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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



SC junks Akbayan's plea to cite DENR in contempt for dolomite project

Published November 19, 2020, 6:21 PM

by [Rey Panaligan](#)

The Supreme Court (SC) has denied the plea of the Akbayan Citizen's Action Party (Akbayan) to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt for dumping dolomite sand on portions of Manila Bay.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

Also denied by the SC in its November 17 resolution was Akbayan's plea to intervene in the 2008 Manila Bay environmental protection case that had long become final and executory.

In a resolution, the SC said what it has been monitoring is the full implementation of its 2008 decision that directed practically all government agencies, including those in law enforcement, to speed up the cleanup, restoration, and preservation of Manila Bay.

The SC even formed the Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC) to monitor and evaluate the reports submitted by the agencies tasked to implement its decision.

The committee is now headed by Chief Justice Diosdado M. Peralta with Associate Justice Rodil V. Zalameda as vice chairperson and Associate Justice Edgardo Delos Santos and Court Administrator Jose Midas P. Marquez as members.

A copy of the SC's resolution denying Akbayan's motion to intervene and to cite the DENR in contempt was not immediately available. The SC's public information office (PIO) said it would be uploaded in its website, sc.judiciary.gov.ph, once available.

The PIO's statement:

"The Supreme Court on Tuesday, November 17, denied the motion to intervene filed by Akbayan Citizen's Action Party in the Manila Bay case.

"The said case which is already final and executory involves a continuing mandamus order directing concerned government agencies to ensure the clean-up, rehabilitation and preservation of the Manila Bay.



SC junks Akbayan's plea to cite DENR in contempt for dolomite project

"... the Court held that the case has been rendered final and executory and that its jurisdiction is limited only to the full implementation of the mandated reliefs.

"The Court held that intervention is not viable where the case has long been concluded with finality and is now on execution albeit still under judicial supervision as a necessary consequence of the standing mandamus for the constant clean-up and maintenance of the bay and its waters.

"The Court held that it has not yet found any violation of the continuing mandamus amidst the quarterly reports submitted by the concerned agencies and the on-site ocular inspection conducted by the Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC).

"The Court took judicial notice that the DENR has not been remiss in its reportorial duty to the MBAC respecting the works actually performed by the concerned agencies and departments according to the writ's directions."

In its 2008 decision written by retired Associate Justice Presbitero J. Velasco Jr., now Marinduque governor, the SC said: "In the light of the ongoing environmental degradation, the court wishes to emphasize the extreme necessity for all concerned executive departments and agencies to immediately act and discharge their respective official duties and obligations."

It pointed out that "time is of the essence..., and hence, there is a need to set timetables for the performance and completion of the tasks, some of them as defined for them by law and the nature of their respective offices and mandates," it stressed.

Directed to undertake immediate action on the Manila Bay problem are the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), DENR, Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DoH), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Budget and Management ((DBM), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the Philippine National Police Maritime Group, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA).

Thereafter, the SC issued a continuing mandamus to compel the government agencies to perform their tasks.



SC junks motion to cite DENR in contempt over 'Manila Bay Sands' project

By [Kristine Joy Patag](#)(Philstar.com)
- November 19, 2020 - 5:57pm



Sandbags were placed along the artificial white sand beach along Manila Bay amid the ongoing rehabilitation of the natural harbor by the DENR in this undated photo.

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court has denied the motion of progressive group Akbayan to intervene in the landmark case ordering Manila Bay rehabilitation and to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in contempt over its controversial artificial white sand beach project.

In a statement on Thursday, the SC Public Information Office said that the case is already final and executory and “its jurisdiction is limited only to the full implementation of the mandated reliefs.”

Akbayan sought to intervene in the 2008 case and asked the SC to cite the DENR in contempt for allegedly violating the continuing mandamus the court issued over the department’s controversial “beach nourishment” project.

The project involved filing the stretch of the bay’s shore with crushed dolomite—which environmental groups have raised may pose risk to the marine ecosystem but also in communities around the area.

The SC however said intervention is not viable since the case has long been final and is now in execution stage.

“From the finality of the decision containing the writ, the jurisdiction retained by the Court is limited only to ensuring the successful implementation of the mandate reliefs,” the SC PIO added.

No violation of mandamus yet

In line with the continuing mandamus issued by the SC, the government agencies are called to submit to the court a quarterly progressive report of the activities they have undertaken following the court ruling.



SC junks motion to cite DENR in contempt over 'Manila Bay Sands' project

The SC PIO however said the court has not yet found any violation of the continuing mandamus, as it noted that the DENR has not been remiss in its reportorial duty to the Manila Bay Advisory Committee, chaired by Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta.

“This is evident from the compliance report, duly made of record containing a detailed resume of the works accomplished, concluded and maintained within the bay and its environs,” the SC PIO added.

‘Dolomite beach’

The SC also noted that the controversial dumping of crushed dolomite project came from the DENR’s “beach nourishment” program and is “not an allied or related activity sanctioned by the writ.”

Thus, the controversial project “could hardly be objectively measured as a deviation from the government’s mandate as defined in the said writ.”

The SC PIO said that contention is bred only when they will look into the hazardous potential of dolomite, but noted that it involves a factual issue, not ordinarily entertained by the high court.

“It is a challenge that properly lies in the realm of political questions which the Court may not venture into even incidentally in contempt proceeding under the given circumstances,” it added.

In October, Peralta asked the DENR to submit a report on studies and findings on the effects of dolomite on people following the chief justice’s meeting with Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and other officials.

SC spokesperson Brian Hosaka said then that Peralta's request was given as chairperson, and on behalf of the SC Manila Bay Advisory Committee. "In fact, the Chief did not make any comment with regard to the dolomite beach because of the pending matter before the SC," he added.

The SC has yet to release the voting results, only noted that Associate Justice Marvic Leonen has submitted a separate opinion.

A copy of the full ruling has also yet to be made public.



MANILA BAY REHAB | Supreme Court junks motion to cite DENR in contempt over dolomite project

November 19, 2020 , 06:57 PM

(November 19, 2020) – The Supreme Court has denied the motion filed by a political organization seeking to hold the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt over the dolomite beach beautification project in Manila Bay.

In a statement released to the press on Thursday, the high court said it has not found any violation on the part of the DENR, at least for now, with regard to the tasks that the agency needs to fulfill as stipulated in the mandamus on Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Only Justice Marvic Leonen wrote a separate opinion, but a copy of which is yet to be released to the press.

“The Court took judicial notice that the DENR has not been remiss in its reportorial duty to the MBAC (Manila Bay Advisory Committee) respecting the works actually performed by the concerned agencies and departments according to the writ’s directions,” a portion of the high court’s statement read.

In 2008, the SC issued a continuing mandamus which mandates various government agencies, including the DENR, to clean up and rehabilitate the Manila Bay.

This led to the creation of an advisory committee, presently chaired by Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta, that is assigned in monitoring the cleanup drive in the bay.

Akbayan Citizen’s Action Party, in September, wanted the SC to grant their motion for intervention in the ongoing mandamus and hold the environment agency accountable for not living up to their mandate of rehabilitating the Manila Bay.

The dolomite sand, in particular, could potentially damage the environment, according to experts.

“A dolomite beach in Manila Bay is nothing but a window-dressing project,” Akbayan said in their petition.

“Dumping artificial white sand to achieve an artificial Boracay-like beach in Manila Bay is a direct violation of the continuing mandamus because the presence of dolomite in Manila Bay will never make the waters fit for swimming, skin-diving and other forms of contact recreation,” Akbayan argued, citing the harmful effects of the dolomite to the environment and to people.

The high court said, however, that “its jurisdiction is limited only to the full implementation of the mandated reliefs,” citing the finality of the writ from years back.

