

20 DECEMBER 2020, SUNDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# Solid Waste Management plans ng 57 LGUs, inaprubahan na ng National Solid Waste Management Commission

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Dec. 19, 2020 at 11:28am



Inaprubahan na ng National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) ang Solid Waste Management (SWM) plans ng 57 Local Government Units (LGUs) sa buong bansa.

Dahil dito, umabot na sa 114 ang kabuuang bilang ng mga LGUs na naaprubahan ngayong taon.

Ayon sa ulat, sa kabuuang 57 na inaprubahan, 32 dito ay mula sa mga lungsod at munisipalidad sa Luzon; 18 sa Mindanao; at pito sa Visayas.

Ang Region 1 at 3 ang may pinakamaraming naaprubahan na SWMP sa tig-sampu bawa't isa.

Ayon kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Usec. Benny Antiporda, malaking tulong ito sa pagbibigay ng solusyon sa problema ng bansa sa solid waste.

Matatandaang base sa Republic Act 9003, lahat ng LGUs – probinsiya, lungsod at munisipalidad ay kinakailangang gumawa at magsumite ng 10-year SWM plans na nakaangkla sa SWM framework at kailangan ding maaprubahan ng NSWMC.

Source: [https://rmn.ph/solid-waste-management-plans-ng-57-lgus-inaprubahan-na-ng-national-solid-waste-management-commission/?fbclid=IwAR3hE7Za7Mz\\_V0dCJqfrD\\_kgCu\\_gh2PBhHjD56O4Qwql5d1\\_SDEBd1u6H-E](https://rmn.ph/solid-waste-management-plans-ng-57-lgus-inaprubahan-na-ng-national-solid-waste-management-commission/?fbclid=IwAR3hE7Za7Mz_V0dCJqfrD_kgCu_gh2PBhHjD56O4Qwql5d1_SDEBd1u6H-E)



# DENR Secretary Cimatú, iniutos na pigilan ang mga illegal loggers bago makapagputol ng puno

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Dec. 19, 2020 at 10:41am



Plano ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatú na baguhin ang tinatawag na “traditional model of forest protection” ng ahensya.

Layon nito na mahuli ang mga illegal loggers bago pa man makapagputol ng puno sa halip na makakumpiska lamang ng mga pinutol nitong kahoy.

Ayon kay Cimatú, ang maituturing na trophy ng taga-DENR ay ang mismong nakatayong mga puno at hindi ang mga nakukumpiskang mga putol na.

Inatasan naman ni Cimatú si DENR Undersecretary for Special Concerns Edilberto D. Leonardo na bumuo ng apat na special composite team na magdadagdag sa anti-illegal logging operations sa Cagayan Valley, Bicol Region at sa Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape.

Ayon pa sa Environment Chief, ang pagbuo ng augmentation teams sa mga nabanggit na lugar ay isang madiskarteng paraan sa bahagi ng DENR upang baguhin ang nakasanayan sa pagprotekta ng kagubatan bagkus ay mas mainam na masawata at maparusahan ang mga financiers at operators.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/denr-secretary-cimatu-iniutos-na-pigilan-ang-mga-illegal-loggers-bago-makapagputol-ng-puno/?fbclid=IwAR0tH1WrZ8oHKNpclUiPUwFrW-xFpL6dyUAcwB0WQrn1W0wWWtJ4xhxpdc>



## 8M puno tinanim sa Negros kahit pandemic

By Abante News Online — Last updated Dec 19, 2020

NEWS



8 0

Sa kabila ng restriksyon dail sa community quarantine, naisagawa pa rin ang pagtanim ng nasa 8 milyong puno sa Negros Island.

Unang nilunsad ang Greener Negros Movement noong 2015 na naglalayon na magtanim ng 10 milyong puno sa loob ng 10 taon sa buong isla. Kolaborasyon ito ng Energy Development Corporation (EDC), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at iba pang ahensya.

Kinilala ng grupo ang isa sa kanilang kasama sa proyekto na si Rene 'Tatay Eti' Vendiola na kilalang rainforestation farmer at may-ari ng Liptong Woodland sa bayan ng Bacong, na tinagurian namang 'haven of Philippine native trees'.

Ayon naman kay Norreen G. Bautista, head ng EDC corporate social responsible team, "The health crisis brought about by Covid-19 has put the spotlight even more on the need to keep our air clean through decarbonization, which entails planting and growing native trees as well as shifting to renewable energy for our source of power." (PNA)

# U.S. hands over Php2.3M in equipment and WildALERT System to boost DENR capacity to protect Philippine wildlife

By USAID Published on December 19, 2020

MANILA, Dec. 19 - As part of its support to strengthen wildlife law enforcement and protection in the Philippines, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided essential equipment and supplies to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to boost its work in combating wildlife trafficking and providing holistic care for rescued wildlife in its custody.



DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau Director Ricardo Calderon receives the complete WildALERT system and manuals from USAID Protect Wildlife Chief of Party Rebecca Paz. Photo by USAID



Wildlife handling tools which will be distributed to DENR wildlife rescue centers across the country. Photo by USAID

On December 11, USAID turned over to the DENR over Php2.3 million (\$48,000) in tools and equipment which will be used for proper handling and management of wildlife, particularly those rescued from illegal trade. The items—including conservation tags, armored gloves, snake tongs, forceps, and microchips for efficient handling and tagging of live animals—will be distributed to DENR wildlife rescue centers across the country. These tools will help DENR veterinarians and personnel properly examine and care for rescued and injured wildlife and speed up their rehabilitation and recovery for subsequent release into natural habitats.

USAID also handed over the complete components of the Wildlife Agency and Citizen Law Enforcement Reporting Tool (WildALERT) system, which was launched on World Wildlife Day last March. WildALERT is an innovative solution developed by the DENR and USAID to help enforcers and frontliners in the field to curb wildlife crimes through real-time and centralized reporting. The system, made up of a mobile app and a reporting management platform, helps users correctly identify rescued wildlife species and promptly submit digitized reports of wildlife law violations. This can help improve the daily enforcement operations of the DENR and partner agencies across the country.



Ricardo Calderon, Director of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau, received the new sets of tools and the WildALERT system and manuals from Rebecca Paz, Chief of Party of USAID's Protect Wildlife Project.

With new tools in place and the WildALERT System ready for roll out, the DENR is now better equipped and ready to respond to wildlife rescues and to conduct anti-wildlife trafficking operations, contributing to the Philippine government's heightened prevention of zoonotic diseases and potential pandemics. (USAID)



## 7th PHL eagle family found on Mt. Apo

'The discovery of the birds on Mt. Apo only proves it still has a very healthy forest'

By Jonathan L. Mayuga  
December 20, 2020



*Philippine eagle Photo from*

In July and September last year, a team of explorers climbed steep slopes and lush forest vegetation on Mt. Apo Geothermal Reservation in Kidapawan City in search of a rare find—a pair of Philippine eagle and their nest to confirm sightings in a completely new and unexplored territory.

The expedition not only confirmed the existence of the pair of Philippine eagle, it also confirmed the pair's lone progeny—a juvenile eagle that is beginning to learn how to hunt on its own.

The newly discovered Philippine eagle family is the seventh recorded and documented on Mt. Apo, said Jayson Ibañez, director for Research and Conservation of the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF).

"It was an international expedition to look for the pair. We suspected there was a pair there because of previous sightings," Ibañez told the BusinessMirror said via Messenger on December 3.

### Continuing quests

The PEF, the longtime institutional partner of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the conservation of the Philippine eagle and their habitats, aims to find all eagle nesting sites within the Mt. Apo Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) and help protect each of the nest sites.

