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# NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



## DENR Turns Over Shredder-Composters to LGUs in Manila

by  [Village Connect](#) about 11 hours ago



As part of its ongoing efforts to address pollution in Manila Bay, 161 of the 178 local government units (LGUs) in the eight provinces comprising the Manila Bay area have been provided shredder-composter units through the joint effort of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Senator Cynthia A. Villar.

*"This is part of our continuing efforts to clean up Manila Bay, as ordered in the Supreme Court continuing mandamus. Solid waste management is a major concern in the rehabilitation of the bay along with the illegal discharge of untreated wastewater,"* said DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Cimatu likewise cited Villar's *"untiring and unrelenting advocacy for environmental stewardship has amplified the DENR's voice and be clearly heard within the halls of the Senate."*

"Undoubtedly, her advocacy has been a big push for the DENR strides to overcome profound challenges particularly in getting LGUs to prioritize compliance with RA 9003 in their governance, especially in the Manila Bay area," Cimatu said.



DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said the 161 units of shredder-composter have been formally turned over to the respective local governments.



*"This is a huge help to LGUs to comply with the provisions of Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. It is anchored on the support Senator Villar has been giving to us in the DENR,"* Antiporda said.

Antiporda added Villar's effort "raises the call for effective solid waste management as a major concern in the country's discourse on governance both at the national and local level."

He cited the lady lawmaker's determination to equip all LGUs with composting facilities, which not only facilitates compliance of LGUs with RA 9003 but also with the Supreme Court Mandamus on Manila Bay Rehabilitation for LGUs to adopt measures to prevent dumping of solid and liquid wastes into Manila Bay's water.

The Manila Bay region consists of the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, and Tarlac in Central Luzon; Cavite, Rizal, and Laguna in CALABARZON; and the 16 cities and one municipality in Metro Manila.

Of the 161 shredder-composter units distributed, Laguna received 30; Nueva Ecija, 30; Bulacan, 24; Pampanga, 22; Cavite, 23; Rizal, 14; Bataan, 12; and Tarlac, 6.

The remaining 17 are up for bidding and the DENR aims to complete the bidding process and installation and to turn them over to their respective LGU hosts within the quarter.

Antiporda reiterated the importance of the shredder-composter equipment as it will not only reduce the amount of waste that ends up in sanitary landfills but also transform the diverted wastes into assets as organic fertilizer and soil enhancers, which are valuable to agriculture and horticulture.

*"We appeal to the LGUs to use these assets fully and properly,"* Antiporda said.

The first batch of five shredder-composter units was rolled out in December 2020 for San Fernando City and the towns of Apalit, Candaba, Guagua, and Magalang in the province of Pampanga.

The equipment, which costs around P1 million each, should be installed near the materials recovery facilities operated by host LGUs and should be supplied with an independent electrical source fitted with an emergency shutdown device as a safety measure.

Each unit requires a floor area measuring 84 square meters or a dimension of 12 meters by seven meters and is operated by at least two to three certified operators trained by the DENR- Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

The DENR-EMB will conduct random inspection of the equipment to monitor compliance of the LGUs with the memorandum of agreement and compliance of equipment suppliers on the warranty provisions.

Source: <https://www.villageconnect.com.ph/denr-turns-over-shredder-composters-to-lgus-in-manila/7011>

# DENR sends 161 shredder-composters to Manila Bay LGUs

By ... -May 13, 2021



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has provided shredder-composters to 161 of the 178 LGUs in the eight provinces comprising the Manila Bay area as part of efforts to address pollution.

The agency said the facilities are expected not only to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in sanitary landfills but will also help transform diverted wastes into organic fertilizer and soil enhancers.

DENR Laguna received 30; Nueva Ecija, 30; Bulacan, 24; Pampanga, 22; Cavite, 23; Rizal, 14; Bataan, 12; and Tarlac, 6 while the remaining 17 are up for bidding and for turnover within the quarter.

The equipment which costs around P1 million each should be installed near the materials recovery facilities operated by host LGUs and should be supplied with an independent electrical source fitted with an emergency shutdown device as a safety measure.

Each unit also requires a floor area measuring 84 square meters or a dimension of 12 meters by seven meters and is operated by at least two to three certified operators trained by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

Likewise, the DENR-EMB will conduct random inspection of the equipment to monitor compliance of LGUs with the memorandum of agreement and compliance of suppliers on warranty provisions.

"This is part of our continuing efforts to clean up Manila Bay, as ordered in the Supreme Court continuing mandamus. Solid waste management is a major concern in the rehabilitation of the bay along with the illegal discharge of untreated wastewater," said DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, in a statement. -J. Macapagal

Source: [https://malaya.com.ph/index.php/news\\_special\\_feature/denr-sends-161-shredder-composters-to-manila-bay-lgus/](https://malaya.com.ph/index.php/news_special_feature/denr-sends-161-shredder-composters-to-manila-bay-lgus/)



# 161 LGUs around Manila Bay area receive shredder-composters from DENR



BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

MAY 13, 2021

A total of 161 local government units (LGUs) within the Manila Bay region have been provided with shredder-composter units.

The project, a joint effort of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the office of Senator Cynthia Villar is part of the ongoing effort to address pollution in Manila Bay.

There are a total of 178 LGUs in eight provinces within the so-called Manila Bay region that stretches from Cavite to Bataan province.

The Manila Bay region consists of the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, and Tarlac in Central Luzon; Cavite, Rizal, and Laguna in Calabarzon, and the 16 cities and one municipality in Metro Manila.

Of the 161 shredder-composter units distributed, Laguna received 30; Nueva Ecija, 30; Bulacan, 24; Pampanga, 22; Cavite, 23; Rizal, 14; Bataan, 12; and Tarlac, 6.

The remaining 17 are up for bidding and the DENR aims to complete the bidding process and installation, and to turn them over to their respective LGU hosts within the quarter.

“This is part of our continuing efforts to clean up Manila Bay, as ordered in the Supreme Court continuing mandamus. Solid waste management is a major concern in the rehabilitation of the Bay along with the illegal discharge of untreated wastewater,” Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said in a news statement.

The DENR chief cited Villar’s advocacy for environmental stewardship, saying it has amplified the DENR’s voice for it to be “clearly heard within the halls of the Senate.”

“Undoubtedly, her advocacy has been a big push for the DENR strides to overcome profound challenges particularly in getting LGUs to prioritize compliance with RA 9003 in their governance, especially in the Manila Bay area,” Cimatu said.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said the 161 units of shredder-composter have been formally turned over to the respective local governments.

“This is a huge help to LGUs to comply with the provisions of Republic Act [RA] 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. It is anchored on the support Sen. Villar has been giving to us in the DENR,” Antiporda said.

Antiporda, meanwhile lauded Villar’s determination to equip all LGUs with composting facilities, which will facilitate compliance of LGUs with RA 9003 and boost measures to prevent dumping of solid and liquid wastes into Manila Bay’s water.



## DENR, police ink 'adopt-a-mountain' pact



ZAMBOANGA. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Zamboanga del Sur Provincial Police Office (ZDSPPO) enter into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the "Adopt-A-Mountain" program. A photo handout shows DENR Regional Executive Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez (center) and Lieutenant Colonel Bonifacio Arañas Jr., Zamboanga del Sur First Provincial Mobile Force Company commander, representing the ZDSPPO and another DENR officials sign the MOA on May 10, 2021 at the DENR regional office. (SunStar Zamboanga) May 12, 2021

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Zamboanga del Sur Provincial Police Office (ZDSPPO) have entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the "Adopt-A-Mountain" program.

DENR Regional Executive Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez said the partnership is aimed to boost the reforestation efforts of the DENR.

The signatories of the agreement, forged Monday, May 10, at the DENR regional office, were Rodriguez, representing the DENR, and Lieutenant Colonel Bonifacio Arañas Jr., Zamboanga del Sur First Provincial Mobile Force Company commander, representing the ZDSPPO.

"The participation of the PNP (Philippine National Police) in joining with us in greening our mountains is a sure sign that more people are beginning to care for the protection and conservation of our environment," Rodriguez said.

"Hopefully, this partnership shall serve as a beacon for other organizations to emulate," she added.

She said DENR Administrative Order 98 dated October 01, 1998 stipulates that the "Adopt-A-Mountain" program shall aim to accelerate the revegetation and greening of denuded and degraded mountains and range lands so as to improve water yield capacity and timber production.

Stipulated in the MOA of DENR and ZDSPPO that a total of three hectares at the Baclay-Pulacan Reforestation Site in Baclay village, Tukuran, Zamboanga del Sir were allotted for police to conduct their greening efforts.

Both parties recognize the importance of collaboration and partnership in order to achieve the objectives and the direction to the Core Values (Makakalikasan) of their organizations. (SunStar Zamboanga)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1894430/Zamboanga/Local-News/DENR-police-ink-adopt-a-mountain-pact>



# Suspected wildlife traders nabbed

[IAN OCAMPO FLORA](#)

May 12, 2021

TWO wildlife traders were arrested by combined operatives of the Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and local police stationed in Baliuag, Bulacan in an entrapment operation recently.

Police Corporal Nino Gabriel, investigator at Baliuag Police Station, identified the suspects as Alvin Santos and Rendel Santos, residents of Barangay Tarcan in Baliuag town, who were arrested for illegal selling of wildlife without necessary permit from the DENR. The suspects were allegedly selling umbrella cockatoos (*Cacatua alba*).

According to Paquito Moreno, Jr., executive director of DENR regional office, the operation stemmed from online surveillance of an informant, who reported to environment authorities that these arrested individuals have been selling wildlife using multiple accounts on Facebook, a social media platform.

"A buy-bust operation was arranged with local police on May 3, where the DENR assets met with the wildlife traders to purchase two heads of umbrella cockatoo worth P85,000," he said.

Moreno said the umbrella cockatoos are endemic species in Indonesia and are among the endangered species listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

According to studies, the population of the umbrella cockatoo has gone into a rapid population decline due to hunting, forest loss and continued pressure from illegal trade.

Moreno urged the public, especially netizens, to refrain from selling and buying wildlife species without necessary permits from the DENR.

He said traders have moved into online platforms to market illegally acquired wildlife, including migratory birds.

Trading, collecting, hunting, or possessing of wildlife and their by-products is illegal and punishable against wildlife law.

Dennis Vergara, chief of the DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources based in Baliuag town, said the DENR already filed criminal charges against the suspects for violating Section 27 of the Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources and Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

If found guilty, the suspects may be imprisoned for a maximum of two years and fined up to P200,000, he added.

The umbrella cockatoos were already turned over to DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau for proper care and rehabilitation.

## The Bicameral Conference Committee has approved the measure seeking to improve the confirmation of imperfect land titles by simplifying the procedure and requirements in granting land deeds.



### Malapit na mapirmahan: Bicom OKs bill to clean up imperfect land titles

11 hours ago

By Billy Begas

The Bicameral Conference Committee has approved the measure seeking to improve the confirmation of imperfect land titles by simplifying the procedure and requirements in granting land deeds.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, author of the measure in the House of Representatives said the committee report on the proposed Imperfect Land Title Confirmation Act was signed today.

Salceda said small farmers suffer the most from having their titles unconfirmed because they do not have the money to litigate or undergo complex processes, and they can't use their land or sell them.

"It's like they don't own their lands," Salceda said. "This measure will help small farmers and homesteaders. It makes it easier for them to get everything from borrowing capital from banks, to leasing their land to more efficient users, to earning income from their property."

The present law requires the claimant to present a copy of the original classification approved by the secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), City or Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO/PENRO) certification, and an official publication of the DENR Secretary's issuance declaring that the land is alienable and disposable.

These requirements can be difficult to secure given strict conditions and processes in the courts.

Under the proposal, the DENR Secretary's approval is only required for lands that are more than 20 hectares.





The CENROs and PENROs are also mandated to act on petitions for agricultural free patents within 120 days.

The measure also shortened the period of possession required for perfection of imperfect titles from 74 years to 20 years.

It also allows "those who have acquired ownership of private lands or abandoned riverbeds by right of accession or accretion under the provision of existing laws" to file petitions to the regional trial courts (RTC) for perfection of their claims."

"Property rights, especially for the small property owner is very important in equitable development. When people feel more secure in their rights to their property, they tend to develop it more aggressively. We need farmers and small landholders to use their lands efficiently as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This reform is crucial for agricultural and economic recovery," Salceda added.



## SMC commits P1B for Pasig River rehab, scales up waterways clean up initiatives

[May 12, 2021](#) 14 min read

MANILA — San Miguel Corporation (SMC) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will commence the cleanup of the Pasig River before the end of May as the company commits to spend P1 billion for the initiative — the boldest and most recent attempt at reviving the biologically inactive river.

The cleanup, which is shaping up to be the largest joint government and private-sector effort to clean up the heavily polluted and silted Pasig River, is the second such initiative of SMC.

Last year, the company began a similarly ambitious P1 billion effort to clean up the 27-kilometer Tullahan-Tinajeros River system, running from La Mesa Dam through Quezon City, Malabon, and Navotas — cities are known for flooding during the rainy season.

“We are taking decisive action to clean up our major river systems to balance the needs of our economy and the environment towards a viable and sustainable path forward,” SMC president Ramon S. Ang said.

He added that the company is committed to “rid our major river systems of silt and solid waste and return them to their ideal depths, so they can more effectively channel floodwaters out to Manila Bay. More importantly, we want to help significantly reduce plastic waste pollution in our seas and oceans—which endanger our marine resources, and threaten fishing grounds.”

In a report released by scientific online publication “Our World in Data” last May 1, the Tullahan River is listed as one of seven Philippine rivers in Asia contribute the most plastic waste to the oceans.

Other Philippine rivers in the list are the Pasig River, Meycauayan River in Bulacan, Pampanga River, Libmanan River in Camarines Sur, Rio Grande de Mindanao River, and the Agno River in Pangasinan.

“Like traffic, congestion, and smog, pollution of our bodies of water is one of the many issues that have made life difficult and less than ideal for all of us these past couple of decades. While many of us may not immediately notice it, we are paying a big price for these compounding problems. Our advocacy is to take action and undo some of the damage and rescue and rehabilitate our rivers,” Ang added.

Apart from the Tullahan and Pasig Rivers, SMC has earlier announced its plans to dredge the Meycauayan Rivers as part of its environment and flood mitigation program for Bulacan province.



For the Pasig River rehabilitation project, SMC is looking to extract some 50,000 metric tons of silt and waste every month, or a total of 600,000 metric tons per year from the river.

To ensure sustainability, SMC integrated the river's rehabilitation into plans for the Pasig River Expressway, to be built on the banks or sides of the river, and seen to further decongest traffic and improve accessibility within Metro Manila.

Meanwhile, since starting its Tullahan river cleanup in June last year, SMC has reported removing over 219,000 metric tons of silt and waste from the river. The river cleanup is one of the main reasons why Malabon and Navotas reported no major flooding during the typhoons that hit Luzon late last year.

SMC launched the Tullahan project last year together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) led by Sec. Roy Cimatu, to support the Manila Bay cleanup.

For the initial stages of the project, covering 11.5-kilometers from Manila Bay in Navotas to Potrero in Malabon and Valenzuela cities, SMC has been dredging 1,500 metric tons of silt and solid waste per day. These are segregated and go to DENR-approved garbage receiving facilities.

Earlier, SMC announced the procurement of new dredging equipment that will help expedite dredging activities to cover more areas before the rainy season sets in.

SMC is also eyeing to clean and widen the tributaries belonging to the Marilao-Meycauayan-Obando River System (MMORS) in Bulacan. Also planned are river channel improvements for the Alipit or Taliptip River; Sta. Maria River, and the Meycauayan River of the MMORS.

In recent years, SMC has taken on a number of major sustainability initiatives. In 2017, in a move to help rid bodies of water of plastic wastes, it discontinued its plastic bottled water business. It also pioneered the building of "recycled plastics roads" that use plastic wastes in the production of asphalt.