“The Court held that the instant recourse is a challenge to the wisdom behind the use of the component dolomite, which is a factual issue not ordinarily entertained by the Court,” the SC said in a statement.

“It is a challenge that properly lies in the realm of political questions which the Court may not venture into even incidentally in a contempt proceeding under the given circumstances,” the statement added.



MANILA BAY REHAB | Supreme Court junks motion to cite DENR in contempt over dolomite project

In October, Peralta said he was satisfied with the performance of the DENR in the Manila Bay cleanup, based on the water quality report presented by the agency. He did not specifically comment on the dolomite project since a petition was pending at the high court back then.

The P389-million dolomite project, a part of the Manila Bay nourishment project by the DENR, has drawn flak ever since it was revealed to the public. Pro-environment groups believe that, in order to truly rehabilitate the bay, planting mangroves is one of the more sustainable ways to go.



SC denies Akbayan's bid to intervene in Manila Bay case over dolomite beach

Mike Navallo, ABS-CBN News
Posted at Nov 19 2020 06:30 PM



A view of the dolomite sand in Manila Bay beach project after typhoon Quinta left the Philippine area of responsibility on October 27, 2020. *George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News/File photo*

MANILA — The Supreme Court (SC) has junked the bid of Akbayan to intervene in a 2008 case in an attempt to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt of court supposedly for violating a continuing order to keep Manila Bay clean by dumping crushed dolomite there.

In a statement Thursday, the SC Public Information Office (PIO) said the court resolved on Tuesday that it could no longer allow Akbayan to intervene because “the case has long been concluded with finality.”

It also said that the only jurisdiction left for the court is to supervise the implementation of the ruling through submission of periodic reports to the Manila Bay Advisory Committee.

The high court noted the DENR has not been remiss in submitting its reports and it has “not yet found any violation of the continuing mandamus” based on the quarterly reports being submitted.

It also clarified that the specific directive given to the DENR and other agencies is to “clean the waters of the bay and perform maintenance measures to keep it within the legal standards of cleanliness fit for recreation”, and does not cover the DENR’s beach nourishment program.

The high court, it said, will only step in if the material used for the project — dolomite — can be shown to be hazardous.

“The Court held that the instant recourse is a challenge to the wisdom behind the use of the component dolomite, which is a factual issue not ordinarily entertained by the Court,” the media briefer from the SC PIO said.



SC denies Akbayan's bid to intervene in Manila Bay case over dolomite beach

“It is a challenge that properly lies in the realm of political questions which the Court may not venture into even incidentally in a contempt proceeding under the given circumstances,” it added.

The DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways spent P389 million to dump artificial white sand along a portion of the Manila Bay shore, which is actually crushed dolomite rock sourced from Cebu.

Akbayan had said that the artificial beach enhancement project is a “danger” to the environment, supposedly because it “contains varying levels of crystalline silica that can damage human lungs, cause cancer when breathed in, and irritate the skin and eyes.”

Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta is the member in charge of the case, being the only magistrate left out of those who came out with the landmark ruling in 2008 that directed 13 government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay.

Peralta is also the chair of the Manila Bay Advisory Committee, which visited the so-called dolomite beach in October and remarked that the water in Manila Bay is already clean.

“What we can say about Manila Bay, it’s already clean. All the waters that go to the bay from the esteros are already clean. So in other words, the purpose of the continuing mandamus is having clean water. And if you will ask me if I am satisfied, I am satisfied because the waters are clean,” he had told the media, despite the pendency of Akbayan’s petition and despite DENR’s warning that swimming in Manila Bay is unsafe.

Peralta would later clarify in a press conference on October 23 that he did not refer to the water in Manila Bay itself but to waste water that undergoes treatment before it flows to the bay.

Akbayan was represented by former Commission on Human Rights Chair Etta Rosales, Center for Youth Advocacy executive director Rafaela Mae David and Akbayan Youth Chair Dr. Raymond John Naguit when the group raised the issue before the SC in September.



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After Ulysses' 'Great Flood', DENR to continue declogging waterways

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)
November 19, 2020



Floodwaters inundate Metro Manila, Thursday Nov. 12, 2020. Typhoon Ulysses swelled rivers and flooded low-lying areas as it passed over the storm-battered northeast Philippines, where rescuers were deployed early Thursday to help people flee the rising waters.
[more from author](#)

AFTER the massive flood caused by rains induced by Typhoon Ulysses early this month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) vowed to continue various estero-cleanup activities as part of the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The huge volume of rain dumped by Typhoon Ulysses caused major rivers in Luzon that pass through the National Capital Region (NCR) and drain to Manila Bay — including San Juan, Marikina, and Tullahan – to overflow.

The clogging of esteros is also being blamed for the massive floods in low-lying areas in Metro Manila, with some barangays being completely being submerged by floodwater.

“As the rehabilitation of Manila Bay pushes forward, we have not waned in our efforts to declog esteros in Metro Manila to ensure that these are free of waste materials that choke rivers and river systems,” Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said in a statement.

“Declogging these waterways brings back their depth to prevent overflow that inundates nearby communities and lead to loss of lives and property,” he added.

As of October 29, the DENR cleanup activities within the Manila Bay region have covered a total of 51.88 kilometers of primary esteros and removed 526,477.58 cubic meters of garbage and silt.

Before emptying into Manila Bay, these esteros drain into primary river systems, such as Pasig, San Juan, Las Piñas-Zapote, Taguig-Pateros, Parañaque, Marikina, and Navotas-Malabon.



After Ulysses' 'Great Flood', DENR to continue declogging waterways

The DENR conducts regular cleanup activities in creeks leading to these rivers. The cleanup activities include clearing, desilting, grubbing, removal and hauling of submerged garbage in esteros.

These activities have also lowered the fecal coliform level in the Manila Baywalk area from 62,700 most probable number per 100 millimeters (mpn/100ml) in January 2019 to 9,200 mpn/100ml in September 2020.

Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Inter-Agency Task Force, said the cooperation of all stakeholders was essential and critical in restoring the water quality of Manila Bay.

"The DENR has been working with local government units and has entered into partnerships with the private sector to sustain the efforts initiated by the task force," Cimatu said.

According to Cimatu, "garbage-free waterways will help mitigate flooding as typhoons intensify and increase in number every year because of climate change.

In partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways, 78.34 percent or 656,180.72 cubic meters out of the targeted 837,572.42 cubic meters of dredged materials have been removed from creeks and rivers.

Other solid waste management interventions to clean Manila Bay include the installation of trash traps or trash screens in esteros to prevent trash from further flowing downstream, and the distribution of rolling trash bins and tri-bike or habal-habal in barangays for proper waste collection.

The DENR hired estero rangers to cleanup esteros, collect garbage particularly in areas not accessible to garbage trucks, and to report indiscriminate waste disposal.

Last year, the DENR entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for the implementation of the P1.7-billion Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program. One of the four major components of the DENR-DPWH joint undertaking is the P640 million Prior Estero Project which involves massive dredging of silt and garbage in at least 40 esteros, mostly in Manila, Pasay and Paranaque.

Of these, 19 have been completed and more than 20 are still in various phases of project implementation.

San Miguel Corporation, which is gearing up for construction of its P734-billion Manila International Airport Project in Bulakan, Bulacan, has been offering help to the national government to address perennial flooding in Metro Manila and Bulacan.

The ongoing P1-billion, 10-year Tullahan-Tinajeros River System dredging project will be replicated in Bulacan upon the request of local officials in the Province, to help mitigate flooding which has affected Bulacan's residents, particularly those living in low-lying areas of the province.

Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon last experienced a massive flood in 2009 during the onslaught of Typhoon Ondoy, considered as one of the worst in the country's history.