According to the PEF, the Philippine eagle nest sites are ancient breeding areas, believing that generations of eagle pairs have occupied the same nests over and over again.

As such, PEF conservation experts believe that conserving the nest sites where eggs are laid, hatched and chicks are nurtured until they grow is key to the success of saving the species from extinction.

PEF Executive Director Dennis Salvador told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview on December 16 that the discovery of the Philippine eagle family is proof that the technical capacity of the PEF has improved significantly over the years, particularly in finding the eagles.

He said finding the Philippine eagles and their nest are very important "for us to be able to protect them," he said.

### Strong partnership

Salvador underscored the need for a strong partnership between the government, nongovernment organizations, private sector and communities in saving the Philippine eagle.

"Primarily, we need the support of the private sector because of the logistical requirements," he said.



Tagged rescued or captive-bred eagles, which the PEF have released into the wild, are monitored through radio transmitters. This, he said, is the single major and expensive, but most reliable system adopted by the PEF to identify the location and the behavior of the eagles.

On the other hand, working with communities in protecting the eagles and their habitat could not be overemphasized, Salvador said,

He added that the communities, particularly the indigenous people (IP) who live in the area, are in the best position to protect the species and their habitats from various threats.

## In the brink of extinction

Considered critically endangered, only around 400 pairs of the Philippine eagles are left in the wild.

The population decline was attributed by experts to habitat destruction, hunting for trophies, illegal wildlife trade and accidental bycatch.

Of late, however, sightings of juvenile Philippine eagles in completely new territories with no history or record of the species are offering exciting news about their existence.

The Philippine eagle, considered the largest bird of prey in the world, pairs for life. They produce only one offspring every two to three years which sometimes die of natural death because of the brutal conditions in the wild.

## 'Search for King of Birds'

The expedition began when the PEF, the DENR and the Energy Development Corp. (EDC) launched a project dubbed "Search for the King of Birds" along the western slopes of Mt. Apo.

The expedition team targeted the Mt. Apo Geothermal Reservation in Kidapawan City where eagles were seen in the past.

The project, which primarily aims to confirm the existence of the Philippine eagle in the area, also targets to enhance the local awareness about the critically endangered bird of prey, and explore the community's capacity for eagle conservation.

## Confirmation

The 2019 expeditions that confirmed the sighting of one eagle close to the reservation, discovered that the eagle, believed to be not more than a year old, is a floater, or still sexually immature and unpaired, according to PEF experts.

The presence of an immature eagle, however, indicates that its parents could be nearby.

The expedition, however, was inadvertently put on hold, said Ibañez, due to the community lockdowns imposed to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

## Braving Covid-19

It was only last November when the PEF and EDC was able to resume the search owing to their observance of health Covid-19 protocols.

PEF team members—Senior Biologist Ron Taraya and Field Intern Keanu Sitjar—underwent mandatory 14-day quarantine in Kidapawan City, had themselves tested for the virus and other medical screenings.





Together with EDC Forest Aides Climclim Lumayon and Renjie Sinding, the team embarked on the monthlong expedition, and picked up where they stopped last year.

The team had to climb steep terrains en route to the survey site and had to squeeze their way through lush forest vegetation.

## Eagle stakeout

Finding and documenting the Philippine eagle that is considered the rarest of all birds of prey is easier said than done.

The species tend to fly away, making the team stake out in four observation posts, where they suspected the eagle might be lurking.

Three of the observation posts were on the ground, while one is on an elevated platform, which gave the team the closest view of the narrow valley and the surrounding forests.

The team spent 192 observation hours, documenting under frequent rains every bit of information and the events that unfold until they were able to document the Philippine eagle family.

The eagles were documented at least eight times—with an accumulated observation hours of 26.5, less than 15 percent of the total 192 observation hours of the entire month-long expedition.

## Breeding, hunting

Ibañez and Taraya's narration of the expedition was posted on the PEF's official web site.

It was on November 4 when the team got their first glimpse of the pair of eagles exhibiting courtship behavior

“We could hear our hearts pumping as we witnessed an unmistakable breeding behavior of two mature eagles” Ibañez said.

The following day, as the team was documenting the pair anew, the team heard loud, crying calls from another eagle nearby—similar to a young or juvenile eagle begging for food from its parents.

They finally spotted the third member of the family a week later as it emerged on a tree directly above the falls, loudly calling out for its parents.

The juvenile eagle was observed to be in its post-fledging stage and could be starting to hunt on its own. One time was observed to attempting to target a long-tailed macaque.

Based on their observation and assessment, the members of the team believed that the juvenile eagle would soon be hunting on its own and the eagle pair could be laying an egg soon.

Besides the Philippine eagle, the team was able to spot seven other raptors during the expedition.

They were the Philippine serpent eagle, Philippine honey buzzard, brahminy kite, Philippine falconet, Chinese sparrow hawk, crested honey buzzard and the peregrine falcon.

## Welcome development

Sought for comment, DENR Assistant Secretary said the discovery of the seventh Philippine eagle pair in Mt. Apo KBA is a welcome development.



“This means that our wildlife, specifically the Philippine eagle, is able to enjoy our resources. This means that in this area, our management is effective. It also means that threat, as far as expansion, appears to be under control given the increasing number of Philippine eagle in the area,” Calderon told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview on December 3.

Calderon, concurrent Biodiversity Management Bureau director, credited the PEF and the EDC for their successful program to save the country’s National Bird from extinction.

## A company advocacy

Allan Barcena, head of EDCs Corporate Social Responsibility Public Relations Group, said via text message on December 10 that the discovery has only proven that Mt. Apo, which is the habitat of the Philippine eagle, still has a very healthy forest.

He also credited EDC’s strong commitment and advocacy of environmental sustainability in protecting the environment, particularly the Geothermal Reservation on Mt. Apo.

“EDC has been protecting and nurturing the forest within its 700-hectare Mt. Apo Geothermal Reservation with the help of its Manobo IP Communities,” he said.

He said various initiatives of the company, one of Asia’s leading geothermal energy producers, “elevate the environment and communities they work with as part of its mission of forging collaborative pathways for a decarbonized and regenerative future.”

“Biodiversity conservation and monitoring has always been one of our priorities, along with bridging forest gaps and propagating 96 of our Philippine native tree species under our Binhi greening legacy program,” he said.

Image credits: [Philippine Eagle Foundation](#)



## DENR-LMB sa publiko: Mag-apply ng agricultural free patent bago ang Dec. 31



December 19, 2020 @ 5:25 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Upang makapagsumite ng kanilang aplikasyon sa lahat ng Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) pinaalalahanan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang lahat ng magsasakang Pilipino na nais makinabang sa agricultural free patent program ng gobyerno na mayroon na lamang sila hanggang katapusan ng buwan para asikasuhin ang kanilang aplikasyon.

Sinabi ng Land Management Bureau (LMB) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), hindi na muling tatanggap ang CENROs ng aplikasyon pagkatapos ng Disyembre 31, 2020 deadline base na rin sa nakasaad sa Republic Act 9176 o mas kilala sa tawag na Public Land Act of 2002.

Ayon sa LMB, “The law had extended the filing of applications for free patent and judicial confirmation of imperfect and incomplete titles to alienable and disposable lands of public domain, thus amending Commonwealth Act 141 or the original Public Land Act.”

Nabatid sa ulat na ang agricultural free patents ay ang mga lupang ibinigay sa natural-born Filipino citizen na may hanapbuhay na pagbubungkal ng lupa sa loob ng 30 taon at mayroong hindi tataas sa 12 hectares at nakapagbabayad din ng karampatang real property tax.