It also launched an ambitious water sustainability initiative, "Water for All" which aims to cut the San Miguel Group's utility and domestic water use by 50% by 2025. (AI/MTVN)

Source: [https://maharlika.tv/2021/05/12/smc-commits-p1b-for-pasig-river-rehab-scales-up-waterways-clean-up-initiatives/?fbclid=IwAR1zoH1L0ZcZCeY4vMns1XlwyMLBFoUG\\_8h33dTtAaP14S790ywhOxbJKaU](https://maharlika.tv/2021/05/12/smc-commits-p1b-for-pasig-river-rehab-scales-up-waterways-clean-up-initiatives/?fbclid=IwAR1zoH1L0ZcZCeY4vMns1XlwyMLBFoUG_8h33dTtAaP14S790ywhOxbJKaU)





# San Miguel earmarks P1B for Pasig River cleanup

By TED CORDERO, GMA News

Published May 12, 2021 7:00pm



San Miguel Corp. (SMC) said Tuesday it is setting aside P1 billion for the cleanup of Pasig River.

In a statement, SMC said it will commence the cleanup drive before the end of May in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The cleanup, which is shaping up to be the largest joint government and private sector effort to clean up the heavily-polluted and silted Pasig River, is the second such initiative of SMC, the company said.

Last year, SMC began a similarly ambitious P1-billion effort to clean up the 27-kilometer Tullahan-Tinajeros River system, running from La Mesa Dam through Quezon City, Malabon, and Navotas — cities known for flooding during the rainy season.

“We are taking decisive action to clean up our major river systems to balance the needs of our economy and the environment towards a viable and sustainable path forward,” said SMC president Ramon Ang.

He added that the company is committed to “rid our major river systems of silt and solid waste and return them to their ideal depths, so they can more effectively channel flood waters out to the Manila Bay. More importantly, we want to help significantly reduce plastic waste pollution in our seas and oceans--which endanger our marine resources, and threaten fishing grounds.”

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“Like traffic, congestion, and smog, pollution of our bodies of water is one of the many issues that have made life difficult and less than ideal for all of us these past couple of decades. While many of us may not immediately notice it, we are paying a big price for these compounding problems. Our advocacy is to take action and undo some of the damage and rescue and rehabilitate our rivers,” Ang said.

Apart from the Tullahan and Pasig Rivers, SMC has earlier announced its plans to dredge the Meycauayan Rivers as part of its environment and flood mitigation program for Bulacan province.

For the Pasig River rehabilitation project, SMC is looking to extract some 50,000 metric tons of silt and waste every month, or a total of 600,000 metric tons per year from the river.

To ensure sustainability, SMC integrated the river’s rehabilitation into plans for the Pasig River Expressway, to be built on the banks or sides of the river, and seen to further decongest traffic and improve accessibility within Metro Manila.

Meanwhile, since starting its Tullahan river cleanup in June last year, SMC has reported removing over 219,000 metric tons of silt and waste from the river.

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SMC is also eyeing to clean and widen the tributaries belonging to the Marilao-Meycauayan-Obando River System (MMORS) in Bulacan.— AOL, GMA News



# Recto: Use DENR budget for dolomite beach to replace trees at Nayong Pilipino

By HANA BORDEY, GMA News

Published May 12, 2021 5:21pm



Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto on Wednesday proposed using the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) funds for its controversial Manila Bay "white sands" project and the National Greening Program (NGP) to replace trees that could be chopped down at Nayong Pilipino for the construction of a COVID-19 mega vaccination site.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto on Wednesday proposed using the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) funds for its controversial Manila Bay "white sands" project and the National Greening Program (NGP) to replace trees that could be chopped down at Nayong Pilipino for the construction of a COVID-19 mega vaccination site.

In a statement, Recto said that the 2021 national budget allots P3.158 billion to the NGP—good for 44.6 million seedlings—and P1.553 billion to the Manila Bay beach project, which uses crushed dolomite for the sand.

Recto said these funds could replace the trees at the Nayong Pilipino property in Parañaque City should they be cut down to make way for the proposed vaccination center.

"Sa bawat Ipil-Ipil na pinutol sa lote ng Nayong Pilipino, kayang-kayang pondohan ang 100 na kapalit. Pwede ngang isang milyong puno, o isa sa bawat Pilipinong tinamaan ng COVID. Ang punto ko, mayroong compensation fund kung kakailanganin," Recto said in a statement.

[For each Ipil-ipil that will be chopped down at the Nayong Pilipino site, the government can fund 100 trees to replace it. The government can fund even a million trees or one tree for each Filipino who got COVID-19. My point here is we have compensation fund if it is needed.]

"The [Nayong Pilipino Foundation] property is the rally point of a massive counterattack against the deadly virus. Let it be the staging area of the science that will defeat the pandemic and save us all," he added.





Recto expressed support for the construction of the vaccination facility.

“On a per square meter basis, the property will benefit thousands of people. It is a social project that packs enough 'goodwill density' to justify the lot being used to meet a public emergency,” he said.

“Yes, the trees there serve as urban lungs. But what also cannot be denied is that the lifesaving facility that will be built serves the same purpose, to protect people from getting COVID so they won't be gasping for air on the driveways of overwhelmed hospitals,” he added.

Apart from Recto, Senator Panfilo Lacson on Tuesday [expressed support for the construction of the COVID-19 vaccination facility](#).

On Sunday, vaccine czar Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr. [called on the board of the NPF to approve the construction of the planned mega vaccination site](#).

Galvez said the NPF Board of Trustees (NPFBT) has yet to sign a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the National Task Force (NTF) Against COVID-19 for the construction of the mega vaccination site at the Nayong Pilipino.

The NPFBT expressed apprehension about the plan, saying some 500 trees would have to be cut down to make space for the project.

The construction of the vaccination center will be shouldered by the Razon's ICTSI Foundation, with Felino "Jun" Palafox as the architect.

On Tuesday, Malacañang [said the planned mega COVID-19 vaccination center would only be temporary](#). — BM, GMA News



## Recto: Use 'Manila Bay Sands' fund to replace trees to be cut for Nayong Pilipino vaccination hub

By: [Neil Arwin Mercado](#) - Reporter / [@NAMercadoINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:32 PM May 12, 2021



FILE PHOTO: Heavy equipment dump fresh dolomite sand at "Dolomite Beach" at Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard in Manila City. INQUIRER/GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

MANILA, Philippines — Funds earmarked to create a “white sand beach” along Manila Bay can instead be used to finance the replacement of trees that will be uprooted to give way to the planned construction of a mega vaccination center at the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF) property in Parañaque City.

This was the proposal of Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto on Wednesday as he backed the projected mega vaccination center in Nayong Pilipino, saying the lot on which the facility will stand “will be used for a facility that will protect millions of lives.”

Recto said the “replace-tree-you-cut” policy can apply in this situation, citing funding sources from the DENR’s National Greening Program (NGP) and “Operational Plan for Manila Bay Coastal Management Program.”

“The DENR’s budget for Manila Bay’s rehabilitation,” the lawmaker explained in a statement, “can bankroll a mangrove planting project, which many experts argue is a better rehabilitation material than imported sand.”

“Kung nakapagtanim nga ng buhangin sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay, bakit hindi kayang magtanim ng puno at mangroves sa lugar na malapit doon? Sa bawat Ipil-Ipil na pinutol sa lote ng Nayong Pilipino, kayang-kayang pondohan ang 100 na kapalit,” he added.

(If they can plant sand on the shores of Manila Bay, why can’t we plant mangroves in the area? For every ipil-ipil tree cut on the Nayong Pilipino lands, they can fund a replacement of 100 trees.)

Recto likewise said the NGP’s P3.158 billion budget, as computed by DENR, will be good for 44.6 million seedlings.

“DENR’s mega billions for NGP can fund the establishment of a green belt in the area, including mangroves as the latter is in NGP’s approved menu of projects,” he pointed out.



“Or it can reforest a wide swath of the denuded Marikina watershed in honor of the Nayong Pilipino trees which were sacrificed so people may live,” he also said.

While Recto acknowledged that trees in the Nayong Pilipino property serve as “urban lungs”, the senator stressed that the facility that will be built “serves the same purpose” which is “to protect people from getting COVID so they won’t be gasping for air on the driveways of overwhelmed hospitals.”

“On a per square meter basis, the property will benefit thousands of people. It is a social project that packs enough ‘goodwill density’ to justify the lot being used to meet a public emergency,” he said.

KGA





## Recto: Budget available to replace trees to be cut in 'mega vaccination site'

Vanne Elaine Terrazola May 12, 2021

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto on Wednesday, May 12, backed the proposed construction of a "mega vaccination center" at the 8.5-hectare urban forest in Parañaque City, saying that there are funds, anyway, to replace the trees to be cut for the project.



(Photo from Nayong Pilipino Foundation)

Recto echoed the justification of [officials](#) in pushing for the construction of the vaccination facility amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which the country has yet to contain more than a year since it started.

The project was opposed by the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF), which owns the property, and [environmental advocates](#) as some 500 trees will be cut to pave the way for its construction.

"The trees will not be chainsawed by illegal loggers, but the lot on which they stand will be used for a facility that will protect millions of lives," Recto said in a statement.

"Yes, the trees there serve as urban lungs. But what also cannot be denied is that the lifesaving facility that will be built serves the same purpose, to protect people from getting COVID so they won't be gasping for air on the driveways of overwhelmed hospitals," he added.

For the Senate leader, the trees could anyway be replaced with "billions of pesos" allotted in the 2021 national budget for planting trees.

Specifically, he noted the P3.158-billion budget of the National Greening Program (NGP) under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which he said will be good for planting 44.6 million seedlings.

"DENR's mega billions for NGP can fund the establishment of a green belt in the area, including mangroves as the latter is in NGP's approved menu of projects. Or it can reforest a wide swath of the denuded Marikina watershed in honor of the Nayong Pilipino trees which were sacrificed so people may live," Recto said.

Senators, however, had previously questioned the [success](#) of the said program, as forests and mountains supposedly remained denuded.

Even Recto, in 2019, asked for [proof](#) that the reforestation program had been successful before funds were granted for the program.

Aside from the NGP fund, Recto said the DENR also has P1.553 billion for the implementation of its "Operational Plan for Manila Bay Coastal Management Program, which is supposedly the source of its controversial dolomite sand project.



He said the government can instead spend the fund for a mangrove planting project, "which many experts argue is a better rehabilitation material than imported sand."

"Sa bawat Ipil-Ipil na pinutol sa lote ng Nayong Pilipino, kayang-kayang pondohan ang 100 na kapalit. Pwede ngang isang milyong puno, o isa sa bawat Pilipinong tinamaan ng COVID. Ang punto ko, mayroong compensation fund kung kakailanganin (For every Ipil-ipil tree cut down in the Nayong Pilipino lot, funds are sufficient to plant 100 trees as a replacement. You can plant a million, even, for every Filipino stricken with COVID-19. My point is, there is a compensation fund if necessary)," Recto said.

"The NPF property is the rally point of a massive counterattack against the deadly virus. Let it be the staging area of the science that will defeat the pandemic and save us all," he appealed.



# Recto backs proposed mega vaccination site at Nayong Pilipino grounds

RFJ



Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto has backed the proposal to establish a mega vaccination site at the Nayong Pilipino grounds in Parañaque City, noting that it will protect millions of lives.

"The trees will not be chainsawed by illegal loggers, but the lot on which they stand will be used for a facility that will protect millions of lives," said the senator.

"On a per square meter basis, the property will benefit thousands of people. It is a social project that packs enough "goodwill density" to justify the lot being used to meet a public emergency," he added. The proposed mega vaccination site has met several oppositions as the plan needs to sacrifice trees in the said area. But Recto said that it is a "lifesaving facility."

"Yes, the trees there serve as urban lungs. But what also cannot be denied is that the lifesaving facility that will be built serves the same purpose, to protect people from getting COVID so they won't be gasping for air on the driveways of overwhelmed hospitals," the senator explained.

"But the replace-the tree-you-cut policy can be applied to the case at hand," he added.

He pointed out that there are billions of pesos in the 2021 national budget that could replace the trees on the Nayong Pilipino property in more numbers than what will be cut.

Recto cited the P3.158 billion budget of the National Greening Program (NGP), which, based on DENR costing, will be good for 44.6 million seedlings.

He also proposed to tap the P1.553 billion for the implementation of DENR's "Operational Plan for Manila Bay Coastal Management Program," the source of the controversial "Manila Bay Sands" project.

"DENR's mega billions for NGP can fund the establishment of a green belt in the area, including mangroves as the latter is in NGP's approved menu of projects. Or it can reforest a wide swath of the denuded Marikina watershed in honor of the Nayong Pilipino trees which were sacrificed so people may live," said Recto.

He said that DENR's budget for Manila Bay's rehabilitation can bankroll a mangrove planting project.

"Kung nakakapagtanim nga ng buhangin sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay, bakit hindi kayang magtanim ng puno at mangroves sa lugar na malapit doon? Sa bawat lpil-lpil na pinutol sa lote ng Nayong Pilipino, kayang-kayang pondohan ang 100 na kapalit," said Recto. – [newpost.com.ph](https://newpost.com.ph)

Source: <https://newpost.com.ph/recto-backs-proposed-mega-vaccination-site-at-nayong-pilipino-grounds/>



## Resigned Nayong Pilipino Exec: Law Must Be Followed In Building Mega Vaccination Facility

Resigned Nayong Pilipino Foundation executive director Lucille Karen Malilong-Isberto stressed that they were not against the construction of the mega vaccination site and only wanted their concerns to be addressed.

Franz Lewin Embudo Wednesday, May 12, 2021



The state-run park Nayong Pilipino. The Philippine STAR file photo

On May 6, the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF) said its Board of Trustees has approved the use a portion of the state-run park in Parañaque City as mega vaccination facility as part of the government's plan to beat COVID-19, but expressed concerns over health, legal and environmental implications of the project.

In its statement, the NPF said it is currently hosting a quarantine facility operated by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, thus its management is coordinating with the Department of Health (DOH) and the military to ensure that the vaccination site does not pose risks to the patients in the COVID-19 facility and the vaccinees.

It also sought clarification from the National Task Force Against COVID-19 (NTF) and the DOH as to the governance structure for the vaccination facility, as statements by Department of Tourism (DOT) officials revealed that ICTSI Foundation will operate and manage the facility.

NPF said this led to questions about the propriety of allowing a private foundation to use government property contrary to Presidential Decree No. 1445. ICTSI Foundation is part of the Razon group of companies. "Legal issues are being studied to ensure full compliance with all laws, rules, and regulations," the NPF stated.

The NPF also stressed that environmental laws must be complied with as the property "is not a vacant lot but has a thriving urban forest that hosts a variety of urban wildlife and is the last remaining grassland in the reclaimed area of Parañaque."

"The abrupt cutting of close to 500 trees and other site works on the NPF property will kill the existing ecosystem," NPF said.

The NPF statement prompted NTF chief implementer and vaccine czar Carlito Galvez Jr., the DOT, Malacañang and even billionaire Enrique Razon Jr., chairman of the board and president of the International Container Terminal Services (ICTSI), to counter the state-run park's officials, particularly its executive director – lawyer Lucille Karen Malilong-Isberto, who resigned due to the issue.

On Sunday, May 9, Galvez released a statement saying that they do not wish to downplay the position taken by the NPF board but "it must surely know the urgency of the situation our nation is confronting."





"The establishment of the mega vaccination center at the Nayong Pilipino will help accelerate the implementation of our National Vaccination Program, as it will enable us to vaccinate around 10,000 individuals daily," Galvez said.

Galvez noted that the construction of these mega vaccination sites is in line with the national government's strategy of expanding the coverage of immunization program.

With regard to environmental issues, Galvez assured the NPF and the public that this concern "has been carefully considered" and that this was the reason why the ICTSI Foundation obtained the services of architect Felino "Jun" Palafox to design the facility.