To dredge or not to dredge

By [Boo Chanco](#)(Philstar.com)

- November 20, 2020 - 12:00am

Floods are part of a Pinoy's life. I remember annual floods where I grew up in Paco, Manila, so that our refrigerator is on the second floor. Not convenient because the kitchen and dining are on the first floor, but necessary because of the floods.

As a journalist, I have heard people, who understand science and our politics, cynically say that the flooding problem will never be solved because it enriches our politicians. The flood control budgets of the DPWH and other agencies, including LGUs, provide a constant source of funds that line the pockets of officials and their friendly contractor friends.

Producing studies to deal with our floods is also a staple for researchers working for ODA agencies like JICA and the World Bank. Indeed, I think flooding has been over studied. We know what to do, but we are not doing what we should.

The big debate through the decades is to dredge or not to dredge – and the debate is far from over.

Experts have made a living making it seem like they are looking for a solution to our flooding problem. I have a more simplistic view.

First of all, I think we ought to do something about our denuded mountains. Unless we reforest those bald mountains in Montalban and the foothills of Sierra Madre, nothing we do by way of engineering solutions in the metro areas below will work.

The topsoil of the mountains will continue to be eroded and be carried by the flow of water during the rainy season to cause siltation and worsen flooding below. We need trees to hold on to the water and prevent flash floods.

Second, we need to dredge to provide immediate relief. It will not solve the problem long term, but like aspirin, it will alleviate the headache. We need to dredge the rivers and the Laguna Lake. It seems obvious even if the experts are still debating that.

Laguna Lake, which takes in Sierra Madre floodwaters, is now only two meters deep from 22 meters some years ago. Look at it as a bathtub with 23 faucets and the Pasig river is the only exit drain. The dredging can help even if it is not the ultimate solution.

There was a last-minute award by the Arroyo administration for a Laguna Lake dredging project to a Belgian company. PNoy stopped the project saying it was awarded in haste without scientific studies. Corruption was implied but that's always the case with projects of such nature.

The Belgian company took our government to arbitration and won. The International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) issued the award in favor of the Belgian company on Jan. 23, 2017.

The deal was junked six years earlier even if it was twice declared by then-Justice secretary Leila M. de Lima as "legal and binding". Our government is obligated to pay P800 million in damages for the scrapped Laguna Lake project.



To dredge or not to dredge

Maybe the final bill for the taxpayers is over P1 billion, including legal fees and other costs.

Former DPWH secretary Babes Singson explained that “what was cancelled was a corrupted dredging project in Laguna Lake which would also create a navigational lane.

“But what we did was properly implement a plan to dredge systematically starting from the mouth of the Pasig River and create an increased embankment on both sides of the Pasig River going to the Marikina River. If we did not clear the river embankments of the squatters, more people would have perished.

“What they need to implement is the full flood control master plan for Metro Manila. Key component is a regulating dam upstream in Montalban/Rodriguez. This way water from the Sierra Madre Mountains will come down the Marikina River based on its carrying capacity.”

Carlos A. Arcilla, a professor at the UP National Institute of Geological Sciences, thinks PNoy was justified in canceling the P19-billion Laguna de Bay dredging contract. Arcilla wrote that it was technically flawed and would not have controlled flooding in the metropolis.

Arcilla wrote in the Inquirer: “My testimony at the Philippine Republic vs Baggerwerken trial in Washington (international arbitration case in the World Bank, 2014) regarding the fraudulent P8-billion Pasig dredging project and the proposed P18-billion Laguna de Bay dredging project showed that very little technical vetting was done.

“We discovered that the Laguna de Bay and Pasig dredging projects were not properly vetted technically even if these were endorsed by the DPWH, Department of Environment and Natural Resources and, especially by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). The Philippine position was weakened because the lack of vetting was probably intentionally done to promote corruption.”

Arcilla is also negative about the Montalban Dam. He wrote: “The bulk of this flood control program, a P200-billion dam in the Montalban area, may not be able to accommodate upstream river excess discharge.

“Thus, any comprehensive flood control plan in this area must include a way to reduce extreme rainfall-related river discharge flowing into the Marikina River, which is the greatest source of discharge into the Laguna de Bay.”

Arcilla also warned that “flood control plans that will involve large dams in the Montalban watershed should also consider the existence of active faults in the area and the very large watershed areas that will be flooded to accommodate the dam water.”

It is interesting that Arcilla also criticized a P350-billion Metro Manila Flood Control Plan that was approved by the NEDA.

“Despite the best intentions, NEDA does not have the wherewithal to do thorough technical vetting, especially for large-ticket projects.



To dredge or not to dredge

“We should end this rapacious cycle of creating substandard projects to be funded by sovereign loans from foreign banks that bring their own consultants who will not be looking out for genuine Philippine interests.

“There are enough competent Filipino engineers and scientists who are honest and patriotic. They should help vet these projects and help stop this great corrupt leakage of funds...”

More on this never-ending debate in a future column. Suffice it to ask: What do we do now? This debate can't go on much longer. We are already drowning in words, studies and floodwater.

Boo Chanco's e-mail address is bchanco@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter [@boochanco](https://twitter.com/boochanco)



Duterte declares ‘National Bicycle Day’

By [Edith Regalado](#) (Philstar.com)
- November 20, 2020 - 12:00am



Proclamation 1052 proclaims, “The need to highlight the importance of non-motorized transportation as a means of fostering sustainable development and promoting environmental health that is conducive to the physical health and well-being of all Filipinos.”

MANILA, Philippines — President Duterte has declared the fourth Sunday of November of every year as “National Bicycle Day” in an effort to promote non-motorized transportation and to ensure ecological integrity and a clean and healthy environment.

Proclamation 1052 proclaims, “The need to highlight the importance of non-motorized transportation as a means of fostering sustainable development and promoting environmental health that is conducive to the physical health and well-being of all Filipinos.”

Meanwhile, the Philippines Development Plan until 2022 promotes the Clean Air Act that mandates the state to focus on pollution prevention rather than control.

The plan seeks to establish a clean and healthy environment by promoting eco-friendly technologies, systems and practices.

Proclamation 1052 also provides that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will be tasked to lead the observance of the National Bicycle Day and celebration in coordination with relevant non-government organizations and civil society groups.

All government agencies and instrumentalities and the private sector are enjoined to participate and render the necessary support to the DENR.

The bicycle was one of the modes of transportation approved by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases as Metro Manila was placed under general community quarantine.

The government encourages biking for transportation, noting that the two-wheeled vehicle is also cheaper as bikes do not need gasoline to run.

And while public transportation has been limited due to the pandemic, the bicycle will also be a big help for the public.