“Our field offices continue to accept agricultural free patent applications to give those who have been cultivating their lots for a long time the chance to have the same titled in their names,” giit ni LMB Director Emelyne V. Talabis.

Sinabi pa ni Talabis, kabilang sa mga kinakailangan sa aplikasyon para sa agricultural free patents ay ang mga sumusunod:

- Duly accomplished application form;
- Tax Declaration, Deed of Sale, Extra Judicial Settlement or Waiver of Rights;
- Certification from the Municipal Circuit or Regional Trial Court concerned that there is no pending land registration case involving the parcel being applied for;

. Approved Survey Plan with Technical Description or Form V37, if covered with isolated survey;



- Certification of status of land from the Land Registration Authority, if the municipality is under cadastral proceedings or if there is an old survey (Private and Original Survey);
- Certification that the land applied for is alienable and disposable; and
- Documentary stamp

Sa inilabas na Memorandum na may petsang Nobyembre 23, 2020 ni DENR Undersecretary for Legal Administration, Human Resources and Legislative Affairs Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr., nilinaw nito na ang mga aplikasyon na naisumite bago ang Disyembre 31, 2020 ay patuloy na ipoproseso para sa fiscal year 2021.

Ayon kay Adobo, ang “turnaround time” ay 110 maximum days base na rin sa Citizen’s Charter No. RO-L-03 na may titulong Application for Free Patent (Agricultural), in compliance with RA 11032 or Ease of Doing Business Act. (Santi Celario)



## DENR, TESDA may libreng online short course

By Abante News Online — Last updated Dec 14, 2020

LIFESTYLE



58 0

May libreng online short courses on solid waste management sa publiko ang National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) at Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)

Ang NSWMC ang magpapatupad ng mga probisyon sa Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 sa pamumuno ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) DENR Roy A. Cimatu.

Ad Asia – InsideContent Ad

Ayon kay NSWMC Alternate Chair at DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management ang Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda, ang digital learning material ay ginawa upang matulungan ang mga tao na magawa ang epektibong SWM habang tayo ay nasa new normal.

Ang online short course ay may dalawang unit, ito ay ang Introduction to Ecological Solid Waste Management at Practicing Solid Waste Management.

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Kabilang sa unang unit ang pag-aaral sa Philippine environmental laws and regulations, ecological SWM maging ang pinanggagalingan ng basura.

Sa ikalawang unit naman, kabilang sa mga pag-aaralan ang waste segregation, composting, recycling, managing residual waste na may potensiyal para sa recycling at ang tamang waste collection, treatment at disposal.

Magkakaroon ng pagsusulit ang mga mag-aaral pagkatapos ng kurso bago sila bigyan ng

certificate.

Libreng makukuha ang kurso sa TESDA website. (Riz Dominguez)

Source: <https://www.abante.com.ph/denr-tesda-may-libreng-online-short-course/>



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LOOK: Manila Bay sands will soon get a refill after seven barges loaded with dolomite arrived and now docked in Manila Bay near Delpan Bridge in Tondo, Manila.

Photos: Bob Dungo Jr.



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## Rizal lawmaker seeks forest rehab

posted December 20, 2020 at 12:00 am

by [Maricel Cruz](#)

A congressman from Rizal whose district suffered devastating floods this year has launched a forest conservation and rehabilitation campaign in a bid to encourage the youth to become more proactive in protecting the environment.

Deputy Majority Leader and Rizal Rep. Fidel Nograles Jr., along with more than 200 students from Colegio de Montalban, University of Rizal System, as well as San Mateo Municipal College, planted 1,000 bamboo saplings along Wawa Dam in Rodriguez town.

The town, as well as the neighboring San Mateo were among those badly-hit when Typhoon Ulysses struck in November.

Nograles said the “Save Our Forests Now” program is “a good opportunity to make the youth more involved in climate advocacy.”

“Many young people are ready to help. We only have to open up avenues for them to be able to direct their desire and energies to worthy causes,” Nograles said.



# DOST enables SMEs to convert waste to new food products

Published December 19, 2020, 12:28 PM

by [Dhel Nazario](#)

Waste materials have been turned to being a valuable source of income through the Collaborative Research and Development to Leverage Philippine Economy (CRADLE) Program of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

According to the DOST, CRADLE enables local companies, including Small-to-Medium-Enterprises (SMEs) to find value through innovation. It recently approved a research for a local company to turn previously unused and disposed materials into a fine undertaking.

One of the recently approved CRADLE projects is with Aegina Organic Farm Products, manufacturer of coconut milk and cacao powder products, who partnered with University of the Philippines – Diliman (UPD) to undertake R&D in converting liquids unused in their normal operations into nutritious and delicious beverages.

Another streamlined production assistance made possible through CRADLE is the Batangas Egg Producers Cooperative (BEPCO) and UP Diliman partnership. With the project, the excess supply of eggs is turned into powdered/granulated chicken egg whites from low value eggs (cracked/dirtied or soft shell). The prototype was already given to BEPCO and is now being evaluated for industrial use. One of the potential uses is for baking purposes.

“R&D enables local companies to find hidden opportunities for additional income and even the possibility to delve into unique product lines,” said DOST Undersecretary for R&D Rowena Cristina Guevara.

“Innovation is a key element to survive and succeed. An R&D investment is an investment to change for the better,” she added.

Under the CRADLE Program, a local industry partner determines a problem/need which requires an R&D solution. The partner higher education institution (HEI) or Research & Development Institution (RDI) undertakes the R&D to solve the problem/ need. The DOST-CRADLE Program will fund up to five million pesos for a period of one to three years R&D projects aiming to solve problems of local businesses.

In the last 3 years, the CRADLE Program has funded 63 projects worth P285 million and partnered with 29 HEIs/RDIs and 63 companies.

CRADLE is one of the four sub-programs of Science for Change – a program geared to significantly accelerate Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in the country through massive increase in investment on S&T Human Resource Development and R&D. Other sub-programs include Niche Centers in the Regions for R&D (NICER) Program which provides institutional grants for HEIs to undertake quality research that will catalyze and promote regional development.

R&D Leadership (RDLead) Program engages local experts to lead and strengthen the research capabilities of academic institutions, R&D centers, and Non-Government Agencies located in any part of the country. Business Innovation through S&T (BIST) for Industry Program facilitates the acquisition of strategic and relevant technologies by Filipino companies to support R&D activities. As of the moment, the S4CP bill is still in the third reading in both houses of Congress.



Interested companies who wish to avail the DOST-CRADLE program must belong to the following priority areas: 1) Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry; 2) Agri-processing; 3) Drug and Herbal Development; 4) Food and Nutrition; 5) Information and Communications Technology (includes Artificial Intelligence); 6) IC Design; 7) Semiconductor and Electronics; 8) Infrastructure and Logistics; 9) Manufacturing; 10) Environment and Climate Change; 11) Industrial Waste Treatment; 12) Renewable Energy; 13) Creative Industries/Knowledge-based Services.

The DOST-CRADLE Program accepted R & D proposals for 2021 from HEIs/RDIs together with their partner company from November 27, 2020 to February 5, 2021. Proposals must be submitted electronically through the DOST Project Management Information System (<https://dpmis.dost.gov.ph/>). For more information, you may visit the DOST-Science for Change Facebook page or email [s4c.ousecrd@dost.gov.ph](mailto:s4c.ousecrd@dost.gov.ph)



Churchgoers attend the first day of the traditional Simbang Gabi at the Our Lady of the Abandoned church in Brgy. San Roque, Marikina City on Dec. 16, 2020.