"Moreover, we believe it is inappropriate for the NPF to equate the fate of 500 ipil-ipil trees with the lives of hundred of thousands if not millions of Filipinos. Moreover, the proposed site of the facility is a reclaimed piece of land and not a protected forest or a marine sanctuary," Galvez said.

Galvez added Razon's ICTSI Foundation offered to build the facility at no cost to the government.

Galvez called on the NPF to sign the memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the project as soon as possible. "We can no longer afford to waste time. The future of our people and nation depends on it."

To recall, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Infectious and Emerging Diseases (IATF-EID) issued Resolution No. 109 dated April 10, which approved the building of a mega vaccination facility on the 9.5-hectare NPF property.

Despite the issuance of this resolution, the NPF Board of Trustees has yet to sign a MOA with the NTF.

Due to the delay in the signing of this MOA, Executive secretary Salvador Medialdea released a memorandum on May 4 directing the NPF "to undertake any and all acts necessary to allow the DOH or the NTF to use the NPF property."

The NPF issued the statement on May 6 in response to Medialdea's memorandum.

Last May 7, DOT Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat also threw her full support for the project, which she described as a "game changer for the vaccination program."

During a press briefing on Monday, May 10, presidential spokesman Harry Roque also reminded the NPF that all government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCC) are under the supervision of the Office of the President.

"I hope their decisions will not go against the very important mission to take care of the lives of our countrymen," Roque said in Filipino.

Razon also lashed out at Isberto on Saturday, May 8, for opposing the project, saying that its management was putting more importance on easily grown ipil-ipil trees than the millions of Filipinos who would be inoculated at the proposed site.

Razon told the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* that, "I am at a loss for words to describe (Isberto) and others at Nayong Filipino! "What planet do these idiots come from?"



Photo from the Nayong Pilipino Foundation's website shows an aerial view of the park.

## Follow the law

On Tuesday, May 11, Isberto clarified that the agency does not oppose the government's idea to build a mega vaccination facility in the park.

In an interview with *ABS-CBN News Channel*, Isberto said they have already given the approval for the use of NPF land as a mega vaccination facility on April 8 and they are just waiting for a request from the DOH that "it needs the land."

"What we asked is that we follow all the legal processes for use of the land under an emergency," Isberto said.

"So where's the request from the Department of Health that it needs the land? That's what we were looking for, especially since during a meeting at the national vaccination operations committee, the DOH signified that it was not asking for the land," she added.

Isberto emphasized that what NPC wanted is to just follow the law, which means that the MOA should come from the proper government agency and not from the private sector.

"What happened was the proposal came from the private sector, ICTSI Foundation. The laws required that the use of public land should be public, which means that it should be a government agency running it. So in this case, we were waiting for the DOH," she said.

Isberto stressed that it will be illegal for NPF to give the land for free use to ICTSI Foundation based on "a mere letter" and a "YouTube video." She was referring to the video that features a vaccination facility in the United States that "looks like a parking lot," and which would be the model for vaccination site to be built.

"Can we allow the private sector to use it?" Isberto said.

Isberto disclosed the NPF has been writing Galvez and the DOH asking for details of the project so that "the proper MOA setting forth that the use of the land is for an emergency purpose [is] clear" but there had been no replies.

Isberto said the NPF is also wondering why Galvez and the DOH are making it appear that they are against the project because of the cutting of close to 500 trees.

"It (Nayong Pilipino property) is within the buffer zone of a protected area. Environmental laws are still in place and we still have the duty to comply [with] those environment laws," she noted. "So that's what we pointed out, if you're going to be building anything there, then let's go through the process of building within the buffer zone of a protected area."



## DOT rushing NPF to enter into an agreement?

Isberto claimed it was the DOT that was rushing the NPF to enter into an agreement when it is supposed to be the DOH that is in charge of the vaccination.

Is it because NPF is under DOT? Isberto said "no" as NPF is an attached agency and the power of the DOT over them is just supervisory.

"But it does not exercise the power of control which is to substitute its judgment over the board," she stressed.

Isberto said an executive order from President Duterte would have made the process "faster" rather than asking the NPF board.

"We're waiting for the DOH to say that it needs the land. And then we'll execute the proper MOA, or of course, the President can always issue an executive order and then that would be the end of it, there's no need for a MOA anymore," she explained.

On the issue that the NPF is asking for a specific amount in exchange for the use of part of the property, Isberto said it is not allowed under the law as it will be used pursuant to an emergency.

"So what's the proof that it's an emergency? We thought that should be the DOH saying that your land is needed for vaccination," she asked.

Why did Isberto resign? "I don't like being rushed into doing things that are iffy," she said when asked if she would reconsider her decision.

She added she is just waiting for her resignation to be accepted by the President.

Isberto said it was Duterte who told them to follow the law and do the right thing. "We want to make sure that all the laws are followed, especially in light of the history of (Nayong Pilipino), and all the scandals it was involved (in). We want strict compliance."

In 2018, Duterte fired the entire board of the NPF for approving a "grossly disadvantageous deal," on the same day Chinese casino operator Landing International Development Ltd.'s groundbreaking of its \$1.5-billion integrated resort and casino on the foundation's property called NayonLanding.

The development will rise on a 95,700-square meter site leased from the NPF for 25 years, which can be extended for another 25. – **With Alexis Romero, Jose Rodel Clapano**

Source: <https://www.onenews.ph/resigned-nayong-pilipino-exec-law-must-be-followed-in-building-mega-vaccination-facility?fbclid=IwAR2dPSpuKluXKyIC3AMDUqMTSmdH97eqpgmgzc9LiRLal01qS33iQAHUQ3o>



## Tycoons push Nayong Pilipino vaccination center

[Iris Gonzales](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 13, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The proposed mega vaccination center at the Nayong Pilipino property in Parañaque's Entertainment City would help the Philippines achieve herd immunity, tycoon Enrique Razon Jr. said in a television interview on Tuesday night.

He said the proposed temporary site would be similar to the large inoculation centers in the US, which are able to accommodate up to 8,000 to 12,000 people a day.

"The new, temporary, and environmentally light vaccination facility has a design capacity to vaccinate as many as 10,000 to 12,000 people a day, roughly 300,000 a month. It will feature an ambulatory vaccination station and a drive-through area," Razon's International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) Foundation said in a statement.

The foundation said it will take 60 days to construct the facility, in time for the arrival of the bulk of vaccines. It also said the center will be designed to ensure that safety and health protocols are observed, including enough space for physical distancing of medical staff and vaccine recipients.

ICTSI said it will bear all costs for the center's construction.

Razon noted that around 451,000 people have been fully vaccinated – only 0.4 percent of the country's over 100 million population.

"We need to vaccinate the people to be able to open the economy. At the rate the vaccinations are going, it will take years to obtain herd immunity," he said.

No deal yet

However, the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF), which owns the property, has yet to sign a memorandum of agreement with the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, raising environmental concerns.

The NPF said the cutting of hundreds of trees will destroy the existing ecosystem and negatively impact Metro Manila residents.

However, Razon said it is a reclaimed area, not a forest park.

"This (pandemic) is the biggest crisis we are facing. It's not a crisis of ipil-ipil or talahib. Maybe there's a crisis of stupidity, but this is a health crisis," he said.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) yesterday said it has committed that no trees will be taken down to make way for the facility.

The infrastructure will be built around the grasslands and trees in the foundation's lot, it said.

"It should be noted that the head of the team of architects engaged for the design of the mega vaccination site, architect Jun Palafox Jr., is an environmental planner," the DOT said.





## **AGI backs Razon**

Alliance Global Group Inc. (AGI), the holding company of tycoon Andrew Tan, said the company fully supports Razon's plan to build the mega-vaccination center.

"We have allowed ICTSI Foundation to use our company's property as their temporary construction staging area," said AGI CEO Kevin Tan.

AGI said the land it leased from NPF, which forms part of Westside City being jointly developed by Megaworld and Westside City Resorts World Inc., is not the land where Nayong Pilipino plans to build a theme park.

"There are two properties separated by a water channel: the bigger property on the left, where Nayong Pilipino is planning to build the theme park and also the area where the proposed mega vaccination center is to be built, and the smaller property on the right side, which is what we have leased from NFP," Tan said. – Elijah Felice Rosales



# Green groups hit jab facility

[Helen Flores](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 13, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Environmental groups and civil society organizations yesterday opposed the planned mega vaccine center at the Nayong Pilipino complex in Parañaque City.

“The proposed mega vaccination center will deepen vaccine inequality. It will marginalize people and groups who have limited access and mobility options to reach the centralized site,” the organizations said in a joint statement.

Those who rejected the proposed mega-vaccine site were Greenpeace Southeast Asia-Philippines, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives-Philippines, Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability, Mother Earth Foundation, Oceana Philippines International, Living Laudato Si’ Philippines, Linghod, Youth for Climate Hope, Mangrove Matters PH, Balud, Young Leaders for Environmental Action Federation, Coal-Free Bataan Movement, Nuclear-Free Bataan Movement, Young Bataenos Environmental Advocates Network, National Society of Parliamentarians, Kuryente.org, Alyansa ng Bagong Nayon Natin, Green Party of the Philippines, Aksyon Kalikasan, Sigaw ng Kabataan Coalition, ASEAN Youth Organization Philippines, Rotary Club of Alabang Madrigal Business Park, Anahaw Laguna, Earth-UST, Ecowaste Coalition, Health Care Without Harm Southeast Asia, Move As One Coalition, AltMobility, Renacimiento Manila, Zero Waste Youth Pilipinas and Zero Waste Youth Negros Oriental.

They said the facility is proposed in an area that has been earmarked as a park and necessitates the cutting of 500 trees.

“We urge President Duterte, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, the Department of Tourism and Enrique Razon to stop this ill-advised plan and instead focus on long-term and people-centered solutions to the health crisis,” they said.

The groups said the government should strengthen and recognize the role of local government and communities in shortening the chain by creating and improving local vaccination facilities.

Local government units “such as San Juan City and Pasig have shown success in utilizing idled sports facilities as vaccination sites,” they said.

# Save the Nayong Pilipino trees!



[BREAKTHROUGH](#) - [Elfren S. Cruz](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 13, 2021 - 12:00am

A midst all the news about political debates, the COVID 19 crisis and the rising unemployment, there was one small news item that seemed to have been ignored. This is the plan to cut down hundreds of trees in Nayong Pilipino and construct a vaccination center.

This may seem like a non-issue to many people. The fact is that in this urban concrete jungle called Metro Manila, the last remaining forest land is going to be cut down. True, we need vaccination centers; but problems cannot be solved by creating a much bigger long-term problem. Surely there must be other places other than this "...thriving urban forest that hosts a variety of urban wildlife and is the last remaining grassland in the reclaimed area of Parañaque." This is according to the Nayong Pilipino Foundation.

It is not an exaggeration to say that humanity is in the midst of a struggle to fight plunging the world into a climate disaster. There are many weapons and tools in the fight; but trees have a significant role. That is why there is now an international outcry to plant trees and even start urban farms.

What is the value of one tree? In his book *How To Avoid a Climate Disaster*, Bill Gates answers a few questions:

## **How much carbon dioxide can a tree absorb in its lifetime?**

It varies, but a good rule of thumb is 4 tons over the course of 40 years.

**How long will the tree survive?** If it burns down (or is cut down) all the carbon dioxide it was storing will be released into the atmosphere.

**In what part of the world will you plant the tree?** On balance, trees in snowy areas can cause more warming than cooling because they're darker than the snow and ice beneath them and dark things absorb more heat than light things do. On the other hand, trees in tropical forests cause more cooling than warming because they release a lot of moisture which becomes clouds which reflect sunlight.

Gates then writes: "...the math suggests you'd need somewhere around 50 acres worth of trees, planted in tropical areas, to absorb emissions produced by the average American in his lifetime... Trees have all kinds of benefits, both aesthetic and environmental, and we should be planting more of them. For the most part, you can get trees to grow only in places where they are already, so planting them could help undo the damage by deforestation. But there is no practical way to plant enough of them to deal with the problem caused by burning fossil fuels. The most effective tree-related strategy for climate change is to stop cutting down so many of the trees we already have."



The most effective place to plant trees is in areas where emission from human and fossil fuels is highest. This means that we should guard every tree in urban areas where emissions are highest.

All cities will be affected by climate change; but coastal cities like Metro Manila will have the worst problem. Climate change will just exacerbate the problems cities are already struggling with – poverty, homelessness, health care, education and many more.

Countries must protect and enlarge its natural defenses against climate change. Gates writes: “Forests store and regulate water. Wetlands prevent and provide water for farmers and cities. Coral reefs are home to the fish that coastal communities depend on for food. But these and other natural defenses against climate change are rapidly disappearing. Nearly nine million acres of old growth forests were destroyed in 2018 alone and when – as is likely – we hit 2 degrees Celsius of warming, most of the coral reefs in the world will die off.”

Environmentalists have warned that we must restore ecosystems. This includes forests and watersheds. Planting mangroves is much cheaper than building breakwaters. Certainly, planting mangroves along the shores is much, much better than spending hundreds of millions trying to create an artificial beach. If we cannot replant trees, then let us, at the very least, stop cutting them down.

Deforestation is one of the biggest causes of carbon emissions throughout the world. According to the World Bank, the world has lost more than half a million square miles of forest cover since 1990. There is the immediate and obvious impact of deforestation – if the trees are burned down or cut down, they quickly release all the carbon dioxide they contain. There are other unseen effects.

When you take a tree out of the ground you disturb the soil and it turns out there is a lot of carbon stored up in the soil than in the atmosphere and all plant life combined. When you start removing trees, that stored carbon gets released into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide.

One way of preventing a climate disaster is that each one of us must try to save trees in whatever way we can. Just like the community pantry, we do not personally have to save a rain forest. Let us try to save every single tree we can save and together we may yet contribute to saving the world from climate disaster.

\* \* \*

Writefest2021, our annual six-session workshop runs from May 17-28 (MWF, 3-4:30 p.m.) with guest authors Sarge Lacuesta and Mookie Katigbak. Facilitators are Kim Derla and Roel SR Cruz.

Young Writers’ Hangout via Zoom on May 22, 2-3 p.m. with Write Things alumna Mica Magsanoc. Contact [writethingsph@gmail.com](mailto:writethingsph@gmail.com). 0945.2273216  
Email: [elfrencruz@gmail.com](mailto:elfrencruz@gmail.com)

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2021/05/13/2097825/save-nayong-pilipino-trees>





Photo shows the Nayong Pilipino property in Parañaque City.  
Nayong Pilipino/Facebook

## Amid green concerns, DOT says no trees will be affected by proposed mega vaccination hub

[Rosette Adel](#) (Philstar.com) - May 12, 2021 - 7:42pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Tourism on Wednesday evening released a lengthy statement addressing the concerns hounding the plan to construct a temporary mega vaccination center on Nayong Pilipino Foundation's (NPF) property at Entertainment City in Parañaque City.

The DOT is particularly refuting the claims of Lucille Karen E. Malilong-Isberto, former Executive Director of the Nayong Pilipino Foundation (NPF), who resigned last Thursday after a reported conflict with Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo over the controversial vaccination site project.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) [last month authorized](#) the National Task Force against COVID-19 (NTF) to enter into an agreement with the NPF for the construction of this temporary inoculation facility. The NPF, a government-owned and controlled corporation, which is an attached agency of the DOT, however, refused to sign this agreement. It raised environmental concerns.

“The abrupt cutting of close to 500 trees and other site works on the NPF property will kill the existing ecosystem. Once lost, it could take decades to recover this ecosystem,” the NPF said.

In a Facebook post on May 8, NPF uploaded a video showing how its property in Parañaque, restored itself from water to reclaimed land and now an urban forest. It added that it is also now a sanctuary for birds and other forms of life.

“Have one last look before it's gone,” it concluded on its post.

The DOT, however, countered this and said environmental concerns were considered.

“This is false. No trees will be affected,” the tourism department said.

It once again cited that the head of the team of architects engaged for the design of the mega vaccination site, is Architect Jun Palafox, who is also an environmental planner.