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Pasig River Coordinating and Management Office - PRCMO

11 hrs · 🌐

LOOK: PRCMO IN ACTION IN ESTERO DE CONCORDIA

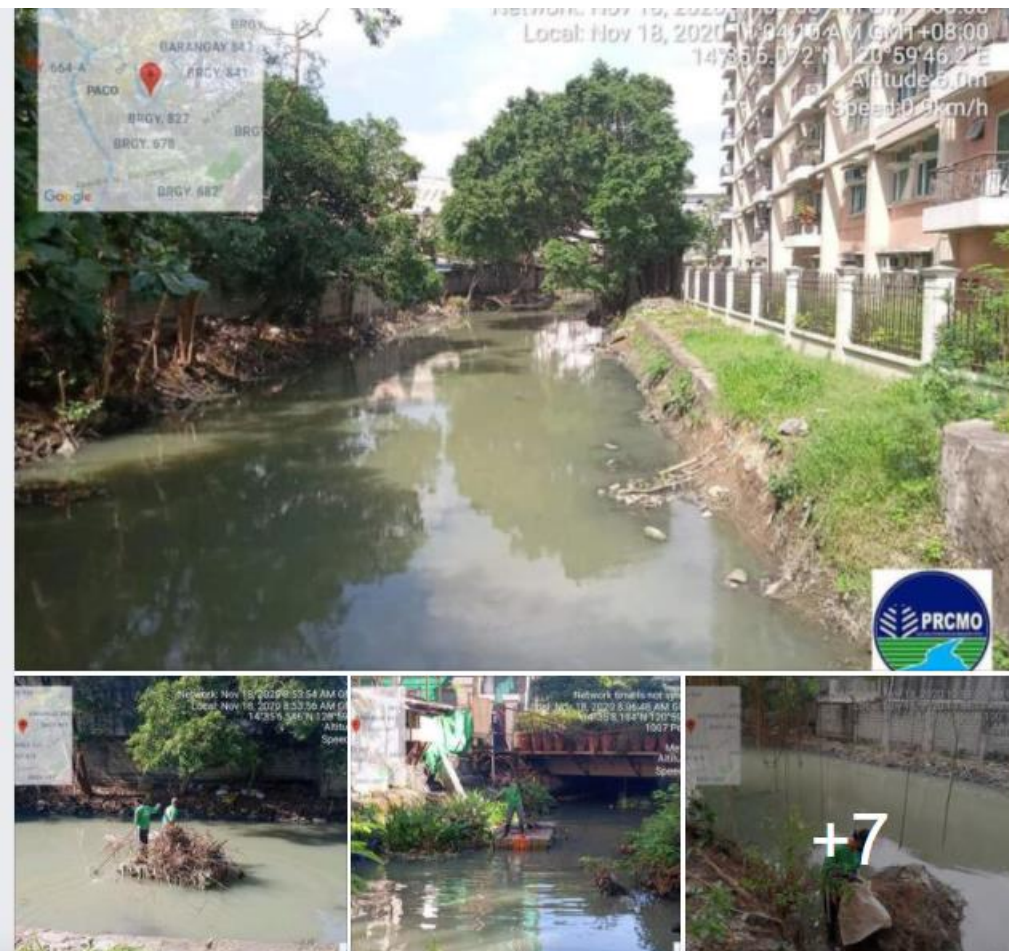
Here are photos of the cleanup and maintenance activities of the River Warriors in #EsteroDeConcordia in Manila.

A total of 21 sacks of waste were recovered by the Warriors from the estero's portion under Barangays 827 and 831, Paco. Of the 21 sacks, 12 were filled with biodegradable materials while the other 9 consisted of nonbiodegradable solid wastes.

The 1.084-kilometer Estero de Concordia is connected to Estero de Paco and Estero de Pandacan and is likewise included in the priority waterways that lead to the Pasig River and Manila Bay.

With more and more partners joining us in our collaborative undertaking for our waterways, restoring the life and reviving the pride of the Pasig River, Manila Bay, and its connected waterways is definitely possible and within our reach!

#PRCMO #DENR #PasigRiver #PusoParaSallogPasig





Manila bats for revival of ‘nilad’ plant population

By Marita Moaje November 19, 2020, 6:08 pm



MANILA – The “nilad” plant where the name “Manila” came from will soon repopulate the city through a partnership between the city government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB).

Manila Mayor Francisco ‘Isko Moreno’ Domagoso in a meeting with DENR-ERDB on Tuesday agreed to launch the “Nilad for Maynila” Project.

The project that will bring back the nilad plant in Manila aims to re-green a part of the Manila Bay.

The toponym or place name of Manila is said to be coined from the abundance of the stalky-rice plant that features flowers of bright white and yellow.

The nilad plant is said to be abundant in the city before and people say it is from the phrase “may nilad” meaning “where nilad is”.

A quick survey identified four potential sites where the nilad plant will be initially planted.

These are the areas of the Baseco Beach, a vacant lot near Quirino Grandstand, an area adjacent to the Manila Yacht Club, and on the islands along the Manila Baywalk.

Domagoso ordered Manila Department of Public Service director Kenneth Amurao to deploy Team Mandaragat, Baseco Beach Warriors, and Estero Rangers to assist the city government in planting and protecting the nilad population in the identified locations.

The nilad plant, with scientific name *Scyphiphora Hydrophyllacea*, is a mangrove species that grew abundantly along Manila Bay and Pasig River during the early times.

Mangroves help people weather the impacts of climate change and help mitigate its causes.

They have the capacity to take more carbon out of the atmosphere than terrestrial forests. **(PNA)**



Sotto calls for review of disaster and environmental laws and their implementation

Published November 19, 2020, 4:27 PM

by [Vanne Elaine Terrazola](#)

Senate President Vicente Sotto III on Thursday called for a review of the country's disaster and environmental laws and their implementation by concerned government agencies.

Sotto said there is a need to update the "outdated" laws in the wake of destruction caused by the series of typhoons that hit the country in recent weeks.

"Our existing environmental laws have laid down a long list of guidelines and protocols that LGUs (local government units) and government offices needed to do before, during and after extreme weather disturbances affect our country. These laws were passed by Congress to make sure that the country, especially LGUs, are one step ahead when super typhoons like Rolly and Ulysses cross our area of responsibility," he said in his statement.

Despite these laws, Sotto said the national government and LGUs were "ill-prepared" when flood waters caused by Typhoon Ulysses submerged houses and business establishments in several provinces Luzon recently.

He also raised the issue of release of water in Magat Dam which flooded towns of Isabela and Cagayan provinces.

"Anong nangyari? Bakit hindi naging handa ang ating pamahalaan at ang mga LGUs nang tumawid sa ating bansa ang mga bagyong sina Rolly at Ulysses? Hindi ba sila sumunod sa mga alituntunin na nakasaad sa ating mga batas? Isa pang mahalagang tanong, ipinatutupad ba ng mga ahensiya ng ating pamahalaan ang mga batas ukol sa kalikasan at natural disasters na ipinasa ng Kongreso?" Sotto asked.

(What happened? Why didn't our government and the LGUs prepare when Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses hit our country. Didn't they follow the protocols stated in our laws? Another important question is, are government agencies implementing the laws that Congress passed on environment and natural disasters?)

Specifically, Sotto wanted the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to apprise Congress of the status of its implementation of environmental laws.

"We need a feedback from the executive if the provisions of the laws are being implemented properly. The executive needs to make a full assessment of these laws because we in Congress need to know which of these are already obsolete and needs to be amended or repealed, and which are still effective and relevant to the current state of our environment," he said.

"These reviews should be done regularly, communication between the executive and legislative branches of our government should be strengthened to prevent more loss of lives and properties," he added.

Still, Sotto said agencies should stop finger-pointing and instead work to help disaster-affected communities.



Sotto calls for review of disaster and environmental laws and their implementation

“Tama na ang pasahan ng sisi (Enough with passing the blame). Hindi nakakatulong ang pagtuturuan ng iba’t ibang ahensiya ng ating gobyerno sa panahon ng kalamidad (The finger-pointing among government agencies does not bring any help during these calamities),” he said.

During their budget debates on Wednesday, Sotto hit the supposed lack of preparation by LGUs ahead of the onslaught of Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses. He said the public should not easily put the blame and ask the national government for help, but go to their mayors and governors first.

The Senate is scheduled to start next week a legislative inquiry on the massive flooding in Luzon, which senators believed was a “man-made” disaster.



Sotto pushes inventory of environmental laws

[Thursday, November 19, 2020](#) [Marlon Purificacion](#)

SENATE President Vicente Sotto III on Thursday pushed for an inventory of the country's environmental laws and an accounting of their implementation by the executive branch as he underscored the need to adapt outdated guidelines with the country's current landscape.