The STAR/Walter Bollozos

## COVID-19 infections in Philippines breach 458,000, deaths now at 8,911

(Philstar.com) - December 19, 2020 - 4:00pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health confirmed 1,491 more cases of novel coronavirus on Saturday, bringing the national caseload to 458,044.

Of the total cases recorded, 28,047 — or 6.1% are marked active, which means these patients are still undergoing quarantine or treatment.

Recovered patients are at 421,086, after 436 more people were reported to have survived the deadly virus.

However, the DOH logged 36 new fatalities, bringing the country's total death toll to 8,911.

The country's positivity rate currently stands at 4.5%. This is based on the 26,123 people tested before 12 p.m. the day previous, 1,187 of whom tested positive.

On Friday, a week before Christmas, the country reported 2,122 new COVID-19 cases. The last time the daily tally surpassed the 2,000-level was on November 29 when the country had 2,076 additional cases.

In a push to curtail the predicted spike in cases amid the holiday season, the COVID-19 task force is requiring the public to wear full-coverage face shields on top of face masks whenever they leave their homes. Previously, face shields were only required in enclosed spaces such as malls and public transportation.

But the DOH on Friday said wearing face shields may not be advisable for certain people. "We do not recommend the use of face shield if a person has a specific condition that could lead to breathing limitations," Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said in Filipino during a virtual briefing.

Vergeire added that face shields may also cause visibility problems for some workers, and in such instances, the DOH advises against wearing them as well.

It has been 279 days since parts of the country were first placed under lockdown, marking the longest community quarantine period in the world.

Worldwide, 75.58 million people have contracted coronavirus, a staggering 1.67 million of whom have died.

— **Bella Perez-Rubio with reports from Gaea Katreena Cabico**

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/19/2064956/covid-19-infections-philippines-breach-458000-deaths-now-8911>



We laud the local government units (LGUs) of the affected areas for their timely pro-active preparation as well as their readiness in responding to the effects of TD Vicky in their localities,” presidential spokesman Harry Roque said.

STAR/Joven CagandE

## Palace cites LGUs, agencies for Vicky response

[Edith Regalado](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 20, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Preparedness characterized the government’s disaster response during the onslaught of tropical depression Vicky in Mindanao on Friday, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said yesterday.

Continuous rain for over 12 hours on Friday inundated large parts of Eastern Mindanao, including Davao Oriental, Davao de Oro, Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte as well as Davao City, Davao del Norte and Davao del Sur. Major highways became impassable due to floods that reached up to rooftops in many areas.

“We laud the local government units (LGUs) of the affected areas for their timely pro-active preparation as well as their readiness in responding to the effects of TD Vicky in their localities,” Roque said.

He said President Duterte was monitoring the situation as disaster and relief personnel fanned out across affected areas for rescue and relief operations.

Armed Forces Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Jose Faustino told The STAR that they have not received reports of casualties so far, although one individual was reported missing. He gave no further details.

He said there was good coordination among LGUs, the Armed Forces and the police.

“The LGUs asked us for personnel they need for search and rescue operations,” Faustino added.

“We ask the public, especially those living in the affected areas, to stay calm, remain vigilant and be ready to evacuate in case local authorities advise them to do so, regularly monitor government advisories and weather updates for more information,” Roque said.

‘I’m here’

Meanwhile, Vice President Leni Robredo told critics she was up and about coordinating with authorities in affected areas, as she taunted critics for their #NasaanAngBisePresidente hashtag which briefly trended on social media at the height of Vicky’s onslaught.

“Andito po ako. Kanina pa kami nag co-coordinate sa areas na apektado (I’m here. We have been coordinating with areas affected),” she said on Facebook, responding to posts by critics.

“Pagdasal po natin mga kababayan natin sa Agusan del Sur at Surigao del Sur na binabaha ngayon (Let us pray for our countrymen in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur who are experiencing flooding right now),” she added.





The hashtag directed at Robredo was an apparent imitation of the #NasaanAngPangulo hashtag that previously trended on social media, which questioned President Duterte's supposed absence during recent typhoons.

The hashtag irked Duterte, who accused Robredo on national television of making a show of relief efforts she spearheaded in the aftermath of Typhoon Ulysses last month.

In another update regarding Vicky, Robredo said they have been trying to get information about the flooding in Mindanao.

"In Agusan del Sur, the affected areas are Rosario, Bayugan, San Francisco, Veruela and Sta Josefa. In Agusan del Norte, Butuan Centro and some low-lying barangays are likewise flooded but we were told the situation is manageable," she said in a post late Friday night.

"We have been informed that the floods have subsided already in Bayugan and Veruela. We were told that power is out in some parts of Rosario and we are still awaiting updates from the other towns until now," she added.

She also noted information citing the towns of Barobo and Tagbina in Surigao del Sur as among those affected.

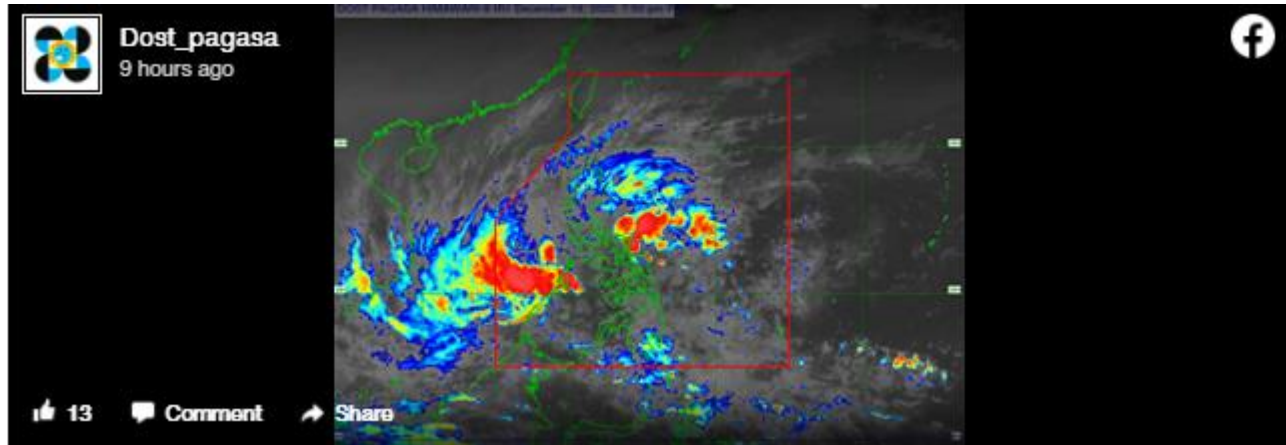
"We received in the comments section info that Bislig in Surigao del Sur is badly affected. We were informed just this morning that Prosperidad in Agusan del Sur was also badly affected," Robredo said in her post. – **Christina Mendez, Janvic Mateo**



# Vicky slightly intensifies as it crosses Palawan

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 20 2020 12:13 AM



Tropical Depression Vicky slightly intensified while passing through Palawan late Saturday, according to the state weather bureau.

In its 11 p.m. bulletin, PAGASA said Vicky was spotted 80 kilometers northwest of Puerto Princesa City at 10 p.m.

The weather disturbance carried maximum sustained winds of 55 kilometers per hour (km/h) near the center and gustiness of up to 85 km/h while moving Northwestward at 25 km/h.