“Accordingly, the environment is of paramount consideration in the architectural plans. The architectural team has made sure to build the temporary vaccination facility around existing grasslands and trees,” the DOT said.

### On presentation of plan

The DOT also countered Isberto's claims "that no details were presented to the NPF and that the plan was presented based just on a non-clear YouTube video."

In an interview with ABS-CBN News Channel, Isberto lamented that it will be illegal for the NPF to allow the free use of the land over a "mere letter" and a "YouTube video." She was referring to the video that features a vaccination facility in the United States which would be the model for jab hub that will soon rise on the NPF property.

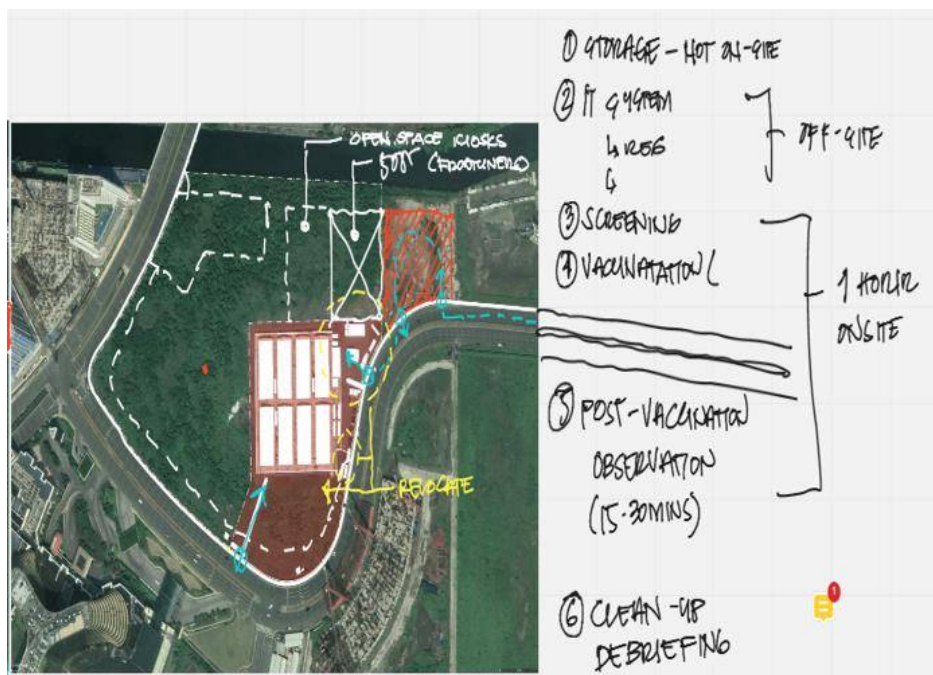
"This is not true. The DOT received a letter dated 8 April 2021 from NTF Secretary Galvez seeking consideration of the Nayong Pilipino Foundation of the proposal. On the same date, the NPF Board of Trustees, including Atty. Isberto, met and approved the request for the use of the said property," the tourism agency said.

It added that there were two meetings between the NPF technical and the team of architects engaged by the private sector "to construct the free and temporary public walk-in and drive-thru vaccination center."

"As a matter of fact, it was the NPF who identified the area in the Parañaque property where the facility is to be constructed. The site that was offered by NPF, and accepted by the private sector architects, is the area where there would have minimal impact to the environment," the DOT furthered adding that Isberto was present in one of those meetings last April 17.

Likewise, the DOT said this was backed by the minutes of the meetings that could prove the NPF officials were present in the discussion.

The DOT released a proposed design the NPF presented as an option that was considered by the design team of Palafox, based on the final design. It said the option, bearing handwritten notes of NPF officials, was used by the private sector design team.



Scanned copy of the design supposedly presented by the Nayong Pilipino Foundation with their handwritten notes.





Design of the Palafox group, according to the DOT.

DOT/Released



## 7M hectares of Philippine land are forested — and that's bad news

The country has been vulnerable to massive flooding linked to deforestation. The coronavirus pandemic is also a catastrophe that arose from populations occupying wild animal habitats.

BY KAROL ILAGAN May 12, 2021 | 02:04:00 PM

### Key findings:

- Forest loss persists in the Philippines even with a log ban and protection laws in place.
- Forest cover has remained the same since the first Aquino administration as losses in some parts of the country have eclipsed gains in others.
- The Mimaropa region – covering Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan – has seen the worst deforestation in recent years.
- The Duterte government excluded reforestation efforts among its commitments to mitigate climate change under the 2016 Paris Agreement.
- Bills that are meant to address legal gaps in protecting forests are languishing in Congress.



Mindoro is the seventh largest island of the Philippines. It sits at the bottom of Luzon, where the country's capital is located, and stretches toward the northern tip of Sulu Sea. Large ships pass through its unpredictable waters, and on its seabed lie the wreckage of vessels that didn't survive it.

On land, a spine of mountains runs across its center. Its forests are home to the tamaraw, a water buffalo just over a meter tall at the shoulder. Its image once graced the one-peso coin. The coins have since been demonetized and the tamaraws that were once widespread are now critically endangered.

Land conversion has wiped out most of the habitat of the tamaraws. The lush expanse of forests where they liked to wallow in mud pits undisturbed have been flattened to the ground to make way for human settlements.



The [same fate](#) has befallen a species of pigeons called [Mindoro bleeding-heart](#), named so because their breasts resemble a puncture wound and there's a blotch of orange at the center that deepens to dark red.

The rate of deforestation, which in turn drives the endangerment of species on the island, has been frightening, said ecologist Neil Aldrin Mallari, who studies the Mindoro bleeding-heart as president of the [Center for Conservation Innovations](#).

The birds are also found on the islands of [Negros, Panay, and Mindanao](#) but the lowland forests where they used to live — the temperature there is right and fruits are aplenty — have drastically thinned through the years.

Mallari said the few remaining pigeons try to adapt, retreating to high altitudes where there are still trees to offer refuge. Those trees are their last stand.

Mindoro lost more than 200,000 hectares of forest cover from 2003 to 2015. It's about the size of land that 3,000 SM Mall of Asia complexes would cover if they stood side by side. The neighboring tourist haven of Palawan also lost nearly 30,000 hectares of forest land during the same period, based on government data.

The losses of Mindoro and Palawan in terms of forest cover make Mimaropa the most deforested region in the Philippines, even if other islands in it such as Marinduque and Romblon recorded some gains.

Mimaropa is also a microcosm of the state of forests in the country. Some provinces have successfully expanded their forest cover, but the gains were erased by consistent losses in others.

A log ban and a number of laws have been in place for decades to restore the forests, but the absence of a coherent policy on forest management has resulted in various forms of land conversion that continue to drive deforestation at an alarming rate.

The country's forest cover is only about seven million hectares or 23% of the country's total land area, based on official numbers, although experts are afraid that this number is overestimated.

That's a lot of forest lost from the early years of the Spanish colonial period, when forest cover was over 90%. The first Christian missionaries saw trees extending from the shores to the mountaintops, and likened the country to a paradise.

Abuses of the countrys' forests eventually harmed the population. The massive floods brought by typhoons *Uring* in Ormoc in 1991 and *Ondoy* in Metro Manila in 2009 were just two of the disasters blamed on massive deforestation. Lush forests and watersheds could have held large amounts of rainwater that otherwise flowed into the communities, experts said.

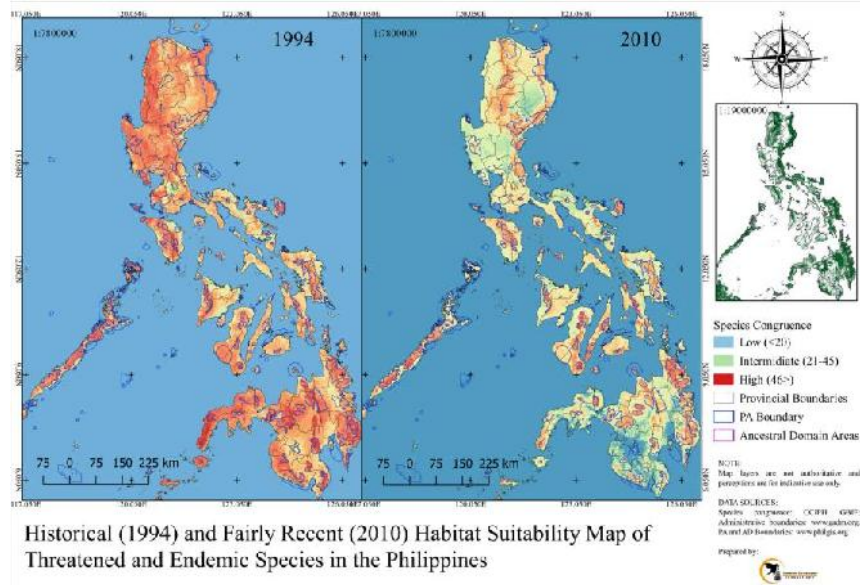
The coronavirus pandemic that is taking its toll on the world — rich and poor countries alike — is also a stark reminder of a catastrophe that happens when populations occupy the habitats of wild animals. Covid-19 is a [zoonotic disease](#) that experts said likely jumped from a bat, then to another host species, before it infected humans.

It's a cycle of tragedies where humans are both the culprits and the victims.

Mallari predicted that Mindoro's bleeding-hearts would soon vanish. It's time to think seriously about the impacts of human activities on nature, he said.

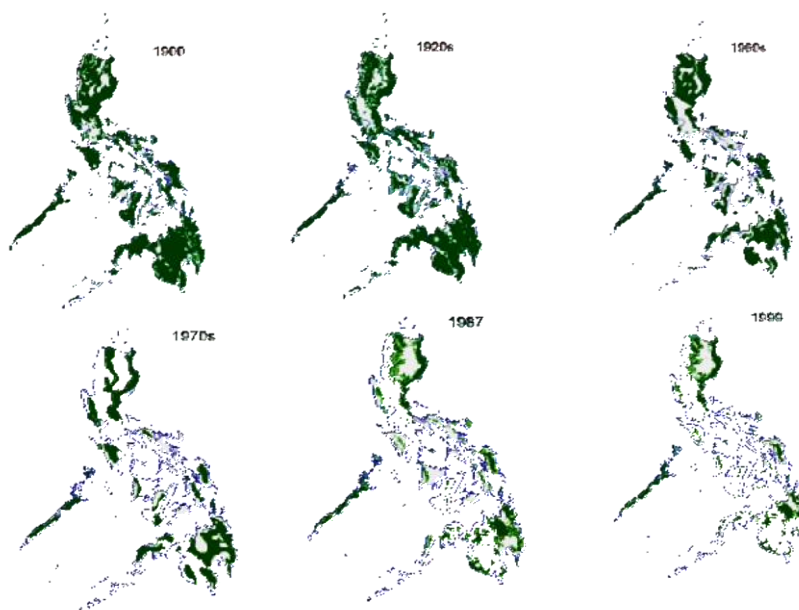
"Extinction of species is not just about the cuddly animals," he said. "We care because they are the building blocks of our ecosystem. '*Pag nawala sila, wala rin tayo* (If they are gone, so are we).'"

The Philippines is one of the world's very few [mega-biodiverse](#) countries and one of the [most vulnerable](#) to climate impacts. It makes the stakes higher for the country.



Historical (1994) and Fairly Recent (2010) Habitat Suitability Map of Threatened and Endemic Species in the Philippines

Threatened and endemic species are retreating up the mountains where forests offer refuge.  
Source: Dr. Neil Aldrin Mallari, Center for Conservation Innovations



The vanishing Philippine forests: extent of forest cover loss in the last century  
Source: Dolom, 2006; Adopted from the Environmental Science for Social Change, 1999  
Courtesy of Dr. Neil Aldrin Mallari, Center for Conservation Innovations

## Dwindling forests

Forests made up 27.5 million hectares or 92% of the country's total land area in the 16th century, during the early decade of Spanish colonial rule. Forest cover dropped to 15.8 million hectares during the last years of the American occupation and to 10.6 million hectares just before the declaration of Martial Law.

It further shrank to 6.4 million hectares just after the 1986 People Power Revolution. Since then the country's forest cover hovered at just under 7 million hectares on average.



The Americans systematized logging, which continued and worsened during Martial Law when dictator Ferdinand Marcos rewarded relatives and cronies with Timber License Agreements (TLA). The country recorded one of the worst deforestation rates in the Asia and Pacific region during those years, losing 316,000 hectares of forest annually on average. The TLA holders did not adopt selective logging, a sustainable way of harvesting timber. They cleared forests, did not replant, and even went beyond their concession areas.

Each administration drew up policies and programs to restore forests. Rehabilitation efforts have been in place since the 1910s, and there's a long list of acronyms and agreements between and among national and local governments, communities living within and near forests, as well as the private sector.

These efforts were mired in allegations of mismanagement, corruption and power play, however.

Following the fall of the Marcos regime, the Cory Aquino government prioritized reforestation with support from bilateral partners and multilateral institutions. Timber exports were banned in 1992 and community-based approaches were introduced following the devastation brought by Typhoon *Uring*, whose heavy rains submerged Ormoc City and killed over 5,000 Filipinos.

Jose Andres Canivel, executive director of the Forest Foundation, said massive deforestation stopped when the government halted the issuance of TLAs. No conclusive data was available, but the shift to Community-Based Forestry Management Agreements might have helped ease the pressure on forests, he said. It's a tenurial instrument that allows qualified upland communities and people's organizations to develop, utilize and manage portions of forest lands and resources.

Forests recover if left alone, and conversion to agricultural land, timber poaching, and forest fires are stopped. They regenerate with the help of bats, birds, and other animals that disperse seeds, Canivel said.

He cited areas in the Sierra Madre and Apayao, which were once logged over but now have closed-canopy forests. "*Nag-logging d'yan, natigil* (They used to log there), now the forest has taken it back," he said.

The second Aquino government also embarked on a massive reforestation program, the National Greening Program, which aimed to double the country's forest cover by 2028. Funded by taxpayers' money, it sought to rehabilitate 7.1 million hectares of unproductive, denuded, and degraded forest lands.

President Benigno Aquino III also banned logging across the country entirely, in the wake of severe floodings that also claimed many lives. Prior to the executive order, the impacts of typhoons *Sendong* in December 2010 and *Ondoy* in September 2009 were linked to deforestation.

Despite these efforts, however, the country's forest cover has not grown from 7 million hectares since the first Aquino administration. It hit a plateau because gains from restoration efforts in some parts of the country were erased by losses in others.



## Philippine forest cover, 1575-2015

*The country's forest cover has essentially hit a plateau since Corason Aquino was president.*

Forest cover (in million ha)

Sources: Forest Management Bureau; National Mapping and Resource Information Authority; Marites Danguilan vitug's *The Politics of Logging: Power from the Forest*.



The steady numbers betray the alarming rate of deforestation in many parts of the country, according to experts. The geographical breakdown of 12 years' worth of data showed that half of all provinces registered losses totaling more than 154,000 hectares, based on the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority's satellite survey.

The real situation is possibly worse. Canivel said data from satellite imagery should be verified on the ground because plantations might have been included. Many forests had been cleared to make way for plantations, which did not count as forests, he said. For instance, forests in the Caraga region had been planted with timber; in Palawan, oil palm.

Samson Pedragosa, Haribon Foundation advocacy officer, also questioned liberal definitions of forests adopted by the Philippines. A half-hectare land with a tree canopy cover of more than 10% is considered a forest, according to the United Nations [Food and Agricultural Organization](#) (FAO).

Mallari said this global definition did not quite match the characteristics of tropical rainforests, which should be dense and diverse. An increase in forest cover might not necessarily be due to growing trees, but because of the way forests were redefined, he said.

Philippine forests are also defined by their physical attributes – more than 1,000 meters above sea level and/or with an 18% slope – rather than their ecological function, Mallari said.

PCIJ requested an interview with the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) to verify the data it had provided as well as understand the country's forest management strategy. The FMB acknowledged PCIJ's letter, but could not respond to questions as of writing.