Sotto said a review of the status of implementation of the laws that past and present Congresses have passed has become crucial especially in the wake of how the recent massive flooding in many provinces in Luzon due to incessant rains caught the national and local government units flat-footed.

"Our existing environmental laws have laid down a long list of guidelines and protocols that LGUs and government offices needed to do before, during and after extreme weather disturbances affect our country. These laws were passed by Congress to make sure that the country, especially LGUs, are one step ahead when super typhoons like Rolly and Ulysses cross our area of responsibility," Sotto pointed out.

It is disconcerting, Sotto added, that despite the existence of laws and their corresponding implementing rules and regulations (IRR), the national government and LGUs were still ill-prepared when flood waters due to non-stop rains caused by typhoon Ulysses submerged houses and business establishments in Rodriguez in the province of Rizal and how stored water from the Magat Dam spilled the swollen Cagayan River to the towns of Isabela and Cagayan provinces in the Cagayan Valley region, washing away properties and claiming lives in its path.

"Anong nangyari? Bakit hindi naging handa ang ating pamahalaan at ang mga LGUs nang tumawid sa ating bansa ang mga bagyong sina Rolly at Ulysses? Hindi ba sila sumunod sa mga alituntunin na nakasaad sa ating mga batas? Isa pang mahalagang tanong, ipinatutupad ba ng mga ahensiya ng ating pamahalaan ang mga batas ukol sa kalikasan at natural disasters na ipinasa ng Kongreso?" Sotto asked.

Sotto wants the government, particularly the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), to apprise Congress of the status of implementation of the numerous laws put in place by lawmakers to protect the people and their lands from the fury of Mother Earth.

"We need a feedback from the executive if the provisions of the laws are being implemented properly. The executive needs to make a full assessment of these laws because we in Congress need to know which of these are already obsolete and needs to be amended or repealed, and which are still effective and relevant to the current state of our environment. These reviews should be done regularly, communication between the executive and legislative branches of our government should be strengthened to prevent more loss of lives and properties," Sotto said.

"Tama na ang pasahan ng sisi. Hindi nakakatulong ang pagtuturuan ng iba't ibang ahensiya ng ating gobyerno sa panahon ng kalamidad. Sa ganitong mga pagkakataon, dapat ay nagkakaisa at nagtutulungan tayong lahat," he added.



Vargas seeks probe on PH's reforestation program, protection of watersheds

By: [Neil Arwind Mercado](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 12:05 AM November 20, 2020



Quezon City 5th District Rep. Alfred Vargas. FILE PHOTO

MANILA, Philippines — Quezon City Representative Alfred Vargas is seeking a congressional investigation into the status of the government's reforestation and watershed protection programs following the destruction and flooding caused by typhoons that hit the Philippines in recent weeks.

Under House Resolution No. 1361, Vargas, a member of the House committee on disaster resilience, said he wants to know what the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other concerned government agencies have been doing to address illegal logging in protected areas, such as the Sierra Madre mountain range.

"The extensive damage caused by Typhoon Ulysses, as well as the previous typhoons, should be seen as a wake up call for us to work for a viable and successful reforestation program and to protect our forest areas and watersheds from such extractive activities as illegal logging and quarrying," Vargas said in a statement on Thursday.

Further, Vargas is also seeking an explanation into the continued quarrying at the Marikina watershed.

"The local officials in the affected provinces have blamed the [widespread flooding](#) to supposed illegal logging in the Sierra Madre and the prevalence of quarrying in areas of the Marikina Watershed," Vargas said.

"These are serious concerns that need to be addressed decisively if we are to prevent a repeat of the disaster that has affected millions of our kababayans," he added.

In his resolution, Vargas noted that the National Greening Program (NGP) adopted in 2011, set a target of 1.5 billion trees to be planted on 1.5 million hectares of land from 2011 to 2016.

While DENR claimed to have 1.7 billion trees during the five-year span of the NGP, data shows total forest cover of the Philippines is the lowest in Asia at only 23 percent, the lawmaker said.



Vargas seeks probe on PH's reforestation program, protection of watersheds

Vargas said DENR officials should disclose other components of the NGP such as the moratorium on the cutting and harvesting of timber in natural and residual forests to be implemented by an anti-illegal logging task force, and the rehabilitation of denuded and degraded forest lands estimated at 7.1 million hectares from 2016 to 2028.

“Any serious undertaking to mitigate the impact of typhoons and other natural calamities must include reforestation as well as the expansion and protection of our forested areas. We cannot divorce environmental protection from disaster risk reduction,” Vargas said. ***With reports from Miguel Dumlao***

JPV

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1362805/vargas-seeks-probe-on-phs-reforestation-program-protection-of-watersheds#ixzz6eHPjxzA>

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METRO

Solons score Marikina watershed quarrying activities

Marikina City Mayor Marcelino Teodoro has earlier appealed for the rehabilitation of the Marikina watershed that was perceived to have aggravated the flooding situation in the city.



Published 7 mins ago

on November 20, 2020 04:00 AM

By [Michelle R. Guillang @tribuneph1_mish](#)



With the House of Representatives set to investigate the recent floods that have submerged most of Cagayan and Isabela, a lawmaker is now questioning the continuance of quarrying activities at the Marikina watershed.

The onslaught of typhoon “Ulysses” last week not only battered areas in the Cagayan Valley region but also left Marikina City and other nearby cities under murky water.

This prompted Quezon City Rep. Alfred Vargas to file House Resolution 1361 last 17 November to ask the House Special Committee on Reforestation to probe the matter and the status of government’s reforestation programs.

“The local officials in the affected provinces have blamed the widespread flooding to supposed illegal logging in the Sierra Madre and the prevalence of quarrying in areas of the Marikina Watershed. These are serious concerns that need to be addressed decisively if we are to prevent a repeat of the disaster that has affected millions of our kababayans,” he said.

It is seen that if the programs are being implemented properly, the damage brought by the recent typhoons may have been reduced.

Marikina City Mayor Marcelino Teodoro earlier appealed for the rehabilitation of the Marikina watershed that was perceived to have aggravated the flooding situation in the city.

He believed quarrying activities there should be temporarily discontinued as the local government unit assesses how it can be further regulated.



METRO

Solons score Marikina watershed quarrying activities

Typhoon “Ulysses” should be a “wake-up call” for the government, noted Vargas.

“The extensive damage caused by typhoon “Ulysses,” as well as the previous typhoons, should be seen as a wake-up call for us to work for a viable and successful reforestation program and to protect our forest areas and watersheds from such extractive activities as illegal logging and quarrying,” he said.

He then questioned if the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other concerned government agencies address illegal logging in protected areas, such as the Sierra Madre mountain range.

“Any serious undertaking to mitigate the impact of typhoons and other natural calamities must include reforestation as well as the expansion and protection of our forested areas. We cannot divorce environmental protection from disaster risk reduction,” Vargas said.



Reforestation — long-range answer to massive flooding

Published November 19, 2020, 11:15 PM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)



The immediate need in Luzon is for continued rescue and relief work for the people who lost their homes in the wake of typhoon Ulysses, the latest of a series of storms and typhoons that swept in from the Pacific in a span of three weeks.

It was initially reported that Ulysses had caused massive flooding in Marikina City, the catch basin of Metro Manila, but it turned out the next day that the flooding had actually hit the whole of Luzon, particularly Cagayan and Isabela in the north. Helicopters brought food packs to many barangays isolated by the floods that covered the region.

Damage to rice and other farms in the Cordilleras, Ilocos region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, and Bicol was estimated at P2.53 billion. With the declaration of a state of calamity in all of Luzon, the national government augmented the funding of the National Risk Reduction and Management Fund by P10 billion.