- ['Vicky' triggers floods, landslides in parts of Visayas, Mindanao; at least 2 dead](#)

Storm signal No. 1 was still hoisted over the following areas, where 30 to 60 kph winds could rip roofs off nipa and cogon huts, damage rice crops and down banana plants:

## LUZON

- Northern and central portions of Palawan (Araceli, Dumarán, Taytay, El Nido, San Vicente, Roxas, Puerto Princesa City, Aborlan, Narra, Quezon, Sofronio Espanola)
- Calamian
- Cuyo
- Cagayancillo
- Kalayaan Islands

Vicky is expected to be 50 km south-southeast of Kalayaan, Palawan (outside of Philippine area of responsibility) Sunday evening.

It will be 445 km Southwest of Kalayaan, Palawan on Monday night.

Source: [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/20/20/vicky-slightly-intensifies-as-it-crosses-palawan?fbclid=IwAR3Urb0rfDTyDfAITokWbEQzaLMV9w1FenZRuR3-REqf\\_D240DlzfS4by7w](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/20/20/vicky-slightly-intensifies-as-it-crosses-palawan?fbclid=IwAR3Urb0rfDTyDfAITokWbEQzaLMV9w1FenZRuR3-REqf_D240DlzfS4by7w)



# Vicky nagdala ng landslide, matinding pagbaha sa ilang parte ng Mindanao

**ABS-CBN News**

Posted at Dec 18 2020 07:12 PM



Umabot sa bubong ang baha sa Purok 3 sa Barangay Poblacion, Agusan Del Sur. *Photo Courtesy: Phoebe Anne Osigan.*

Nagdala ng pagbaha at landslide ang bagyong Vicky sa Mindanao, matapos ang walang tigil na pag-ulan sa malaking bahagi ng lugar.

Sa Purok 3, Barangay Poblacion sa Rosario, Agusan Del Sur, inabot ng hanggang bubong ng ilang bahay ang baha.

Nalubog din sa baha ang palengke at terminal sa bayan ng Rosario, batay sa kuhang retrato ng guro na si Albert Pamonag.

“Halos naapawan na po ang lahat ng bahay at paninda nila. May mga tao na pilit na sinasalba ‘yung mga gamit nila,” ani Pamonag.

Pinasok din ng tubig-baha ang ilang bahay sa bayan ng Prosperidad, Agusan Del Sur.

Puspusan din ang pagsagip sa mga binahang residente sa Bayugan City.

Binaha rin ang ilang bahay at pananim sa bayan ng Pantukan, Davao Del Oro dahil sa bagyo.

Nagsilikas ang ilang residente habang sinasalba ang mga gamit at hayop.

Nasa 100 residente ang inilikas sa mga paaralan matapos bahain ang 3 barangay sa bayan ng Nabunturan, Davao Del Oro. Pero makalipas ang ilang oras ay humupa na rin ang baha.

Alas-6 naman ng umaga ng Biyernes nang gumuho ang lupa sa Sitio Depot, Barangay Upper Ulip sa bayan ng Monkayo, Davao Del Oro.

Nagtulungan naman ang mga awtoridad sa pag-rescue ng mga residenteng na-trap sa Bislig City, Surigao Del Sur.

Nilusong ng mga pulis ang abot-baywang na tubig.

Nagsasagawa na ng survey at assessment ang mga lokal na pamahalaan lalo’t isa ang lungsod sa mga matinding binaha.

— **Ulat ni Hernel Tocmo**

Source: [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/18/20/vicky-nagdala-ng-landslide-matinding-pagbaha-sa-ilang-parte-ng-mindanao?fbclid=IwAR2\\_yrEjgvxNKuvx2IH2rXv0cO5gUvYXquph03DgFJF44QCKro24603NU9s](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/18/20/vicky-nagdala-ng-landslide-matinding-pagbaha-sa-ilang-parte-ng-mindanao?fbclid=IwAR2_yrEjgvxNKuvx2IH2rXv0cO5gUvYXquph03DgFJF44QCKro24603NU9s)



## UPDATE: 5 dead, hundreds left homeless as ‘Vicky’ hits Visayas, Mindanao

Published 10 hours ago on December 19, 2020 08:52 PM

By [John Roson](#)



Five persons died, another remains missing, and hundreds were left homeless as tropical depression “Vicky” triggered massive floods and landslides in different parts of Visayas and Mindanao, authorities reported.

Agusan del Sur Gov. Santiago Cane Jr. said three drowned and another remained missing because of floods in San Francisco town.

Two fatalities were residents of San Francisco while the other was a resident of Talacogon who was in the town, Cane said in an interview over DZBB radio Saturday night.

The fatalities include a 29-year-old male employee of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources who, along with his wife, were carried away by floodwaters while crossing a swollen river, he said.

Rescuers managed to save the woman, but her husband was later found dead, Cane said.

According to Cane, floods affected 74 barangays in the province, and some 2,000 people remain in evacuation centers.

Floods also reached the first floor of the provincial capitol in Prosperidad town, leaving some equipment of the provincial government’s radio and television station unusable, he said.

Thirty-four barangays in the province were still experiencing power outages as of Saturday evening.

Cane said he has asked the Sangguniang Panlalawigan to place Agusan del Sur under a state of calamity because of the effects of tropical depression “Vicky.”

Earlier, authorities reported that two persons died and another was injured in a rain-triggered landslide in Mahaplag, Leyte.

Evelina Laraño, 67, and Juvilinda Milana, 62, died when the landslide hit their home in Brgy. Cuatro de Agosto, Mahaplag Mayor Daisy Lleve said.

One Ryan Amos, 14, was injured but rescued alive from the rubble, while Godofredo Laraño Jr. also survived, Lleve said in a social media post.

The landslide also caused part of the road connecting Mahaplag to Baybay City in the west and to Sogod of Southern Leyte to collapse, leaving it impassable to vehicles, she said.



In Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, 76 families comprised of 291 persons lost their homes in the coastal barangay of Ibo, as these were destroyed by big waves generated by “Vicky,” city Mayor Junard Chan said in another social media post.

The affected families are taking shelter at the Ibo Elementary School, where they have been provided with mats to sleep on and relief goods, he said.

Meanwhile, the Office of Civil Defense-Caraga reported that some 4,866 people remain in evacuation centers in Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur, as of Saturday evening.

The OCD-Southern Mindanao earlier reported that at least 800 persons were evacuated in Davao de Oro because of floods and landslides.

In Candijay, Bohol, at least 23 persons were “pre-emptively” evacuated to schools and a barangay hall, the Office of Civil Defense-Central Visayas said in a separate report.

Undersecretary Ricardo Jalad, National Disaster Risk Reduction, and Management Council executive director said an “orange” rainfall warning was released early Saturday for Sorsogon and Northern Samar, followed by a “red” rainfall warning for both provinces, as well as Camarines Norte, and another “orange” warning for Albay.

Based on tomorrow’s weather forecast from the state weather bureau PAGASA, Bicol region, Quezon, Aurora, Isabela, Quirino, and Nueva Vizcaya have been warned of heavy to intense rainfall, he said.

Apayao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ifugao, Oriental Mindoro, Kalayaan Islands, and the rest of mainland Cagayan Valley will experience moderate to heavy with at times intense rainfall.

Eastern Visayas, Dinagat Islands, and the rest of Cordillera, Calabarzon, and MIMAROPA will experience light to moderate with at times heavy rains tomorrow.

The local government units and people from these areas are being warned of possible floods and landslides, Jalad said.



## Over 300 families in Mindanao evacuate due to Vicky's floods

**Published** December 19, 2020 5:01pm

By JOAHNA LEI CASILAO, GMA News

Floods from Tropical Depression Vicky forced 338 families to flee their homes on Saturday in Regions X, XI, and Caraga in Mindanao, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said.