Global Forest Watch (GFW), a [US-based monitor of global forests](#), offered an alternate barometer of annual forest loss, which Philippine agencies do not gather and publish. It shows that the Philippines lost more than 7,700 hectares of forest cover, equivalent to nearly 20 basketball courts, every hour last year.

This adds up to an area the size of Iloilo City in over a year. The loss was 2% higher in 2020, mirroring the global trend of a 12% increase in forest destruction.

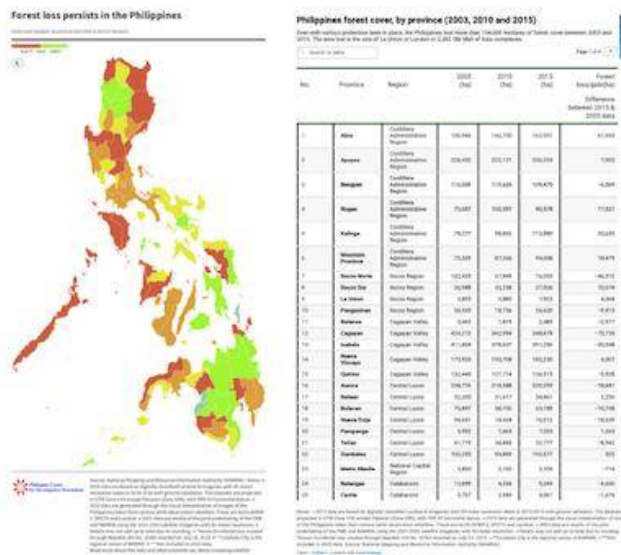


GFW also uses satellite imagery to measure deforestation, but its data cannot be compared with FMB's.

From 2002 to 2020, the country recorded 150,813 hectares of primary forest loss, GFW data also showed.

Alarming rates of deforestation are happening worldwide. GFW recorded 4.2 million hectares of forest loss, an area the size of the Netherlands, occurring within tropical primary forests around the globe. Some progress, however, has been recorded in Southeast Asia as forest losses in Indonesia and Malaysia have declined for the fourth year in a row in 2020.

Read about Malaysia's declining forest loss by Rainforest Investigations Network fellow Yao Hua Law of Macaranga.



## Greening Program

The Duterte government continued Aquino's reforestation program. The **Enhanced National Greening Program** (E-NGP) seeks to rehabilitate 1.2 million hectares of denuded forest lands before President Rodrigo Duterte's term ends in 2022.

More than 1.74 billion seedlings have been planted from 2011 to 2020 in more than 2 million hectares of land area, FMB records showed. The program likewise generated more than 5 million jobs.

The E-NGP is among the programs designed to achieve the country's REDD+ objective - results-based climate change mitigation strategy - under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). "REDD" stands for "reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation." The plus sign represents the expansion of its focus to the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

The Philippines drew up its National REDD+ Strategy in 2010 but an update published by the FMB in June 2017 showed that the country was still in the "readiness phase" and taking "readiness steps" to establish demonstration sites, as well as undertaking studies to implement it.



FAO's 2015 Global Forest Resources Assessment ranked the Philippines as **5th among 234 countries** with the greatest reported gain in forest area annually from 2010 to 2015. The FMB attributed it to the then four-year-old National Greening Program.

But both state and academic researches have raised red flags on the implementation of the program. In 2019, the Commission on Audit (COA) found **several issues** with the DENR's fast-tracking of the program as it led to the imposition of targets beyond the capacities of officials; the lack of survey, mapping, and planning; and the inclusion of far untenured areas, which will be abandoned after the term of the maintenance and protection contract, among others.

"Instead of increasing forest cover, fast-tracking reforestation activities only increased the incidences of wastage," the COA said.

State think-tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies found that the survival rate of the trees planted under the NGP stood at 61% in 2016 or below the 85% goal.

Moreover, University of the Philippines researchers found that forest cover loss in three sites in the Sierra Madre mountain range declined from 2011 to 2015 but increased from 2016 to 2018. Using satellite data, the study found that the net effect was a balance of reforestation and deforestation, or no significant gain.

Mallari, Canivel, Pedragosa and former environment undersecretary Antonio La Viña all raised concerns over the implementation of the NGP and the E-NGP. They said the efforts to protect the seedlings, the kinds of trees planted, and where the trees were planted needed to be scrutinized.

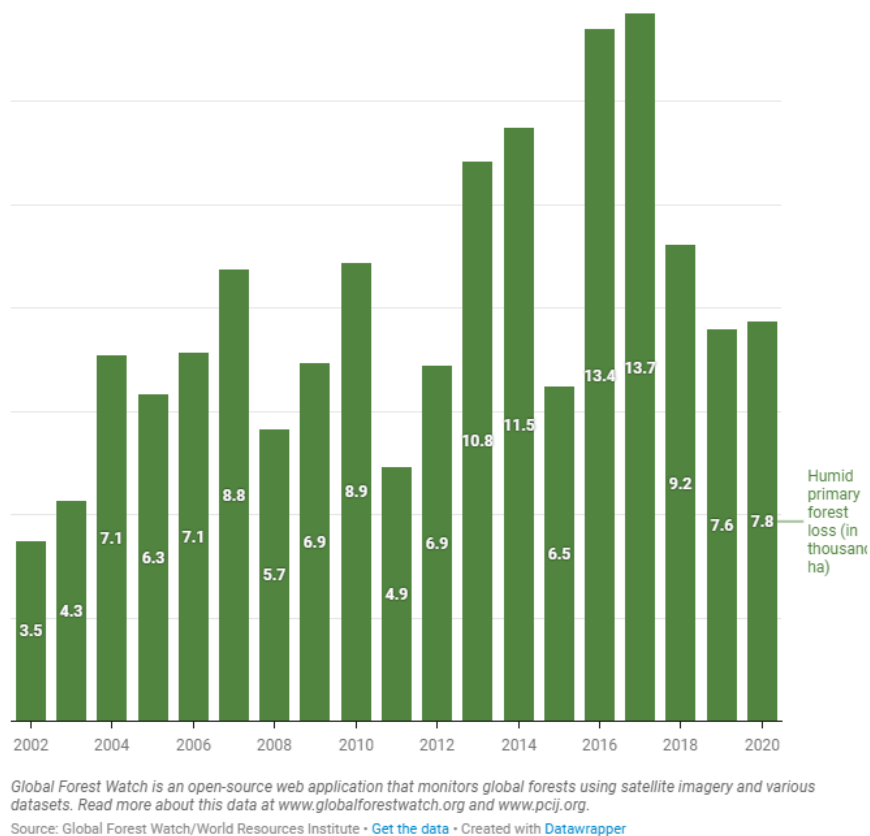
GFW data from 2002 to 2020 even showed that forest loss in the Philippines had reached a record high during the Duterte administration. The country lost more than 10,000 hectares of primary forest on average every year during his term. This was higher than the annual averages during the terms of Gloria Arroyo and Benigno Aquino III.

In a span of 18 years, forest loss reached its peak in 2017 during Duterte's second year in office. The decline continued in the following years although the figures remained within the annual average of about 8,000 hectares.

Pockets of success, however, can be found in rehabilitation efforts done by nongovernment organizations, community groups and the private sector in areas such as the Ipo Watershed, Upper Marikina Watershed and the Masungi Georeserve. At the center of these efforts are the communities that live in or near the forests.

## Satellite survey: The Philippines lost 20 basketball courts of forest every hour in 2020

This adds up to an area almost the size of Iloilo City in over a year.



## Forests and climate change

The Duterte government excluded reforestation efforts from its list of **commitments** under the 2016 Paris Agreement to mitigate climate change. Instead, it was included among adaptation measures, in which Manila pledged to “pursue forest protection, forest restoration and reforestation, and access to results-based finance in forest conservation.”

Mitigation is aimed at addressing and minimizing the causes of climate change, while adaptation is focused on reducing its impacts.

This was curious, according to La Viña, also a former climate change negotiator for the Philippines, and Ian Rivera, coordinator of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice.

La Viña said he was still studying why the government did not include forests to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in its list of commitments. The sectors it included in the country’s mitigation efforts are “agriculture, wastes, industry, transport, and energy.”

Loss of forests is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. At least 20% of global emissions come from deforestation. Addressing the problem is crucial in avoiding the dangerous impacts of climate change.

“We should be looking at enhancement so we can go back to at least 10 million (hectares), for instance,” said La Viña.

Neighbors **Indonesia** and **Malaysia** have placed forests front and center to mitigate emissions. Indonesia imposed a moratorium on the clearing of primary forests, prohibited the conversion of remaining forests, and adopted sustainable forest management measures. Malaysia also cited two initiatives launched in the forestry sector: the Central



Forest Spine and Heart of Borneo “to ensure sustainable forest management and use of natural resources.”

The Paris Agreement is an international treaty that aims to avert climate catastrophe. A total of 196 parties were expected to submit action plans last year. The commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are detailed in documents called nationally determined contributions or NDC.

A [financial mechanism](#) was also established, in which high-emitting developed countries provide funds to less industrialized countries. This will help developing countries bear the brunt of climate change. (The Philippines emitted an average of 1.98 metric tons of carbon dioxide per capita in 2020 or about half of the global average of four metric tons.)

Duterte initially aired his [misgivings](#) about the Paris climate agreement, questioning how developed countries had dictated the terms of the collective fund that would be used to help developing countries like the Philippines achieve climate goals. He eventually [signed](#) it in March 2017.

Based on the NDC it submitted to the UNFCCC on April 15, 2021, the Philippines is targeting to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 75% by 2030. Accomplishing 72.29% of this goal depended on funding and assistance from the international community, based on its report to the UNFCCC on April 15, 2021.

## No greenlight for the ‘green bills’

Just maintaining the country’s forest cover is not enough, said La Viña, who is now executive director of the Manila Observatory, a scientific research center.

“[There’s] no major initiative or nothing significantly negative comes to mind,” he said.

He said proper management of the country’s forests — making sure they are protected — was key. But laws that are supposed to address legal gaps in protecting the country’s forests have been languishing in Congress.

The country’s primary forest code is a Martial Law-era [presidential decree](#) that essentially promotes commercial logging, La Viña said. Although P.D. 705 has since been modified with the passage of the National Integrated Protected Area System in 1992 and the Indigenous People’s Rights Act in 1997, a different law is needed to set the criteria on how forest resources should be managed and utilized.

“There’s no criteria when you can cut or not because we’re still using the old forestry code,” La Viña said.

Canivel made the same call to pass the so-called “green bills” pending in Congress. P.D. 705 promised an industrialization scheme where forests would contribute to the economic sector, but this didn’t happen. A new policy framework was needed to align with new realities, he said.

The log ban that Aquino issued in 2011 is only an [executive order](#). A law is also needed to





resolve how forests will be managed as well as prioritize protection and restoration.

Experts have identified at least three urgent “green” bills – the [National Land Use Act](#) (NLUA), the [Sustainable Forest Management Act](#) (SMFA), and the [Alternative Minerals Management Act](#) (AMMA).

The passage of NLUA is needed to delineate forest boundaries and protect them. Land conversions are the main threats to forests, said Haribon's Pedragosa.

*“Hindi pwedeng gamitin sa agriculture. Hindi pwede gamitin sa iba pang uses kung hindi forest lang talaga (It cannot be used for agriculture. It cannot be used for other purposes but it’s supposed to be just forest),”* he said.

The SMFA is needed to set criteria for allowing logging, and settle debates on whether or not the government should allow selective logging or commercial logging.

Canivel said a new policy framework that would not be preoccupied with issuing timber-cutting or tree-cutting permits was needed. The new forestry law should not only set aside areas for conservation and management, but also for restoration and sustainable use.

“The new law has to be mindful of what we need to protect, what we need to restore and what we need to allow,” Canivel said.

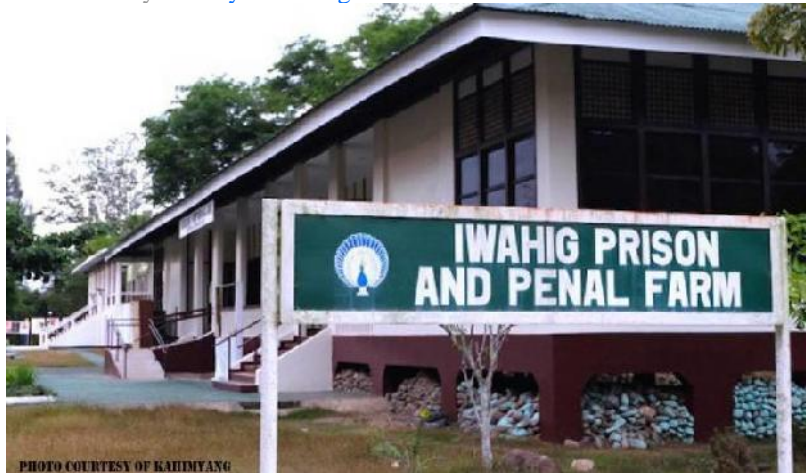
Meanwhile, the AMMA was intended to replace the Mining Act of 1995. It seeks to ban mining in environmentally critical areas such as small-island ecosystems and primary and secondary forests and watersheds. It also seeks to prohibit dumping of mine wastes into water systems.

“We are faced with different realities. We understand forests better now. We certainly need a new policy framework.” **FIN**



# Iwahig Prison Farm to wipe out illegal logging in its reservation

Published May 12, 2021, 12:16 PM by [Jeffrey Damicog](#)



Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm

Officials of the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm (IPPF) have vowed to put an end to illegal cutting of trees in its reservation in Palawan.

In a press statement, IPPF said it stepped up its drive against illegal logging after its personnel discovered last Saturday, May 8, two charcoal kilns and between 30 to 50 cut logs in the area near the Santa Lucia Sub-Colony (SLSC).

"IPPF Superintendent Raul Levita is now formulating enhanced security measures to bring down and apprehend such violators once and for all," it said.

It said the incidents of illegal logging activities were reported by concerned citizens who said they "have been hearing sounds of chainsaws coming from SLSC from early evening till dawn on several occasions,"

It said that when personnel conducted an ocular inspection, "fences and barricades previously installed by the IPPF, to hinder intruders from coming in, had been dismantled by these illegal loggers and charcoal makers."

Last April 19, IPPF's Quick Response Team (QRT) discovered in an area near SLSC at least 20 persons, claiming to be members of the Samahan ng Magsasaka, who have been "building huts, cutting small trees, and subdividing the land by putting up temporary fences and claiming the said portion of land without proper documentations or coordination with the IPPF."

"The QRT immediately asked them to stop the illegal activity and requested them to go home and never to return until they can show legal documents to justify their claims," the IPPF said.

It said that based on the inspection done by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), "more or less two hectares of land had been destroyed/deforested."

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/05/12/iwahig-prison-farm-to-wipe-out-illegal-logging-in-its-reservation/>

# De Lima seeks Senate probe on mining in Zambales allegedly linked to China's construction in WPS

By HANA BORDEY, GMA News Published May 12, 2021 3:50pm



Senator Leila de Lima has filed a resolution seeking a Senate investigation into the mining activities in Zambales which was allegedly linked in China's reclamation projects in the West Philippine Sea.

The detained lawmaker filed Senate Resolution 720 to look into the alleged illegal mining operations in Candelaria, Zambales as well as the systemic review of pending and on-going large-scale mining projects in the country.

De Lima highlighted the need to check these mining operations' compliance with environmental laws, regulations, guidelines, and procedures.

She said there is an urgent need to conduct a systematic review of existing policies and legislation pertaining to mining and determine a policy direction that will not only protect human rights and preserve the environment but also protect Philippine sovereignty as well.

"There is also a need to verify the serious allegations that the materials being extracted in various mining and dredging projects are indeed being used to construct and fortify illegal Chinese infrastructure projects in the WPS," she added.

In her statement, she cited a petition paper initiated by non-government organization Save Candelaria Zambales Movement Inc., which claimed that a certain Yinglong Steel Corporation has been doing mining operations in the said municipality.