The unexpected heavy flooding in Cagayan and Isabela has moved the House of Representatives to conduct an inquiry. Aside from the unusually heavy rains that fell on the mountains in the area, it seems that dam administrators in both Cagayan Valley and Marikina released water threatening the dam structures, but in the process, they worsened the floods in the populated areas downstream.

The spilling operations in Magat Dam raised the flood waters in Isabela, Aurora, all the way to Aparri, Cagayan, the exit point of the Cagayan River, Undersecretary Renato Solidum of the Department of Science and Technology said.

There is now a suggestion, he said, for the dredging of the Cagayan River along with the construction of a temporary embankment. But vital to any effort to prevent another disastrous flooding in the future, he said, is reforestation in the mountains.

Forests serve to keep the water in the mountains. Without trees to hold the water around their roots, the water flows down unimpeded to the lowlands and cause floods like the one that just hit the whole of Luzon.



Reforestation — long-range answer to massive flooding

Then there is the issue of illegal mining in surrounding mountains. While this is not directly related to the floods, it is a problem of law enforcement, which becomes one of special importance in times of disaster.

So many issues are now coming up because of the unusually widespread flood in Luzon. With its additional funds, the government should be able to attend to the most immediate problems of rescue, relief and rehabilitation, and dam control, along with river dredging and raising of embankments.

But the long-range solution must not be forgotten—reforestation of the mountains that will keep the water from rushing down to the lowlands, destroying homes and lives, everytime a typhoon like Ulysses comes roaring from the Pacific.



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12 hrs · 🌐

Bahagi ng planong rehabilitasyon sa mga nasalantang bayan ang dredging sa kahabaan ng Cagayan River at reforestation sa lalong madaling panahon.



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**CAGAYAN
REFORESTATION
PLAN**

YOUTUBE.COM

Reforestation at dredging, bahagi sa plano ng pamahalaan sa Cagayan



Forest pockets up along floodway



Photo By Iloilo City Government
November 19, 2020

ILOILO City's First Forest Pocket is planted adjacent to the Jaro floodway area, adopting the Miyawaki method.

An area of 8 meters x 55 meters (440 square meters) are planted in between fire trees with the following species: ylang-ylang, tapuyay, narra, kamansi, tambis, babana, kamagong, bakan, atis, jackfruit, palawan cherry, caballero and pandakaki.

Already growing are acacia, aratilis, passion fruit and dwarf coconut.

"We will continue to identify forest pockets to be planted and cultivated," Executive Assistant for Environment Armando Dayrit said.

"The area in the floodway is becoming an illegal dumping site of people throwing their garbage. We have to clear it and warn people the floodway is not a garbage dumping place," Dayrit added. **(PR)**



EDITORIAL - Magtanim ng puno

(Pang-Masa)

- November 19, 2020 - 12:00am



KALBO na ang mga bundok. Sinalaula ng mga illegal logger. Pati sa mga watershed areas, pinagpuputol din ang mga puno. Wala nang nakatanim na puno sa mga pampang ng ilog at sapa sapagkat pinutol na upang gawing uling para ibenta sa mga restawran at mga litsunan ng baboy at manok. Wala nang matanaw na luntiang mga kahoy sa bundok, sa halip, lupang guho ang maaaninag. Nawalan na ang mga ugat na kumakapit sa lupa kaya mahina at nagkakaroon ng soil erosion. Sa malakas at matagalang pag-ulan, naiipon ang tubig sa kalbong bundok at dito na magsisimula ang pagguho o landslide.

Sa nangyaring malawakang pagbaha sa Cagayan noong nakaraang linggo na nagdulot nang malaking pinsala sa lalawigan at naging sanhi ng kamatayan ng 13 katao, isa sa itinatuturong dahilan nang pagbaha ay ang pagkakalbo ng mga kabundukan sa lugar. Wala nang punongkahoy sapagkat pinagpuputol na ng mga illegal na magtotroso.

Ayon sa report, ang paligid ng Magat Dam ay unti-unti na ring nauubos ang mga kahoy. Walang patid ang pagputol sa mga kahoy doon na mahalaga pa naman para maging matibay ang lupa sa paligid ng dam. Kapag nawala ang mga puno sa paligid ng dam, asahan na ang mga pagbaha. Wala nang kokontrol sa tubig at mas lalong malubha ang pagbaha.

Sinisisi ni Cagayan Governor Manuel Mamba ang management ng Magat Dam sa pagpapakawala ng tubig na nagresulta sa malaking baha. Sinusuportahan ni Mamba ang isasagawang imbestigasyon sa ginawang pagpapakawala ng tubig. Sabi naman ng Magat ma-nagement, hindi sila dapat sisihin sa nangyari. Anila, talagang maraming ulan ang binagsak ng Bagyong Ulysses dahilan para umapaw ang Cagayan River.

Balak ng pamahalaan na ang mga estudyanteng kukuha ng government license ay required na magtanim ng puno. Ayon kay Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, pangmatagalang solusyon ito para mapigilan ang pagbaha.

Makabuluhan ang balak na ito at maaaring solusyon sa problemang baha. Sa rami ng mga estudyanteng kukuha ng lisensiya, maraming puno ang maitatanim. Siguruhin lamang na ang mga itatanim na puno ay maaalagaan. Marami nang pangyayari na kapag naitanim na ang mga puno sa bundok o sa pampang ng ilog, pinabayaan na at namamatay. Sana, mayroong mag-aalaga sa mga itinanim na puno para masigurong mabubuhay at hindi naman nasayang ang pagpapakahirap ng mga nagtanim at gumastos sa biniling pananim.



EDITORIAL - Wala nang mga puno

(Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- November 20, 2020 - 12:00am



HUBAD na ang mga bundok dahil sa illegal loggers. Pati watershed areas, inubos na rin ng mga salot sa kapaligiran. Wala nang nakatanim na puno sa mga pampang ng ilog at sapa sapagkat pinutol na upang gawing muwebles. Wala nang matanaw na luntiang mga kahoy sa bundok, sa halip, lupang guho ang maaaninag. Nawalan na ang mga ugat na kumakapit sa lupa kaya mahina at nagkakaroon ng soil erosion. Sa malakas at matagalang pag-ulan, naiipon ang tubig sa kalbong bundok at dito na magsisimula ang pagguho o landslide.

Sa nangyaring malawakang pagbaha sa Cagayan noong nakaraang linggo na nagdulot nang malaking pinsala sa lalawigan at naging sanhi ng kamatayan ng 13 katao, isa sa itinatuturing dahilan nang pagbaha ay ang pagkakalbo ng mga kabundukan sa lugar. Sinira ng illegal loggers.

Ayon sa report, ang paligid ng Magat Dam ay unti-unti na ring nauubos ang mga kahoy. Walang patid ang pagputol sa mga kahoy doon na mahalaga pa naman para maging matibay ang lupa sa paligid ng dam. Kapag nawala ang mga puno sa paligid ng dam, asahan na ang mga pagbaha.

Sinisisi ni Cagayan Governor Manuel Mamba ang management ng Magat Dam sa pagpapakawala ng tubig na nagresulta sa malaking baha. Sinusuportahan ni Mamba ang isasagawang imbestigasyon sa ginawang pagpapakawala ng tubig.

Sabi naman ng Magat management, hindi sila ang dapat sisihin sa nangyari. Anila, talagang maraming ulan ang binagsak ng Bagyong Ulysses dahilan para umapaw ang Cagayan River. Mababaw na anila ang Cagayan River.