In an interview on Dabol B sa News TV, NDRRMC executive director Ricardo Jalad said they recorded nine flooding incidents in Caraga, especially in Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur.

“Although tropical depression [lang] si Vicky ay nagdala ito ng matinding pag-uulan, lalong-lalo na diyan sa Caraga Region... May mga pagbaha na nangyari doon na nagresulta sa pag-evacuate,” Jalad said.

“Sa ngayon, initially ang nakikitang sinabmit... ng ating mga regional offices may mga 1,500 plus individuals ang apektado, nailikas. Meron siyam na flooding incidents diyan sa Caraga,” he added.

In its situational report, the [NDRRMC said the flooding occurred](#) in Bislig, Surigao del Sur, and the municipalities of Prosperidad, San Francisco, and Rosario in Agusan del Sur.

A landslide was also recorded in Barangay San Rafael in Bislig, affecting three households, while another landslide was recorded in Southern Leyte in Eastern Visayas.

“As of kaninang umaga, may dalawang missing at isang injured na na-rescue,” Jalad said.

Some roads were also affected due to the tropical depression.

“Aside from those, meron pang mga road sections na apektado diyan sa Davao Region at saka sa Caraga. Maliban doon, diyan sa Southern Leyte. Ito naman ay kaagad nirespondehan ng Department of Public Works and Highways, inayos kaagad,” he said.

Likewise, the NDRRMC said that the Department of Social Welfare and Development has readied P779,958,349.25 worth of assistance as part of the government’s response to residents affected by Vicky.



As of 2 p.m. on Saturday, Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal (TCWS) No. 1 remained over parts of Palawan including Araceli, Dumarán, Taytay, El Nido, San Vicente, Roxas, Puerto Princesa City, Aborlan, Narra, Quezon, Sofronio Espanola, including Calamian, Cuyo, Cagayancillo, and Kalayaan Islands. —**LBG, GMA News**



# Cagayan villages flooded anew

[Raymond Catindig](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 20, 2020 - 12:00am

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Philippines — Mayor Jefferson Soriano of this city ordered yesterday the preemptive evacuation of residents in low-lying areas after a flood alert was raised as water in Cagayan River rose due to heavy rains spawned by the northeast monsoon and water was released from Magat Dam again.

The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) said the road linking Barangay Logac in Lasam town and Gagabutan in Rizal was impassable.

Three bridges in Amulung and one each in Sta. Ana, Tuao and Baggao were submerged in floodwaters.

On Friday, 133 families or 1,500 people were displaced as heavy rains inundated several villages in Pamplona town.

In Kalinga, the PDRRMO said 80 people were forced to leave their homes after flash floods submerged Barangays Cabatacan and Allen in Pudtol town.

Several areas in Barangays San Mariano and Imelda, also in Pudtol, as well as in San Gregorio, Dugupan and Shalom in Luna and Sta. Filomena in Flora were flooded.

## Magat Dam releases water

Authorities warned residents along Magat River and Cagayan River of flashfloods after six spillway gates of Magat Dam were opened at 5 p.m. yesterday.

The water level in the dam was only two meters below its spilling level of 193 meters at around 2 p.m.

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) said it obtained permission from the regional DRRMO to discharge water from the dam.

Edwin Viernes of the NIA-Magat River Integrated Irrigation System said the six spillway gates have a total opening of 12 meters.

Viernes said seven spillway gates were opened during the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses in November.

It was only last Dec. 6 when NIA closed the spillway gates after the water level returned to normal.

The widespread flooding in Cagayan and Marikina during Ulysses was blamed on the massive release of water from Magat Dam.

Local chief executives said the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council should authorize the release of water from dams to help authorities make informed decisions.



# Locsin, Pompeo talk about reinforcing ‘binding’ South China Sea arbitral ruling

By [Eimor Santos, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Dec 19, 2020 3:36:11 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, December 19) — Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro “Teddy Boy” Locsin, Jr. and his US counterpart recently talked about reinforcing the “binding nature” of the Philippines’ arbitration win in the South China Sea dispute, the US Department of State disclosed on Saturday.

Locsin also announced his “great phone conversation” with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Friday night. In a tweet, he said the top Washington official committed to try his best [to help the Philippines secure COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer following an allegedly bungled deal](#).



Pompeo, in a separate tweet, chose to highlight their talk about the Philippines and America's “shared interests” in the South China Sea.



“Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Locsin discussed opportunities to further reinforce the U.S.-Philippine alliance and the binding nature of the 2016 arbitral tribunal award on all parties in the South China Sea,” the US Department of State said in a brief statement posted on its website.

“The two secretaries also discussed the economic, security, democratic, and people-to-people ties that make up the strong bond between our two countries,” it added, without going into detail.



In 2016, an arbitral tribunal in The Hague recognized the Philippines' sovereign rights in areas within its exclusive economic zone that China contests. Manila calls the areas it claims as the West Philippine Sea.

The arbitral ruling junked Beijing's sweeping claim to almost the entire South China Sea and said Chinese forces violated the Philippines' rights when they built artificial islands, blocked Filipino fishermen from fishing, and interfered in petroleum exploration in the West Philippine Sea. While the US does not claim any part of the vast global waterway, it conducts freedom of navigation operations and [calls most of Beijing's claims as "unlawful."](#)

The arbitral tribunal was constituted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which the Philippines and China both signed in 1982 and 1994, respectively, but Beijing refuses to recognize the landmark decision. President Rodrigo Duterte agreed to set it aside to pursue other areas for cooperation, including the [planned oil and gas exploration in contested areas.](#)

Retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio is urging the government to propose an enforcement mechanism, probably in the form of sanctions, in the absence of a "world policeman" to enforce arbitral rulings.



# People are turning to nature during the pandemic, says study

[AFP Relaxnews](#) / 05:02 PM December 18, 2020



INQUIRER.net stock photo

COVID-19 has influenced people's relationship with nature, researchers at the University of Vermont have found, in an analysis revealing that men — and particularly women — have turned to nature for sanctuary during the pandemic.

The researchers studied the impact of the pandemic on how people valued nature. Published in the journal, PLOS One, the findings suggest that nature was an important refuge for people during the pandemic.

They studied data from online surveys of over 3,200 people in Vermont during the state's "Stay safe, stay home" executive order, announced in May 2020. People in the study reported significant increases in outdoor activity during this time, especially among women. In terms of the largest increases, taking walks in nature, away from urban hustle and bustle, proved particularly popular with participants during this period of social distancing (70%), as did watching wildlife (64%).

The people polled also showed growing interest for relaxing alone outside (58%), gardening (57%) and doing artistic activities like photography outdoors (54%).

There was also a shift in the way people valued nature during the pandemic. Participants notably said that, in nature, they cherished a greater sense of mental health and well-being (59%), exercise (29%) or simply appreciating nature's beauty (29%).

The study revealed that women increased their nature use in more ways than men. This applied to several activities like gardening and walking, with women respectively 1.7 times and 2.9 times more likely to report increasing their engagement than men.

"More research is needed, but our preliminary analysis suggests that, during the pandemic, women are more likely than men to report increased importance of values that include mental well-being, beauty, exercise, familiarity with landscape and fun. Our next step is to analyze the qualitative data to explore this result more fully," explains the study's senior author, Rachelle Gould.