The petition claimed that Yinglong has been cutting trees, constructing access roads, building facilities such as bunkhouses, and using heavy equipment without necessary permits, as observed by local officials in Candelaria after several ocular inspections on the site.

The petitioners also surmised that the materials are illegally mined and are used for the reclamation activities of China in WPS.



This claim was raised by other environmental groups in several dredging and mining activities across the country, De Lima said.

Moreover, the senator said the utilization of the natural resources and the implementation of public projects should be in compliance with existing laws and in pursuit of national interests.

"The exigency of raising funds for the government's budget deficit and response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic should never be an excuse to open the 'floodgates' of unregulated and illegal mining that destructs the environment and the future of our younger generations," she said.

"The enforcement of existing mining laws and policies should be ensured and the full extent of these laws must be upheld, including penalizing violators of these laws considering the irreparable destruction of illegal mining activities brings to our environment, culture and society," she added.

The lawmaker recalled President Rodrigo Duterte's recent lifting of the nine-year ban on granting new mining agreements to maximize government revenues and stir economic growth which was stipulated under Executive Order 130.

Last March, De Lima also filed a resolution which seeks a Senate inquiry on the Cagayan Offshore Magnetite Mining Project due to the alleged negative environmental impacts to local communities.

De Lima, during her time as Justice secretary, has created a task force headed by the National Bureau of Investigation, which seeks to cut the illegal black sand mining operations in Cagayan and Ilocos Sur.—AOL, GMA News





# Baseco beach 'no swimming zone' pa!

On May 12, 2021



SARADO parin sa publiko ang Baseco beach sa Maynila.

Ayon kay Police Lt. Philip Fontecha, Police Community Precinct 13 commander, bawal pang maligo ang mga residente sa naturang beach kahit summer na.

Hangga't wala aniyang utos si Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, mananatiling bawal ang paliligo sa Baseco beach.

Gayunman, sinabi ni Fontecha na pinapayagan naman ng kanilang hanay ang mga residente na mag-jogging o walking sa baybaying dagat sa umaga at hapon.

May mga pagkakataon, aniya, na may mga bata ang hindi maiwasan na maglublob sa dagat dahil sa mainit na panahon.

May ilang residente narin ang nahuli dahil naligo sa Baseco beach.

Dinadala aniya sa presinto ang mga nahuhuli, pinapangaralan lang at pinapakawalan din.

(Jocelyn Domenden)

Source: [https://www.policefilestonite.net/2021/05/12/baseco-beach-no-swimming-zone-pa/?fbclid=IwAR2PZ\\_zOzrZC0FqwATmYs4DP0I3dMRPpHx0OdKSeEJFMNdvsqnM686Yvdc](https://www.policefilestonite.net/2021/05/12/baseco-beach-no-swimming-zone-pa/?fbclid=IwAR2PZ_zOzrZC0FqwATmYs4DP0I3dMRPpHx0OdKSeEJFMNdvsqnM686Yvdc)



# Baseco Beach, bantay sarado na ng mga awtoridad

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) -May. 12, 2021 at 11:13am



Bantay sarado ngayon ng tauhan ng Manila Police District (MPD), barangay at Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) ang Baseco Beach sa Port Area sa lungsod ng Maynila.

Ito'y para maiwasan ang pagdagsa ng mga tao sa nasabing lugar at masunod ang panuntunan hinggil sa health and safety protocols lalo na ngayong hindi pa natatapos ang COVID-19 pandemic.

Ayon kay Brgy. 649 Chairman Diana Espinosa, sinusunod lang din nila ang kautusan ng MMDA na panatilihing sarado ang Baseco Beach kahit sa mga residente na nakatira malapit dito.

Nagtalaga na rin ng regular na bantay na pulis sa lugar si MPD Station 13 Chief Police Lt. Colonel Robert Domingo dahil may ilang pasaway pa rin ang lumalangoy.

Ilang beses na rin nagrereklamo ang barangay dahil ang ilang residente sa kanila ay pumapalag pa kapag sinisita ng mga tanod kaya't malaki ang kanilang pasasalamat na may mga pulis nang naka-assign dito.

Ang mga tauhan naman ng Coast Guard ay nag-iikot sa dalampasigan ng Baseco Beach upang masiguro na walang makalulusot na residente para maligo.

Nabatid na ayon sa kapitan ng barangay na tuwing buwan Abril at Mayo bago tumama ang pandemya ay umaabot ng hanggang 10, 000 ang mga taong nagtutungo sa dalampasigan ng Baseco kada araw para makapaligo sa Manila Bay.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/baseco-beach-bantay-sarado-na-ng-mga-awtoridad/?fbclid=IwAR2fF7sfw4ozmbaJU-JKfFF3zqk3APGcx3A0gXA8DGJt-GDD4xCHY4WZDEo>





# DOF welcomes UK support on PH's single-use plastics ban

May 12, 2021, 1:13 pm



Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III

**MANILA** – Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III has welcomed the support offered by the United Kingdom (UK) to the Climate Change Commission's (CCC) advocacy on banning single-use plastics, along with the UK's continuing strong partnership with the Philippines on accelerating both infrastructure development and financial inclusion.

In a recent virtual meeting with British Ambassador Daniel Pruce, Dominguez said the Philippines would appreciate UK's offer of technical assistance and support in effectively communicating to the public the importance and long-term benefits to the economy of banning single-use plastics.

He cited the need to raise public awareness on the dire effects of the climate crisis, and how every Filipino can play a key role in mitigating these by explaining to them how eco-friendly initiatives such as banning single-use plastics will benefit them and future generations over the long term.

Pruce said the UK is ready to assist the Philippines in preparing for its contributions to the discussions in the 26th United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), which could encompass a broad range of issues such as green finance, energy transitions and climate crisis resilience and adaptation strategies.

The COP26, which the UK is chairing this year, will be held in Glasgow, Scotland this November. It brings together signatory-parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Assistant Secretary Paola Alvarez, the point person of the Department of Finance (DOF) on climate crisis concerns, said during the meeting with Pruce that discussions are underway with the British Embassy on engaging with renewable energy (RE) investors to determine from them the possible Philippine policy gaps that need to be addressed to encourage the entry of RE investments to the country.

Alvarez said these discussions will be held with representatives from the DOF, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and the Department of Energy (DOE).

She underscored the urgency of attracting more RE investments into the country given the government's recent decision to impose a moratorium on new coal-fired power plants.

During the meeting, Dominguez also briefly discussed the UK's commitment to implement the first phase of its Iconic Bridges Project for Sustainable Socioeconomic Development in Cagayan province.

Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan, the UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency and Minister of State (Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth) later met with Dominguez to discuss climate crisis-related concerns, particularly on sharing UK's expertise in pushing Philippine legislation on plastics use reduction.

Dominguez committed the Philippines' participation in the UK-led Adaptation Action Coalition, which will act as a forum for developed and developing economies to share knowledge and best practices on local, regional, and global solutions to deal with the climate crisis.





The Coalition is in response to the UN Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience and aims to turn the commitments secured from this call to action into on-the-ground support for climate crisis-vulnerable communities.

Dominguez also separately met with Alok Sharma, the president of the COP26 and member of the UK Parliament, to further explore areas of cooperation between the Philippines and the UK on raising the awareness of Filipinos over the urgency of climate action, and in fine-tuning the legislative measure that aims to ban single-use plastics.

They also briefly discussed how a "green industrial revolution" can give rise to new industries and create more jobs while effectively cutting carbon emissions. *(PR)*



## Sea turtle's carcass found in Dauis, Bohol



Photo from Bohol Environmental Management Office

May 12, 2021

RESIDENTS of Barangay San Isidro in Dauis, Bohol found a carcass of a leatherback sea turtle on Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

The Bohol Environmental Management Office (Bemo), which sent a team of veterinarians to inspect and perform necropsy of the carcass, said the juvenile female leatherback sea turtle was 140 centimeters (cm) long and 100 cm wide.

It was already in the state of advanced decomposition, Bemo added.

Bemo also said that during the necropsy, the team of veterinarians found nylons in the sea turtle's large intestines.

The sea turtle was buried in the village's beach area. (WBS)



CDN Digital 16h · 🌐

LOOK: Ka-luoy sa sea turtle.

Residents of San Isidro, Dauis in Bohol on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, discovered a carcass of female Leatherback Sea Turtle.

Upon inspection, environment authorities found nylons in the large intestine of the sea animal. | BEMO via [Inquirer.net](http://Inquirer.net)



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# Climate Reality leaders laud ADB plan to stop funding coal projects

By Ma. Alaine P. AllaniguePublished on May 12, 2021



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

QUEZON CITY, May 12 (PIA) -- Climate Reality leaders working on the development and deployment of energy in the country have expressed support to the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) plan to stop funding any coal-related projects and decommission coal-fired power plants in the Asia Pacific Region.

This plan was conveyed in the draft policy paper, entitled, "Supporting Low Carbon Transition in Asia and the Pacific," which was released on the ADB website for public consultation. The said paper will be submitted to the ADB's Board of Directors for consideration by October 2021.

Climate Reality Leader Sara Ahmed said that it is great to see that the ADB is finally following the global trend of clean energy transition. "Capital markets are shifting decisively towards cleaner investments. Over 145 globally significant financial institutions have coal exclusion policies and over 50 globally significant financial institutions are including oil and gas," she noted.

Ahmed is an advisor to the Vulnerable Twenty (V20) Group of Ministers of Finance of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a dedicated cooperation initiative of economies systemically vulnerable to climate change, and the founder of the Financial Futures Center which aims to support climate prosperity in vulnerable developing countries.

"Considering the deflationary price trajectory of renewable electricity generation and storage options, it is therefore prudent for the ADB to finance the use of modernized technologies in a way that can take advantage of improved pricing, reliability, and reduced exposure to inflationary pressures and international volatility," she added.

Climate Reality Leader Johnny Altomonte, meanwhile, said that the implementation of the draft policy will serve as a big market indicator in the region, signaling that a sustainable energy transition is on its way in the Philippines.

Altomonte is the Chief Executive Officer of Verne Energy Solutions, an organization that provides clean and green energy solutions to private firms and city governments in the country.

"Sustainable energy has not only become the environmental and social choice but the prudent financial one as well. However, incumbent support for fossil fuels has insofar prevented renewable deployment in Asia. Given this, we welcome and support ADB's draft energy policy that finally brings an end to financing coal and upstream oil and gas," Altomonte said.





Echoing Altomonte's optimism, Climate Reality Leader Christianne Santos said that the ADB's withdrawal of support to coal is "one great step forward in our collective efforts to fight the climate crisis."

Santos is currently the Social Transformation Manager at WeGen Distributed Philippines, a next-generation energy tech business that uses rapidly advancing renewable energy, battery storage, and software technologies to develop energy solutions for a range of applications.

"As the Philippines started to open its doors for a more competitive renewable energy mix, ADB's recent announcement clearly provides for better leverage to enhance the country's renewable energy advances, including that of the local market players," Santos said.

Santos added that the ADB's decision to stop funding coal projects also affirms existing policies against extractive industries that are not only counter-productive to economic development but also harmful to the health of communities.

The Climate Reality Project (TCRP) Philippines joined its roster of Climate Reality Leaders in welcoming ADB's draft energy policy plan. It noted, however, that the plan indicates that the multilateral bank will continue to finance natural gas projects under certain conditions.

"The draft energy policy could still be improved by setting a specific time for its fossil fuel exit strategy, including natural gas projects. We must remember that all fossil fuels and natural gas are not sustainable. Banning coal is not enough. Nevertheless, we remain optimistic that the ADB will do right by the people by helping accelerate the global transition to a clean energy system," Nazrin Castro, Branch Manager of TCRP Philippines, said.

To recall, the Climate Reality Project Philippines is a collaborative, diverse, and multi-disciplinary community of Pinoy Climate Reality Leaders innovating to find solutions to the climate crisis through skills-sharing, value-formation, and capacity-building activities; mobilization; and institutionalization of nation-building efforts towards an inclusive, empowered, and transformed Philippines. (PIA NCR)



# Dozens of cities lack climate adaptation plan

By [Agence France-Presse](#) May 13, 2021

**STOCKHOLM:** Hundreds of cities have no climate adaptation plans in place despite rising threats like floods, heatwaves and pollution, according to a report on Wednesday that said this could put 400 million people at risk across the world.

Fast-expanding urban areas are home to more than half the population of the planet and are increasingly exposed to climate-fueled disasters, economic shocks and health crises as the world warms, with fears that vulnerable communities will be hardest hit.

CDP, a global nonprofit that collects data disclosed by companies, cities, states and regions on environmental impact, analyzed over 800 global cities and found that 43 percent do not yet have a plan to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

With more and more people drawn to live in urban areas, CDP estimated that by 2030 around 400 million people will be living in poorly prepared cities.

“The urgent need to act and have adaptation measures in place to keep the citizens safe is increasing together with (the growing urban population),” said Mirjam Wolfrum, CDP’s policy director for Europe.

She said 93 percent of the cities included in the report were facing “significant threats” while 60 percent highlighted “substantive” water security issues.

The top five hazards are flash and surface flooding — including from rising sea levels — heat waves, rainstorms, extreme hot days and droughts, she said, adding that air pollution is also a major health concern.

Ongoing adaptation strategies in the municipalities that reported to CDP include tree planting (20 percent), flood mapping (18 percent) and developing crisis management plans like evacuation systems (14 percent).

With cities responsible for some 70 percent of global emissions, the report said urban centers are also looking at schemes like increasing the use of renewable energy and improving green spaces, transport infrastructure and recycling.

Under the 2015 Paris climate deal, countries agreed to limit global heating to 2 degrees Celsius, with a less damaging target of 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The years since have been among the hottest on record, while severe storms, floods and wildfires have affected communities across the planet. But in some cases cities are also moving faster and setting more ambitious climate targets than national governments, according to CDP.

The report highlighted Santa Fe County in the United States, Greater Manchester in the United Kingdom and Penampang in Malaysia — the first city in Southeast Asia to report a net zero ambition.

There has also been a marked increase in cities taking part in the CDP’s annual report, with 812 cities disclosing in 2020, compared to just 48 in the first study in 2011.

Wolfrum said this could be down to the fact that the changes to the climate are increasingly visible. “People in the city council, they can now feel this and see this,” she said.

“They are already paying billions in climate hazards and they see this as increasing.”

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/05/13/news/world/dozens-of-cities-lack-climate-adaptation-plan/872698/>



# 2021, "it's now or never" laban sa global warming

On May 12, 2021



**INSPIRASYON SA BUHAY:** "...Kung hindi kayo makikinig sa tinig ng Diyos, at hindi na kayo susunod sa Kaniyang mga utos, mangyayari sa inyo ang mga sumpang ito... padadalhan niya kayo ng matinding init at tagtuyot. Hindi kayo titigilan ng mga ito hanggang sa kayo ay malipol. Ipagkakit sa inyo ang ulan at dahil dito, magiging parang bakal ang lupa dahil sa pagkatigang..." (Deuteronomio 28:22-23, Ang Tanging Daan Bibliya).

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2021, TAON NG TOTOHANANG PAGLABAN SA GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE SA MUNDO: It is now or never. Ngayon na, o hindi na kahit kailan pa man. Ito ang nagkakaisang pahayag ng mga dalubhasa sa global warming and climate change na nagpulong ngayong linggong ito, sa paanyaya ng Nobel Foundation at ng iba pang tinaguriang mga major science academies o mga grupong ang mga pagkilos ay nakatuon sa siyensiya.

Layunin ng pulong na itulak na ng puspusan ang pandaigdigang pagpapatigil sa pag-iinit ng temperatura ng mundo, umpisa ngayong 2021. Ayon mga dalubhasang ito, kasama si US Special Presidential Ambassador on climate issues John Kerry, paparating na ang daigdig sa tinatawag na "point of no return", o oras, na pag nakalipas ng walang nangyayari, hindi na pupuwedeng mapagpalabanan pa ang literal na pagkakasunog ng lahat sa mundo dahil sa mainit na panahon.