Balak naman ng pamahalaan na pagtanimin ng puno ang mga estudyanteng kukuha ng government license. Gawin itong requirements. Ayon kay Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, pangmatagalang solusyon ang pagtanimin ng puno para mapigilan ang pagbaha.

Maganda ang balak na ito kung maipatutupad. Sa rami ng mga estudyanteng kukuha ng lisensiya, maraming puno ang maitatanim. Siguruhin lamang na ang mga itatanim na puno ay maaalagaan. Marami nang pangyayari na kapag naitanim na ang mga puno sa bundok o sa pampang ng ilog, pinapabayaang lang kaya namatay. Balewala ang tree planting. Siguruhing may mag-aalaga sa mga itatanim na puno para mabuhay at hindi masayang ang pagpapakahirap sa pagtanimin. Ito na lang ang solusyon para maiwasan ang pagbaha.



Avarice caused the floods in Cagayan and Isabela



By [Ramon T. Tulfo](#)
November 19, 2020

WE wept after seeing TV footage and news photos of Cagayan and Isabela provinces turned into lakes during and after Typhoon “Ulysses”.

Our hearts went out to the people on rooftops signaling for help and those being evacuated to safety from the rampaging floodwaters

But you know what?

Local officials in Cagayan and Isabela — as well as the regional officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) — are to blame for the fate that has befallen the people of Cagayan and Isabela.

Avarice or excessive greed by those officials caused the calamity.

The Cagayan River overflowed its banks once again because the channel is heavily silted.

Overflowing of the country’s longest and largest river is a frequent occurrence during typhoons, but Ulysses was the worst in many years.

The river is 2 to 3 meters deep in most areas because of the accumulation of sand and mud over the years.

Floods would have been prevented had the Cagayan River been 9 to 12 meters deep.

A Taiwanese, Joseph Huang, volunteered to dredge the Cagayan River for free — repeat, for free! — four years ago.

But local and regional officials of the DPWH and DENR gave him a hard time by reportedly demanding bribes from Huang and his representatives.

Local officials also allegedly made Huang pay exorbitant fees for permits to dredge when those permits are usually issued for free.



Avarice caused the floods in Cagayan and Isabela



On the other hand, regional officials of the DPWH and DENR were apparently under instructions from legislators to dredge the river using only the legislators' preferred contractors, who would be paid through their pork barrel.

Billions of pesos are set aside every year by the House of Representatives and the Senate for the dredging of rivers and other waterways.

So, it's understandable why congressmen and their cohorts at the DPWH and DENR didn't want to dredge the Cagayan River for free because that would have deprived them of the reason to use their pork barrel.

Huang would have rid the Cagayan River of millions of tons of mud and sand, then transported the silt to Hong Kong as fillers for the international airport that is being reclaimed from the sea.

Huang, who has invested millions of dollars in the fish and seafood business, volunteered to dredge the Cagayan River as a gesture of gratitude to our government.

* * *

This columnist hates telling the government "I told you so," but I've written about the catastrophe that would hit Cagayan — I didn't mention Isabela — as a result of the greed of the officials I mentioned above.

If memory serves, I criticized local officials and regional executives of the DPWH and DENR last year and in 2018 for refusing to have the heavily silted river dredged.

Huang's dredging ship stayed anchored off Cagayan for years incurring expenses for operations and crew.

The ship waited for the go-signal that never came.

As a result, Huang lost P200 million for the maintenance of the ship and its crew.



Avarice caused the floods in Cagayan and Isabela

* * *

Had the Noynoy Aquino administration dredged Laguna de Bay and constructed the Parañaque Spillway, the repeat of Typhoon “Ondoy” in 2009 would not have taken place in Marikina and other parts of Metro Manila.

Marikina and neighboring areas were submerged in waters that reached up to the rooftops of houses because of Ondoy.

The same thing happened during recent Typhoon Ulysses.

During Ondoy, water from the denuded mountains flowed into Laguna Lake, which is heavily silted like the Cagayan River, flooding 80,000 hectares of urban land; that’s more than Singapore’s 72,000 hectares!

After Ondoy, architect Felino “Jun” Palafox, a world-famous urban planner, proposed to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo the dredging of Laguna Lake and the construction of the Parañaque Spillway to prevent huge floods in Metro Manila.

Without the Parañaque Spillway, Palafox told GMA, the heavily silted Laguna Lake is like “a toilet without a flush” or “a big bathtub with 23 faucets without a drain.”

GMA approved Palafox’s recommendations, but her successor, Noynoy Aquino, scuttled the project.

* * *

Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar may resign after President Rodrigo “Digong” Duterte called out the DPWH for unabated corruption, according to sources in the department.

Villar, the sources said, would make the public scolding of the DPWH by the President as a reason for quitting.

“He has long wanted to resign; he was waiting for the right time,” said one of my sources.

Villar, the son of former senator Manny and Senator Cynthia, was excluded from the presidential scolding because, Digong said, he was “too rich to steal.”

The young Villar will start campaigning for political office — possibly senator or vice president — in the 2020 elections, my little birdies said.

* * *

Liya Wu, Chinese-turned-Filipino citizen, has donated 300 sacks of rice to the Ramon Tulfo Good Samaritan Foundation for distribution to the victims of typhoons Rolly and Ulysses.

The rice, in sacks weighing 25 kilograms each, is as aromatic as the ones donated by billionaire philanthropists Ramon Ang, Kim Wong and Henry Lim Bon Liong.

The rice donations from Ang, Wong and Lim Bon Liong have been given away to thousands of hungry people.



Avarice caused the floods in Cagayan and Isabela

The latest donation from Liya is her second.

If Liya Wu's name is familiar, that's because she was unfairly included in the charge sheet of immigration officers reportedly involved in human trafficking at the international airport.

Ms. Wu, who operates the Empire International Tours and Travel, is a legitimate tour operator who secured visas for her Chinese clients at the Bureau of Immigration main office in Intramuros, Manila.

The 44 immigration officers who were charged had allowed Chinese nationals to enter the country without visas for hefty sums.

I helped Wu acquire her Filipino citizenship in court because her husband, Bernard Gan, is my close friend.



Calls to preserve Sierra Madre mountain range renewed after ‘Ulysses’ onslaught

By [Catalina Ricci S. Madarang](#)

- November 19, 2020 - 7:19 PM



Before and after typhoon damage photos at the jump-off point at Tinipak River in Mt. Daraitan in Rizal via Random Act of Kindness on Facebook (Random Act of Kindness/Released)

Calls to protect the **Sierra Madre** mountain range and suspend the construction of the **Kaliwa Dam** project were launched online after **Typhoon Ulysses** ravaged several parts of Luzon.

The Sierra Madre, also [considered](#) as the barrier or backbone of Luzon, is the longest mountain range in the Philippines that covers the northeast coast of Luzon.

It is also where 20 of the [country’s protected areas and forests](#) are located, including the **La Mesa Watershed Reservation** and the **Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscapes**.

On the other hand, Kaliwa Dam project is a Kaliwa Dam is P12.2 billion China-funded project which is among the government’s priority projects as a long-term solution to Metro Manila’s water woes.

[It is planned](#) to be a medium-term water source for Metro Manila that will supplement Angat Dam in Bulacan.

Why Filipinos are pushing to preserve Sierra Madre

In a post on Facebook on November 19, environmental conservation group **Random Act of Kindness (RAK)** shared photos of the typhoon damage at the Tinipak River-Mt. Daraitan jump-off point in Rizal.

The landscape, especially the path, was nearly ruined with boulders of rocks everywhere.

“This is NOT the Tinipak River-Mt. Daraitan jump-off point that we know of,” the caption read.