In the long term, the findings could encourage authorities to recognize the value of nature in providing an important escape for people potentially facing similar events in the future. **RGA**

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/106647/people-are-turning-to-nature-during-the-pandemic-says-study>



# Giving up meat consumption everywhere won't solve the climate crisis, researchers say

[AFP Relaxnews](#) / 05:45 PM December 18, 2020



An African woman milking a cow in the village near Lalibela town, northern Ethiopia, East Africa. Image: Getty Images/hadynyah via AFP Relaxnews

Is a diet without meat the solution to the ongoing climate crisis? Some scientists are skeptical, largely because of the lack of data and analysis coming from low- and middle-income countries. While adopting a meatless diet might be pertinent in industrialized nations, it could be detrimental to Africa's economic and environmental welfare.

Meat production has been the subject of numerous concerns for the past few years, especially in Europe and the United States, because of its negative impact on the environment. Scientists from the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) have been studying the issue and posit that it's not the only major problem. They also suggest that a meat-free diet is not a global solution to the climate crisis, and that it could even harm certain countries.

This study, published in *Environmental Research Letters*, shows that a no-meat diet would not have the same impact in Western, industrialized nations and in low- and middle-income countries. This research also highlights the lack of data concerning Africa. Only 13% of all scientific literature about livestock published since 1945 covered Africa, while the continent is home to 20%, 27% and 32% of global cattle, sheep and goat populations.

The ICTA scientists also note that 8 out of the 10 most respected institutes researching livestock are located in the U.S., France, the United Kingdom and The Netherlands, while only two are headquartered in Africa.

“Conclusions drawn in widely publicized reports argue that a main solution to the climate and human health crisis globally is to eat no or little meat but they are biased towards industrialized, Western systems,” said Birthe Paul, lead author of the study.

## Focus on solutions that have a stronger impact

In their report, the scientists also argue that only focusing on the negative effects of livestock on the environment leads to overlooking its positive role in ecosystem services, income and provisions supply in low- and middle-income countries. Such a focus also fails to take into account more systemic questions concerning the way animals are raised.

“Mixed systems in low- and middle-income countries, where animal production is fully linked with crop production, can actually be more environmentally sustainable,” said one of the scientists.



“In sub-Saharan Africa, manure is a nutrient resource which maintains soil health and crop productivity; while in Europe, huge amounts of manure made available through industrialized livestock production are overfertilizing agricultural land and causing environmental problems,” added one of the authors of the study.

The research team concluded that a plant-based diet could be relevant in industrialized countries but that it is far from being a global answer to global warming, and especially, that it can’t be applied the same way in every country.

Their study also suggests solutions that could have a stronger impact on the planet and would benefit both farmers and the environment. For instance, improved animal feed to limit greenhouse gases, better management of grazing land, and mixing crop and livestock where manure is plowed back into the soil.

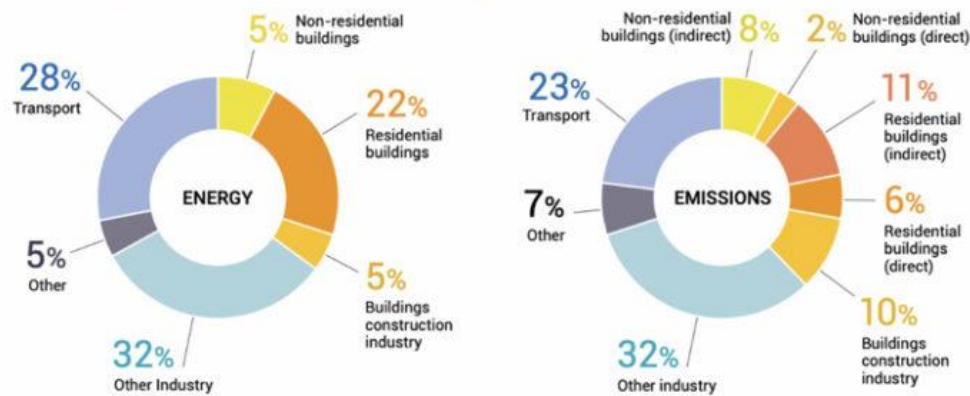
The authors also note that according to Food and Agriculture Organization predictions, meat consumption in sub-Saharan Africa could reach an average of 12.9 kilograms per capita in 2028, while it could skyrocket to over 100 kilograms per capita in the U.S. **RGA**



# U.N.: Buildings-related emissions hit record high

By [BusinessMirror](#)  
December 20, 2020

Global share of buildings and construction final energy and emissions, 2019



Notes: Construction industry is the portion (estimated) of overall industry devoted to manufacturing building construction materials such as steel, cement and glass. Indirect emissions are emissions from power generation for electricity and commercial heat.  
Sources: Adapted from IEA (2020a), World Energy Statistics and Balances (database), [www.iea.org/statistics](http://www.iea.org/statistics) and IEA (2020b), Energy Technology Perspectives, buildings model, [www.iea.org/buildings](http://www.iea.org/buildings).

Emissions from the operation of buildings hit their highest-ever level in 2019, moving the sector further away from fulfilling its huge potential to slow climate change and contribute significantly to the goals of the Paris Agreement, according to a report released on Wednesday.

However, pandemic recovery packages provide an opportunity to push deep building renovation and performance standards for newly constructed buildings, and rapidly cut emissions, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said in a news release.

The forthcoming updating of climate pledges under the Paris Agreement—known as nationally determined contributions (NDCs)—also offer an opportunity to sharpen existing measures and include new commitments on the buildings and construction sector.

The “2020 Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction,” from the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC), found that while global building energy consumption remained steady year-on-year, energy-related carbon-dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions increased to 9.95 GtCO<sub>2</sub> in 2019.

This increase was due to a shift away from the direct use of coal, oil and traditional biomass towards electricity, which had a higher carbon content due to the high proportion of fossil fuels used in generation.

When adding emissions from the building construction industry on top of operational emissions, the sector accounted for 38 percent of total global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

“Rising emissions in the buildings and construction sector emphasize the urgent need for a triple strategy to aggressively reduce energy demand in the built environment, decarbonize the power sector and implement materials strategies that reduce lifecycle carbon emissions,” said UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen.

“Green recovery packages can provide the spark that will get us moving rapidly in the right direction,” Andersen added.

“Moving the buildings and construction sector onto a low-carbon pathway will slow climate change and deliver strong economic recovery benefits, so it should be a clear priority for all governments,” she pointed out.



To get on track to net-zero carbon building stock by 2050, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that direct building CO<sub>2</sub> emissions need, by 2030, to fall by 50 percent and indirect building sector emissions by 60 percent, the report said.

This equates to building sector emissions falling by around 6 percent per year until 2030, close to the 7 percent decrease in 2020 global energy sector CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to the pandemic.

Worryingly, the GlobalABC's new Buildings Climate Tracker—which considers measures, such as incremental energy efficiency investment in buildings and the share of renewable energy in global buildings—finds that the rate of annual improvement is decreasing.

It in fact halved between 2016 and 2019. To get the buildings sector on track to achieving net-zero carbon by 2050, all actors across the buildings value chain need to increase decarbonization actions and their impact by a factor of five.

Even though progress in efficiency efforts has not kept up with an increase in sectoral growth, there are positive signs and opportunities to catch up on climate action, the report finds.

## Green recovery potential

The recent Emissions Gap Report 2020 from UNEP found that a green pandemic recovery could cut up to 25 percent off predicted 2030 green-house gas emissions, and bring the world closer to meeting the 2°C goal of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Much more needs to be done to get to the 1.5°C goal, UNEP said.

Governments can help achieve these gains by systematically including building decarbonization measures into recovery packages.

The measures are increasing renovation rates, channelling investment into low-carbon buildings, providing jobs, and increasing real-estate value.