Sa ulat na lumabas ngayong umaga lamang ng Abril 28, 2021, lumilitaw na ngayong 2021 ang "tipping point" para sa lahat ng mga pagkilos upang mapatigil ng totohanan ang pag-iinit ng panahon at ng kalikasan, sa lahat ng dako. Mula ito sa dagdag na pahayag ng isa pang US global warming and climate change advocate, ang dating US Vice President, Al Gore.

Sinabi ni Gore, sa kaniyang pagsasalita sa Virtual Summit ng Nobel Foundation, na hawak na ng mga dalubhasa at mga pinuno ng malalaking bansa ang mga plano sa mabisang pagbaka sa mainit na mundo. Ang kailangan na lamang nila ay ang pagkakaroon ng iisang isip, upang isakatuparan ang nasabing mga plano.

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NGAYONG 2021, "IT IS NOW OR NEVER" NA ANG PAGLABAN SA PAPANIT NA TEMPERATURA NG DAIGDIG: Ang problema lamang, ayon naman sa mga pantas sa siyensiya na dumalo din sa Virtual summit ng nobel foundation, sobrang bagal ng mga tugon ng mga malalaking bansa sa mga plano. Kung susunod kasi sila ng totohanan sa mga planong ito, babagal lalo ang kanilang mga ekonomiya na pinabagal o pinabagsak na ng todo sa nakalipas na isang taon ng Covid 19 pandemic, at magiging dahilan ito ng kawalan ng trabaho at taggutom ng maraming mga tao.

Ito ang isa sa mga dahilan kung bakit, sa panahon ng dating Pangulong Donald Trump ng Amerika, umalis ang mga puti sa Paris Conference on Climate Change, partikular sa kasunduang nilagdaan na ng Estados Unidos at ng iba pang mga tinatawag na First World countries upang bawasan ang paggamit ng US ng langis at petrolyo sa mga negosyo nito. Ipinahayag ni Trump na magiging masama ang epekto ng pagsunod ng US sa Paris Climate Change Agreement dahil titigil naman ang mga negosyo ng mga Amerikano na nakadepende sa petrolyo o langis, na pag ginamit ay nagdudulot ng matinding carbon air pollution.



Tinawag ng Nobel Foundation ang Virtual Summit nito ngayong linggong ito, upang ihanda ang mga pinuno ng mga bansa na inaanyayahang dumalo ni US President Joe Biden sa kaniyang kauna-unahang climate change initiative. Ang Nobel Foundation ay ang organisasyong nagbibigay ng taunang Nobel Peace Prize sa mga tao na malaki ang nagawang kontribusyon para sa kaligtasan at kagalingan ng daigdig sa maraming larangan.

Ang mga Amerikanong si John Kerry at si Al Gore ay kilalang nagsusulong ng pagpapatigil ng paggamit ng langis at petrolyo sa pagpapatakbo ng negosyo. Isinasandal ng dalawang ito ang kanilang panawagan laban sa langis at petrolyo sa mga negosyo sa US, at sa buong mundo na rin sa katotohanang ito lamang ang makakapigil sa patuloy na pag-iinit ng kapaligiran na magiging dahilan ng wakas ng sandaigdigan.

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GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE NA WAWASAK SA DAIGDIG, NAUNA NG IBINABALA LIBONG TAON NA ANG NAKARARAAN: Sa pananaw naman ng Filipino think thank group na Dimensions And Solutions, Onc., lihis din ang mga panawagang ito nina Kerry, Al Gore, Nobel Foundation, at maging ni US President Biden, at ng maraming iba pang concerned world leaders, sa ikalulutas ng suliranin ng global warming and climate change.

Walang mangyayari sa kanilang mga panukalang itigil na ng malalaking bansa ang paggamit ng langis o petrolyo upang mapatakbo ang kanilang mga factories at mga industrial companies, dahil mangangahulugan din naman ng kamatayan ng kani-kanilang mga ekonomiya, ayon sa think tank group.

Walang susunod sa mga panukalang ito, kahit na doon mismo sa mga bansa ng mga nagpapanukala, dagdag pa ng Dimensions And Solutions, Onc. Kung nais talaga ng mga world leaders na maghanap ng totooanang solusyon sa papa-init na papa-init na temperatura sa daigdig (dahilan upang magkaroon ng mga mapanira at nakamamatay na mga kalamidad gaya ng mga malalakas na bagyo o tagtuyot sa lahat ng dako), kailangan nilang unawain muna na may anggulong espirituwal ang nasabing isyu ng global warming and climate change.

Sabi ng Dimensions And Solutions, Inc., kailangan unawain ng mga dalubhasa sa daigdig na matagal ng isinulat ang pagdating ng global warming, kasama ng mga pinsala at kamatayang dulot ng mga ito, ayon sa think tank. Magkaganunman, sabi ng pinuno nitong si Professor Noi T Albo, isinulat na din naman ang mga solusyon sa problema. Kailangan na lamang magbasa ng mga world leaders ng aklat na naglalaman ng mga babalang ito, sabi pa ni Professor Albo.

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REAKSIYON? TANONG: Cellphone: 0947 553 4855. Email: batasmauricio@yahoo.com.

Source: [https://www.policefilestonite.net/2021/05/12/2021-its-now-or-never-laban-sa-global-warming/?fbclid=IwAR38KPOFgTPSO3\\_1yPAqimGIFEA9OnGpEXZrtgN8E3TX3NnBQIv11IKFfKM](https://www.policefilestonite.net/2021/05/12/2021-its-now-or-never-laban-sa-global-warming/?fbclid=IwAR38KPOFgTPSO3_1yPAqimGIFEA9OnGpEXZrtgN8E3TX3NnBQIv11IKFfKM)





## The 'infinite' plastic recycling plant

(Image credit: Alamy)



By Katherine Latham 12th May 2021

The way we normally recycle plastics is a downward spiral of waste and degraded materials, but there is another option – turning plastic back into the oil it was made from.

There is one man-made material that you can find in the earth, the air and in the deepest ocean trenches. It is so durable that the majority of what has been created is still present in our ecosystem. Having made its way into the food chain, it permeates our bodies, flowing from our blood into our organs, even finding its way into the human placenta.

It is of course plastic, and this durability is also what makes the material so useful. Cables stretching across ocean floors, water pipes under the ground and packaging that keeps food fresh all rely on this property.

Efficiently recycling plastic by conventional means is notoriously difficult, and only 9% of all plastic ever made has been recycled into new plastics. But what if there was a way to turn plastic back into the stuff it was made from? The "next grand challenge" for polymer chemistry – the field responsible for the creation of plastics – is learning to undo the process by turning plastics back into oil.

*Instead of a system where some plastics are rejected because they are the wrong colour or made of composites, chemical recycling could see all types of plastic fed into an "infinite" recycling system*

This process – known as chemical recycling – has been explored as a viable alternative to conventional recycling for decades. So far, the stumbling block has been the large amount of energy it requires. This, combined with the volatile price of crude oil sometimes makes it cheaper to produce new plastic products than to recycle existing plastic.



*Some plastics that could be recycled end up in landfill because of poor facilities, or confusion about what is and isn't recyclable (Credit: Alamy)*



**Every year, more than 380 million tonnes of plastic is produced** worldwide. **That's about the same as 2,700,000 blue whales** – more than 100 times the weight of the **entire blue whale population**. Just 16% of **plastic waste is recycled to make new plastics**, while 40% is sent to landfill, 25% to incineration and 19% is dumped.

Much of the plastic that could be recycled – such as polyethylene terephthalate (PET), which is used for bottles and other packaging – ends up in landfill. This is often due to **confusion about kerbside recycling or contamination with food or other types of waste**.

Other plastics – **such as salad bags and other food containers** – find their way to landfill because they are made up of a combination of different plastics that can't be easily split apart in a recycling plant. Litter dropped in the street and lightweight plastics left in landfill sites or **illegally dumped can be carried by the wind or washed into rivers by the rain**, ending up in the ocean.

Chemical recycling is an attempt to recycle the unrecyclable. Instead of a system where some plastics are rejected because they are the wrong colour or made of composites, chemical recycling could see all types of plastic fed into an "infinite" recycling system that unmake plastics back into oil, so they can then be used to make plastic again.

The way plastic is currently recycled is more of a downward spiral than an infinite loop. Plastics are usually recycled mechanically: they are sorted, cleaned, shredded, melted and remoulded. Each time plastic is recycled this way, its quality is degraded. When the plastic is melted, **the polymer chains are partially broken down**, decreasing its tensile strength and viscosity, making it harder to process. The new, lower grade plastic **often becomes unsuitable for use in food packaging** and most plastic **can be recycled a very limited number of times** before it is so degraded it becomes unusable.

The emerging industry of chemical recycling aims to avoid this problem by breaking plastic down into its chemical building blocks, which can then be used for fuels or to reincarnate new plastics.

*In the UK, Mura Technology has begun construction of the world's first commercial-scale plant able to recycle all kinds of plastic*

The most versatile version of chemical recycling is "**feedstock recycling**". Also known as thermal conversion, feedstock recycling is any process that breaks polymers down into simpler molecules using heat.

The process is fairly simple – take a plastic drinks bottle. You put it out with your recycling for collection. It is taken, along with all the other waste, to a sorting facility. There, the rubbish is sorted, either mechanically or by hand, into different kinds of materials and **different kinds of plastics**.

Your bottle is washed, shredded and packed into a bale ready for transportation to the recycling centre – so far, the same as the conventional process. Then comes the chemical recycling: the plastic that formerly made up your bottle could be taken to a pyrolysis centre where it is melted down. Next it is fed into the pyrolysis reactor where it is heated to extreme temperatures. This process turns the plastic into a gas which is then cooled to condense into **an oil-like liquid**, and finally distilled into fractions that can be put to different purposes.

Chemical recycling techniques are being trialled across the world. UK-based Recycling Technologies has developed a pyrolysis machine that turns hard-to-recycle plastic such as films, bags and laminated plastics into Plaxx. This liquid hydrocarbon feedstock can be used to make new virgin quality plastic. **The first commercial-scale unit was installed in Perth in Scotland in 2020.**



*Chemical recycling begins the same way as ordinary mechanical recycling, with collecting and crushing plastics and taking them to a plant (Credit: Alamy)*

The firm Plastic Energy has two commercial-scale pyrolysis plants in Spain and plans to expand into France, the Netherlands **and the UK**. These plants transform hard-to-recycle plastic waste, such as confectionery wrappers, dry pet food pouches and breakfast cereal bags into substances called "tacoil". This feedstock can be used to make food-grade plastics.

In the US, the chemical company **Ineos has become the first to use a technique called depolymerisation on a commercial scale** to produce recycled polyethylene, which goes into carrier bags and shrink film. Ineos also has plans to build several new pyrolysis recycling plants.

In the UK, Mura Technology has begun construction of the world's first commercial-scale plant able to recycle *all* kinds of plastic. The plant can handle mixed plastic, coloured plastic, plastic of all composites, all stages of decay, even plastic contaminated with food or other kinds of waste.

Mura's "hydrothermal" technique is a type of feedstock recycling using water inside the reactor chamber to spread heat evenly throughout. Heated to extreme temperatures but pressurised to prevent evaporation, water becomes "supercritical" – not a solid, liquid, nor gas. It is this use of supercritical water, avoiding the need to heat the chambers from the outside, that Mura says makes the technique inherently scalable.

"If you heat the reactor from the outside, keeping an even temperature distribution is really hard. The bigger you go the harder it gets. It's a bit like cooking," explained Mura's chief executive, Steve Mahon. "It's hard to fry a big steak all the way through but if you boil it, it's easy to make sure it's cooked evenly all the way through."



*A pilot plant has shown that the use of very hot, supercritical water can help chemical recycling scale-up to useful levels (Credit: Licella)*

The plastic waste arrives on site in bales – contaminated, multi-layer plastic such as flexible films and rigid trays that would otherwise have gone to incineration or **energy-from-waste plants**. The bales are fed into the front-end sorting facility to remove any inorganic contaminants such as glass, metal or grit. Organic contaminants such as food residue or soil are able to pass through the process. The plastic is then shredded and cleaned, before being mixed with supercritical water.

Once this high-pressure system is depressurised and the waste exits the reactors, the majority of liquid flashes off as vapour. This vapour is cooled in a distillation column and the condensed liquids are separated on a boiling range to produce four hydrocarbon liquids and oils: naphtha, distillate gas oil, heavy gas oil and heavy wax residue, akin to bitumen. These products are then shipped to the petrochemical industry.





As with other feedstock techniques, there is no down-cycling as the polymer bonds can be formed anew, meaning the plastics can be infinitely recycled. With a conversion rate of more than 99%, nearly all the plastic turns into a useful product.

Mahon said: "The hydrocarbon element of the feedstock will be converted into new, stable hydrocarbon products for use in the manufacture of new plastics and other chemicals." Even the "fillers" used in some plastics – such as chalk, colourants and plasticisers – aren't a problem. "These drop into our heaviest hydrocarbon product, heavy wax residue, which is a bitumen-type binder for use in the construction industry."

The hot, excess gases generated during the process will be used to heat the water, increasing its energy efficiency, and the plant will be powered by 40% renewable energy. "We want to use as much renewable energy as possible and will be seeking, wherever practical, to aim for 100%," says Mahon.

Mura's Teesside plant, due for completion in 2022, aims to process 80,000 tonnes of previously unrecyclable plastic waste every year, as a blueprint for a global rollout, with sites planned in Germany and the US. By 2025, the company plans to provide one million tonnes of recycling capacity in operation or development globally.

"[Our] recycling of waste plastic into virgin-equivalent feedstocks provides the ingredients to create 100% recycled plastics with no limit to the number of times the same material can be recycled – decoupling plastic production from fossil resource and entering plastic into a circular economy," says Mahon.

Scientists such as Sharon George, senior lecturer in environmental science at Keele University, have welcomed Mura's development. "This overcomes the quality challenge by 'unmaking' the plastic polymer to give us the raw chemical building blocks to start again," says George. "This is true circular recycling."



*The plant that is being constructed at Teesside in the UK aims to process 80,000 tonnes of plastic waste every year (Credit: Mura)*

Yet in the past 30 years, chemical recycling has shown **serious limits**. It is energy-intensive, has faced technical challenges and proved difficult to scale up to industrial levels.

In 2020, **a report by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (Gaia)**, a group of organisations and individuals who promote social movements to reduce waste and pollution, concluded that chemical recycling is polluting, energy intensive and prone to technical failures. The report concluded that chemical recycling was not a viable solution to the plastic problem, especially at the pace and scale needed.

Additionally, if the end product of chemical recycling is an oil used for fuel then the process does not reduce the need for virgin plastic, and burning such fuels would release greenhouse gases just as ordinary fossil fuels do.

"Environmental NGOs are keeping a close eye on emerging recycling methods," says Paula Chin, sustainable materials specialist at the conservation organisation WWF. "These technologies are in their infancy and they are by no means the silver bullet solution to the plastic waste problem. We should focus on increasing resource efficiency as a way to minimise waste through greater reuse, refill and repair systems – not relying on recycling to be the saviour."





But Mura argues that their plant will fill a much-needed niche. "[Chemical] recycling is a new sector, but the scale at which it is developing, specifically for Mura, shows both the urgent need for new technology to tackle the rising problem of plastic waste and environmental leakage, and an opportunity to recycle a valuable ready-resource, which is currently going to waste," Mahon says.

Mura's process aims to complement existing mechanical processes and infrastructure, not compete with them, recycling materials that would otherwise go to landfill, incineration or into the environment. All the waste plastic they process will be made new plastics or other materials, none will be burnt for fuel.



*Many chemical recycling plants in the past have gone bust, but Mura believes the supercritical water technique it uses will make it economically viable (Credit: Mura)*

Mura hopes its use of supercritical water for efficient heat transfer will allow them to scale-up to industrial levels, lowering energy use and costs. It could be a crucial factor for success where others have failed.