While construction activities have dropped by 20 percent to 30 percent in 2020 compared to 2019 as a result of the pandemic and around 10 percent of overall jobs have been lost or are at risk across the building construction sector, stimulus programs for the building and construction sector can create jobs, boost economic activity, and activate local value chains, UNEP said.

It added that under its Sustainable Recovery Plan, the IEA estimates that up to 30 jobs in manufacturing and construction would be created for every million dollars invested in retrofits or efficiency measures in new builds.

“Buildings are a strategic sector to simultaneously address various global challenges, such as climate change, the economic crisis resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic, improve living conditions and the resilience of our cities,” said Sergio Israel Mendoza, general director of Environmental, Urban and Tourism Promotion, Mexico’s Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources.

“For Mexico, the implementation of mitigation measures that improve the thermal and energy performance of buildings is a key ingredient for sustainability,” Mendoza said.

## NDC updates open window for faster action

Most countries have yet to submit their second NDCs. Buildings remain a major area that lacks specific mitigation policies, despite its importance to global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, UNEP said.

Of those who have submitted an NDC, 136 countries mention buildings, 53 countries mention building-energy efficiency, and only 38 specifically call out building energy codes.



National governments must step up commitments in NDCs, longer-term climate strategies and support for regulation to spur uptake of net-zero emissions buildings, it said in the news release.

This means prioritizing performance-based, mandatory building energy codes alongside wide-spread certification measures and working closely with sub-national governments to facilitate adoption and implementation.

“We urgently need to address carbon emissions from buildings and construction, which constitute almost 40 percent of global carbon emissions. We must give governments visibility of this at COP26 [26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties in November 2021], to inspire policies and decisions that result in the significant decarbonization of this sector,” said Nigel Topping, United Kingdom High-Level climate champion.

“We need to challenge the incumbency of steel and concrete. Whether or not zero carbon steel and concrete become the materials of the future will depend on how fast those industries innovate in the face of new and disruptive technologies,” Topping said.

He added: “We have some far-reaching commitments under the Science-Based Targets Initiative by leading materials companies which can serve as examples pushing the industry to go further, together.”

## Energy-efficient building investment rising

In 2019, spending on energy-efficient buildings increased for the first time in three years, with building energy efficiency across global markets increasing to \$152 billion in 2019, or 3 percent more than the previous year, UNEP said.

This is only a small proportion of the \$5.8 trillion total spent in the building and construction sector, but there are positive signs across the investment sector that building decarbonization and energy efficiency are taking hold in investment strategies, the UN agency said.

For example, of the 1,005 real-estate companies, developers real estate investment trust, and funds representing more than \$4.1 trillion in assets under management that reported to The Global ESG Benchmark for Real Assets in 2019, 90 percent aligned their projects with green building rating standards for construction and operations.

Green buildings represent one of the biggest global investment opportunities of the next decade, estimated by the IFC to be \$24.7 trillion by 2030.

## Recommendations

Besides calling for a green recover post-pandemic and updated NDCs, the report also recommends that owners and businesses use science-based targets to guide actions and engage with stakeholders across the building design, construction, operation and users to develop partnerships and build capacity.

Investors should reevaluate all real-estate investment through an energy-efficiency and carbon reduction lens.

Other actors across the value chain should adopt circular economy concepts to reduce the demand for construction materials and lower embodied carbon and adopting nature-based solutions that enhance building resilience, the report added.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/20/u-n-buildings-related-emissions-hit-record-high/>





# 2M sign petition for global treaty on plastic pollution

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by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Two million people across the world have signed a petition calling for an urgent establishment of a global treaty to address the growing problem of plastic pollution in the oceans.

“As the evidence of the damage to people and nature caused by plastic pollution continues to build, so too is public outrage about the plastic crisis. The message from the public is clearer than ever – we need decisive global action from the governments and business to address this problem at its roots,” World Wide Fund (WWF) International global plastics policy manager Eirik Lindebjerg said in a statement.

“Two million people are calling for a binding global treaty that sets clear plastic pollution reduction targets and restores accountability as a vital measure to address this crisis,” he added.

Lindebjerg also welcomed the support of 67 governments and more than 30 businesses for the establishment of the treaty and called on all United Nations (UN) member-states to respond to the clear message from the public.

“We must urgently start the negotiation process,” he said.

In October, a WWF delegation, including two members from the Philippines, attended a global technical meeting to look into the scale of plastic pollution and find ways on how to solve the crisis.

The Philippine government just this month publicly called for a global agreement, which was supported by other countries like Vietnam, Korea, Sri Lanka, including African countries, European Union member-states, Pacific Island states, and Latin American countries, WWF said.

The call has also been supported by 30 international businesses and a majority of experts from local and international non-government organizations.

WWF noted that the final recommendations of the meeting will be submitted to the UN for its decision on the commencement of discussions for a new agreement.

WWF-Philippines executive director Joel Palma said it is also time for stakeholders to take immediate action to address plastic pollution globally.

“Public outrage at the state of our environment is building. With two million people, 67 governments, and over 30 businesses calling for a binding global treaty to establish reduction targets and accountability, world leaders can no longer turn a blind eye to the problem,” Palma said

“It is now time to begin negotiations between all UN member-states to address and solve this crisis,” he added. –



Stock image of a bat.

Image by Signe Allerslev from Pixabay

## International team seeking COVID-19 origin will go to Wuhan — WHO

[Nina Larson](#) (Agence France-Presse) - December 19, 2020 - 4:31pm

GENEVA, Switzerland — An international team of experts due to travel to China next month to probe the animal origins of COVID-19 will go to Wuhan and will carry out their investigation freely, the WHO said Friday.

Asked about the international mission, which WHO has been working for months to get to China, World Health Organization emergencies chief Michael Ryan told reporters the experts were expected to travel "in the first week of January".

"There will be quarantine arrangements, obviously, we have to. As ever, we will have to comply with whatever the arrangements are for risk management in travel on arrival and in China itself," he said.

A year into the novel coronavirus pandemic, which has killed nearly 1.7 million people and infected close to 75 million globally, the question of where the virus came from and how it first crossed over from animals to humans remains a mystery.

The WHO has for months been working to send the team of 10 international experts, including epidemiologists and animal health specialists, to China.

The UN health agency sent an advance team to Beijing in July to lay the groundwork for the international probe.

But until this week it had remained unclear when the larger team of scientists would be able to travel to China to begin epidemiological studies to try to identify the first human cases and their source of infection.

There had been concerns about whether the experts would be permitted to travel to Wuhan, where the virus first surfaced last December.

Not 'under Chinese supervision'

But Ryan insisted Friday that while the experts would of course pass through Beijing, there was no doubt "the team will visit Wuhan".

"That's the purpose of the mission," he said.

"The purpose of the mission is to go to the original point at which human cases were detected, and we fully expect to do that."



He also bristled at a question about whether they would be working "under Chinese supervision" while in China.

"It's a team of international experts with international renown, (who) will work with our Chinese colleagues," he said.

"They will not be... supervised by Chinese officials."

"We will operate as we would operate in any member state, at their invitation, with gratefulness for their support to that and with the full intention of pursuing the scientific principles that this organisation has always stood for," he insisted.

WHO, he said, would "provide all the support necessary" to the team "in order to find and learn more about the origin and source of this virus."

Scientists initially believed the killer virus jumped from animals to humans at a market selling exotic animals for meat in the city of Wuhan, where the virus was first detected late last year.

But experts now think the market may not have been the origin of the outbreak, but perhaps rather a place where it was "amplified".

It is widely assumed that the virus originally came from bats, but the intermediate animal host that transmitted it between bats and humans remains unknown.