One of the main reasons chemical recycling has failed to take off so far has been **financial collapse**. In a 2017 report, Gaia noted multiple projects that had failed, including the Thermoste facility in Germany which lost more than \$500m (£350m) over five years, the UK's Interserve which lost £70m (\$100m) on various chemical recycling projects, and many other companies that faced bankruptcy.

Financial difficulty is something that has held back not just chemical recycling but all kinds of plastic recycling. "The economics do not stack up. Collecting, sorting and recycling packaging is simply more expensive than producing virgin packaging," says Sara Wingstrand, New Plastics Economy Project Manager at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

Wingstrand says the only path to "dedicated, ongoing and sufficient funding at scale" for recycling is through mandatory, fee-based Extended Producer Responsibility schemes. These would see all industries that introduce plastic contributing funding to collect and process their packaging after its use. "Without them, it is very unlikely recycling of packaging will ever scale to the extent required," says Wingstrand.

But Mahon believes a system like Mura's is another way to shift the balance sheets in favour of plastic recycling by producing an oil that can be sold at a profit. Mura has recently announced partnerships with the plastic manufacturers Dow and Igus GmbH, and the construction firm KBR.

"The interesting thing here is that Mura can find value in plastics that aren't usually economically viable to recycle mechanically," says Taylor Uekert, researcher at the Cambridge Creative Circular Plastics Centre, University of Cambridge.

Even with the ability to unmake all types of plastic so they can be reused again, it is unlikely to make all of the problems with plastic pollution go away. With so much ending up in landfill and the environment, plastic will continue doing what it was made to do – endure.



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## Endangered porpoises newest attraction in Yangtze

By Xinhua May 13, 2021

**WUHAN:** A pod of the Yangtze finless porpoise has been seen spy-hopping above the silvery surface of the Yangtze River, China's longest river, attracting shutterbugs and nearby residents who want to catch a glimpse of these beautiful creatures.



*SMILING ANGEL* A Yangtze finless porpoise is seen at the Yichang section of the Yangtze River, central China's Hubei province, on May 11, 2021. First thought to be almost extinct a decade ago, more than 400 of such species were spotted in China's famed river three weeks ago. XINHUA PHOTO

The freshwater porpoise with no dorsal fin is native to China and has lived here for 25 million years.

They are the only freshwater subspecies of the finless porpoise family and pulse through the middle and lower main streams of the Yangtze River. With its mouth fixed in a permanent grin, the rotund finless porpoise is known in China as a "smiling angel."

"The finless porpoise we saw Monday afternoon here in Yichang might belong to one or two groups. The porpoise tend to chase after schools of fish, so the areas they appear in must be rich in fish and other aquatic resources," said Zou Li with the bureau of agriculture and rural affairs in the city of Yichang, central China's Hubei Province.

"Before 2015, only two to three finless porpoises had been spotted in the Yichang section, but scenes of the rare mammals popping out and gulping for air are becoming more common in recent years," said Zou.

"The fundamental reason for the increase in sightings is more plentiful fish stock in the whole Yichang section of the Yangtze River."

The population of the aquatic mammal experienced a sharp decrease over the past decades due to overfishing and excessive human activities.

The latest research on finless porpoise conducted by the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs in 2017 showed that there was a wild population of just 1,012 still navigating the twists and turns of the longest river in Asia, even fewer than the giant panda.

The annual decline of its population was 13.7 percent in the 2006-2012 period, while the drop slowed to 10 percent between 2012 and 2017.

"However, the species is still extremely endangered at present, and the country needs to enhance protection for Yangtze finless porpoises," said Yu Kangzhen, vice minister of agricultural and rural affairs, at the press conference of the 2017 survey, citing measures including regular inspections, promoting ex situ conservation and researching artificial breeding.

In January 2018, a fishing ban was implemented in 83 aquatic nature reserves across Hubei to restore the ecological environment and protect the endangered species in the Yangtze River basin.



To further preserve biodiversity along the river, China in January 2020 implemented a full fishing ban in 332 conservation areas in the Yangtze River basin. The move has later been expanded to a 10-year moratorium for the river's main streams and major tributaries from Jan. 1, 2021.

On Feb. 4, 2021, China revised its list of endangered wild animals, elevating the conservation of 65 types of wild animals, including the Yangtze finless porpoise, to the strictest level-one protection from second highest.





Employees rush out of their office after a magnitude-5.8 earthquake rocked Metro Manila and some parts of Luzon yesterday morning.

Edd Gumban

## Magnitude 5.8 quake rocks Metro Manila, Luzon

[Helen Flores](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 13, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — A magnitude 5.8 earthquake rocked several areas in Luzon, including Metro Manila, yesterday morning, state seismologists said.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries from the temblor, but it warned of possible aftershocks.

The quake occurred at 9:09 a.m., with its epicenter located 11 kilometers northwest of Abra de Ilog in Occidental Mindoro.

It was felt at Intensity 5 – classified as “strong” – in Lubang, Occidental Mindoro; Calamba in Laguna, and Calatagan and Calaca towns, both Batangas.

Intensity 4 – “moderately strong” – was felt in Malvar and Lemery, both in Batangas; Calapan in Oriental Mindoro; Mendez in Cavite; Limay in Bataan; Tagaytay in Cavite and Manila.

Intensity 3 or “weak” was felt in Agoncillo, Cuenca, Lipa and Talisay, all in Batangas; General Trias and Dasmariñas, both in Cavite; San Pedro in Laguna as well as in Mandaluyong, Makati, Muntinlupa, Pasay, Pasig and Quezon City.

Intensity 2 or “slightly felt” was recorded in Caloocan and Marikina as well as in Batangas City and Taysan, both in Batangas; Binangonan in Rizal; Cavite City in Cavite; Sta. Cruz in Laguna; Dolores, Lucena and Mulanay in Quezon and Olongapo in Zambales.

Intensity 1 or “scarcely perceptible” was registered in San Mateo, Rizal and San Francisco, Quezon.

Phivolcs said the quake had a depth of 106 km and was tectonic in origin.

### No damage, casualties

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) has not received any reports of damage or casualties from the earthquake.



Assessments at the local disaster risk reduction units are ongoing and the public is advised to expect aftershocks.

Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) police said it has not received any report of deaths and injuries from the earthquake. – **Michael Punongbayan, Emmanuel Tupas**



13 MAY 2021, THURSDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **COVID-19 NEWS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





Authorized persons outside of residence (APORs) line up at a bus station on May 11, 2021 in EDSA Monumento Caloocan where they are given a free ride on EDSA carousel buses.

The STAR/Michael Varcas

## Active COVID-19 cases hit 53,214 after Philippines logs 4,842 new infections

(Philstar.com) - May 12, 2021 - 4:00pm

MANILA, Philippines — Local health authorities on Wednesday recorded 4,842 additional coronavirus infections, bringing the national caseload to 1,118,359.

- Active cases: 53,214 or 4.8% of the total
- Recoveries: 8,312, pushing total to 1,046,431
- Deaths: 94, bringing total to 18,714

Five labs were not able to submit their data to the COVID-19 Document Repository System, the Department of Health said.

What's new today?

- Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said he will [recommend](#) strict travel restrictions on passengers arriving from the Middle East following the detection of cases of a coronavirus variant first identified in India.
- The country's Food and Drug Administration is already [looking](#) for applications said to be pending before its drug testing center after the government's anti-red tape body warned of possible charges for its alleged inaction, the drug regulator's chief said.
- Following the relief of both Caloocan City's Police Community Precinct 9 commander and the local barangay captain for "failing to effectively enforce minimum public health safety protocols," the Philippine National Police [reminded](#) its commanders to closely supervise their respective areas of responsibility to help curb a resurgence of COVID-19 cases

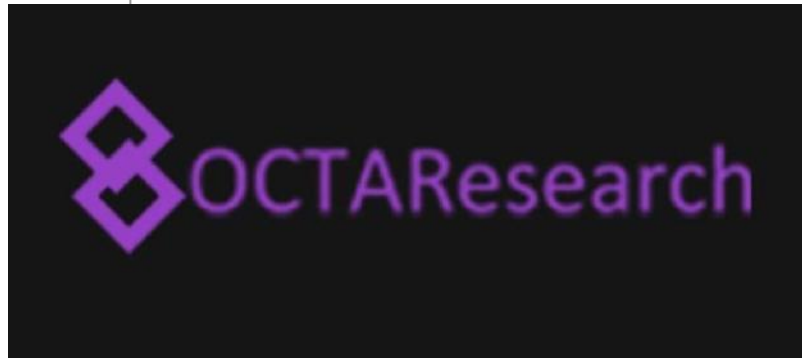
— **Bella Perez-Rubio with a report from Xave Gregorio**



# OCTA says Philippine COVID-19 cases down by 16%

By JOAHNA LEI CASILAO, GMA News

Published May 12, 2021 2:11pm



The number of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases reported daily in the Philippines from May 5 to 11 has dropped by 16% compared to the previous week, the OCTA Research Group announced Wednesday.

In its latest report, the group said the country has reported a 7-day average of 6,522 with a reproduction number of 0.81.

A reproduction number of 1.00 or higher is an indication of the continuous transmission of the virus.

According to the research team, "The most current 7-day average of daily average of new COVID-19 cases in the Philippines is 6,522, which is 16% lower compared to the previous week."

However, the OCTA group noted a surge in COVID-19 cases in Zamboanga, which topped the list of areas outside the National Capital Region with the highest number of infections.

OCTA data show that Zamboanga has reported a 47% increase in cases with an average of 151 new cases per day.

Meanwhile, Puerto Princesa recorded a 35% one-week growth rate with 60 cases daily, while Batangas City and Cagayan de Oro City also reported an increase in cases compared to the previous week.

Also, OCTA said the cities of Tuguegarao, Baguio, and Puerto Princesa had an average daily attack rate (ADAR) greater than 20 per 100,000.

Further, areas that report an ADAR higher than 10 per 100,000 is classified by the Health Department as high risk.

So far, the Philippines has reported a total of [1,113,547 confirmed COVID-19 cases](#), of which 1,038,175 have recovered, and 18,620 have died. — LBG, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/787184/philippines-reports-16-drop-in-covid-19-cases/story/>



Relatives wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE kit) embrace next to the body of a person who died due to the coronavirus before cremation at a crematorium in New Delhi on May 11, 2021.

AFP/Money Sharma

## World could have prevented COVID-19 catastrophe: pandemic panel

[Robin Millard](#) (Agence France-Presse) - May 12, 2021 - 9:00pm

GENEVA, Switzerland — The catastrophic scale of the COVID-19 pandemic could have been prevented, an independent global panel concluded Wednesday, but a "toxic cocktail" of dithering and poor coordination meant the warning signs went unheeded.

The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response said a series of bad decisions meant COVID-19 went on to kill at least 3.3 million people so far and devastate the global economy.

Institutions "failed to protect people" and science-denying leaders eroded public trust in health interventions, the IPPPR said in its long-awaited final report.

Early responses to the outbreak detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019 "lacked urgency", with February 2020 a costly "lost month" as countries failed to heed the alarm, said the panel.

To tackle the current pandemic, it called on the richest countries to donate a billion vaccine doses to the poorest.

And the panel also called on the world's wealthiest nations to fund new organisations dedicated to preparing for the next pandemic.

### 'Delay, hesitation and denial'

Requested by World Health Organization (WHO) member states last May, the report, "COVID-19: Make it the Last Pandemic", argued that the global alarm system needed overhauling to prevent a similar catastrophe.

"We have identified failures at every stage and we do believe that it could have been possible to prevent this pandemic," panel co-chair and former Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said.

"We cannot simply point to one individual who is ultimately responsible," she said.

The report said the emergence of COVID-19 was characterised by a mixture of "some early and rapid action, but also by delay, hesitation, and denial.

"Poor strategic choices, unwillingness to tackle inequalities and an uncoordinated system created a toxic cocktail which allowed the pandemic to turn into a catastrophic human crisis."



The threat of a pandemic had been overlooked and countries were woefully unprepared to deal with one, the report found.

#### Vaccine ultimatum

The panel said the WHO could have declared the situation a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) -- its highest level of alarm -- on January 22, 2020.

Instead, it waited eight more days before doing so.

Nevertheless, given countries' relative inaction, "we might still have ended up in the same place", said former New Zealand prime minister Helen Clark, the report's other chairwoman.

It was only in March after the WHO described it as a pandemic -- a term that is not officially part of its alert system -- that countries were jolted into action.

As for the initial outbreak, "there were clearly delays in China -- but there were delays everywhere", she added.

In the near term, the panel said rich, well-vaccinated countries should provide the 92 poorest territories in the Covax scheme with at least one billion vaccine doses by September 1, and more than two billion by mid-2022.

G7 industrialised nations should pay 60 percent of the \$19 billion (\$15 billion euros) required to fund vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics via the WHO's Access to Covid Tools Accelerator programme in 2021, it added.

Fellow G20 nations should provide the rest -- and Clark said there were positive signs emanating from the whole group.

The WHO and the World Trade Organization should also get major vaccine-producing countries and manufacturers to agree voluntary licensing and technology transfers for Covid-19 vaccines, the panel said.

"If actions do not occur within three months, a waiver of... intellectual property rights should come into force immediately."

#### Invest billions, save trillions

To tackle future outbreaks and pandemics, the panel called for a Global Health Threats Council made up of world leaders, plus a pandemic convention.

The G20 should also create an International Pandemic Financing Facility, able to spend \$5-10 billion a year on preparedness, with \$50 to \$100 billion ready to roll in the event of a crisis.

"Ultimately, investing billions in preparedness now will save trillions in the future, as the current pandemic has so clearly illustrated," Clark told reporters.

The panel also proposed an overhaul of the WHO to make it less cautious and give it more authority to send expert missions into countries immediately without waiting for their approval.

"This must be the last pandemic to cause such devastation to human life, societies and economies around the world," said Clark.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/world/2021/05/12/2097831/world-could-have-prevented-covid-19-catastrophe-pandemic-panel>



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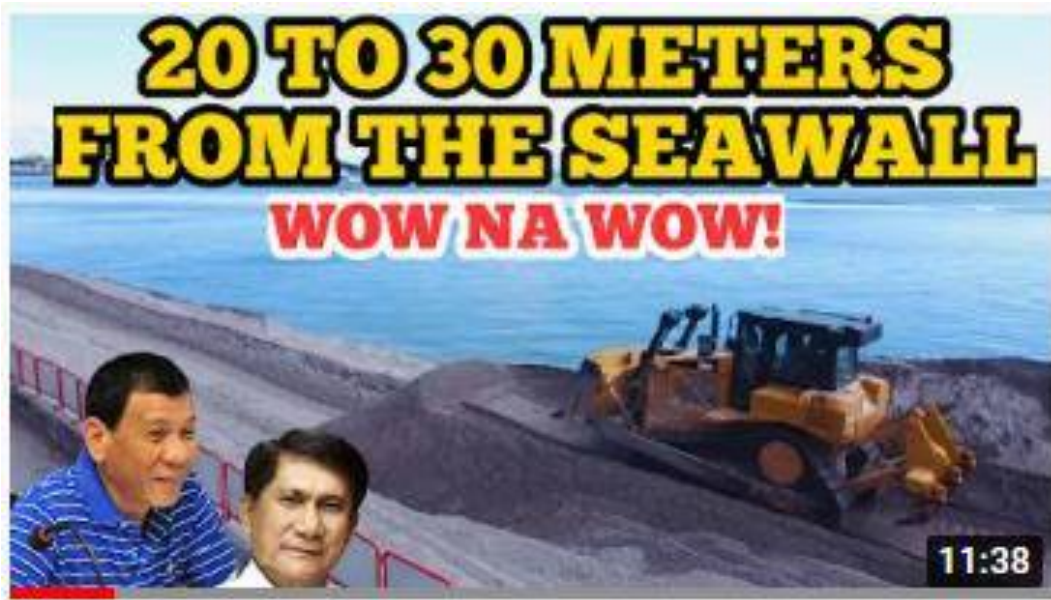
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