Calls to preserve Sierra Madre mountain range renewed after ‘Ulysses’ onslaught

The group also cited a quote from a resident named Ka Buro, saying: “Sa tagal ng panahon ko dito, 49 years, dito na ako sinilang, ngayon ko lang nakitang ganito ‘yong ilog.”

The advocates then noted the importance of protecting Sierra Madre amid the worsening climate crisis, citing the consequences of the Kaliwa Dam project.

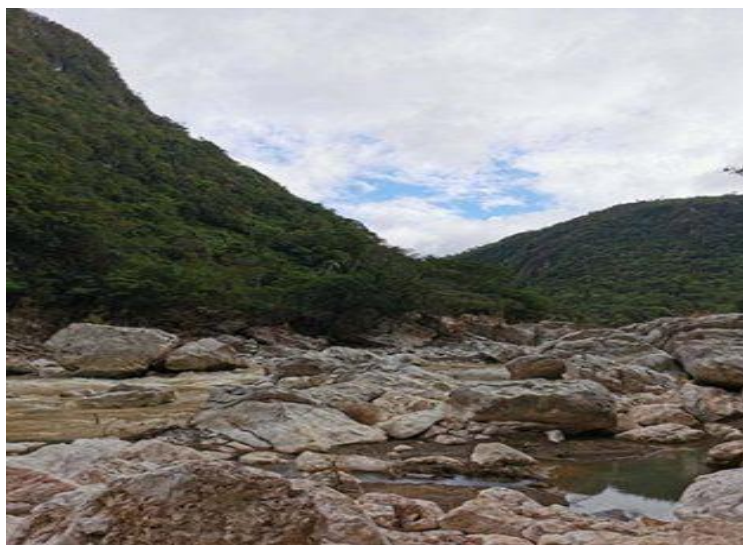
“This could only be the beginning. As we continue to face climate crisis, we need the protection of Sierra Madre Mountain Range. However, residents of Daraitan fear that the illegal construction of Kaliwa Dam could further endanger their lives and destroy their homes when future typhoons, just like [#UlyssesPH](#), hit Tanay, Rizal,” the post read.

“The opposed and illegal Kaliwa Dam would take up portions of Sierra Madre between Tanay and Infanta, Quezon, as well as claim ancestral lands of Dumagat-Remontado. [#STOPKaliwaDam](#),” it added.

RAK also shared photos of the jump-off point before the typhoon arrived. The photos were taken in May 2020.

Photos before Typhoon Ulysses

1 of 4



Photos of Tinipak River-Mt. Daraitan jump-off point before Typhoon Ulysses (Random Act of Kindness/Released)



Calls to preserve Sierra Madre mountain range renewed after 'Ulysses' onslaught



Photos of Tinipak River-Mt. Daraitan jump-off point before Typhoon Ulysses (Random Act of Kindness/Released)



Photos of Tinipak River-Mt. Daraitan jump-off point before Typhoon Ulysses (Random Act of Kindness/Released)

Photos of Tinipak River-Mt. Daraitan jump-off point before Typhoon Ulysses (Random Act of Kindness/Released)

Masungi Georeserve, a private-led conservation area in Baras, Rizal, also called for the restoration of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscapes or the Upper Marikina Watershed, a 26,000-hectare protected area in Rizal. Its restoration will help prevent floodwaters from inundating surrounding communities.



Calls to preserve Sierra Madre mountain range renewed after ‘Ulysses’ onslaught

“In this case, water from the Sierra Madre Mountains flows through areas such as Antipolo, Baras, General Nakar, Rodriguez, San Mateo, and Tanay, all the way down to rivers and waterways such as Pasig River, Marikina River, and Laguna de Bay. However, the continued destruction of the forest has affected the watershed’s natural ability to hold stormwater,” read the post on November 2. Local artist Kevin Raymundo, also known as Tarantadong Kalbo, on November 13 also shared a comic strip depicting Sierra Madre’s importance during typhoons.

Online petitions resurfaced

There are two ongoing online petitions on Change.org addressed to President **Rodrigo Duterte** urging him to discontinue the construction of the Kaliwa Dam and look for alternative water sources.

These were initiated by non-profit coalition **Green Convergence Philippines** with the goal of getting 300,000 signatures and the civic group **Stop Kaliwa Dam Network** with the goal of obtaining 150,000 signatures. The first petition titled, “No to Kaliwa Dam!,” was created two years ago while the latter titled “Stop Kaliwa Dam, Save our Future!” was created a year ago.

The Stop Kaliwa Dam Network said it is opposing the following:

- Destruction of 5,000 homes of indigenous groups Dumagat-Remontados
- Destruction of biodiversity and habitat of 126 species in 300 hectares of the Sierra Madre and endanger 100,000 residents downstream
- Possibility of further encroachment of China on the territory
- Not sustainable because of the high rate of sedimentation in the area

“Alternative water solutions that are both cheaper and more sustainable (e.g. watershed rehabilitation, repairing and improving existing dams and water distribution facilities, water conservation policies) have been offered by various experts,” the petition of Stop Kaliwa Dam Network [read](#).

Meanwhile, the petition of Green Convergence Philippines is already outdated because it is asking Duterte to not sign the agreement with China, citing that the signing of deal is scheduled Nov. 11, 2018.

It stated the similar reasons in opposing the project. It added that the proposed infrastructure is to be located at an earthquake prone area.

“Most of the proposed dam sites would be subject to high peak acceleration and are exposed to generally high degree of seismicity,” the petition [read](#).

Last [August 26](#), Duterte signed [Administrative Order No. 32](#), “expediting the review and approval process of infrastructure flagship projects on water security.”



Calls to preserve Sierra Madre mountain range renewed after ‘Ulysses’ onslaught

This covers the projects listed in the **National Economic and Development Authority’s** [February 17 list](#) of flagship projects, which included Kaliwa Dam Project.

The outdated petition, however, is still making rounds across Facebook and Twitter especially after devastation of recent tropical cyclones “Quinta,” “Rolly” and “Ulysses.”

Last September, opposition to the multibillion Kaliwa Dam project was also raised by Bishop **Bernardino Cortez** of Infanta, citing that it poses risks to lowland agricultural and fishing communities with a history of flash flooding.

READ: [Fight against Kaliwa dam a matter of ‘survival,’ says prelate](#)



Magat Dam ‘aggravates’ impacts of mining, logging, land conversion – IBON

By: [Cathrine Gonzales](#) - Reporter / [@cgonzalesINQ](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:11 PM November 19, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The release of waters from Magat Dam isn’t the first time that it has caused severe flooding and destruction, IBON Foundation, a non-profit development organization specializing in research, pointed out on Thursday.

In a statement posted on social media, the group said “Magat Dam aggravates mining, logging, [and] land conversation impact,” and that indigenous farms and communities have been flooded in the past because of the dam.

“Ifugao lands were inundated in 2008 because of increased sedimentation in the dam’s reservoir. Cagayan and Isabela were also flooded by the dam during Typhoons Pedring and Quiel in 2011,” it added.

IBON Foundation also pointed out that in December 2015, the release of water from Magat, Angat, Ipo, Ambuklao, and Binga Dams during Typhoon Nona displaced around 200,000 residents of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, and Quirino provinces.

The group said this resulted in 42 deaths and P6.4 billion worth of damage.

“Large dams add to the destruction already caused by government-sanctioned logging, mining, and land-use conversion by profit-seeking corporations,” IBON Foundation stressed.

But Wilfredo Gloria, operations manager of the Magat River Integrated Irrigation System, denied the claim of IBON.

“Magat Dam did not aggravate as water releases from the dam is controlled. It is the other way around. Had the environmental laws in mining, logging, land conversion and other related zoning laws were strictly implemented, the destruction should have been mitigated,” he said in a text message to INQUIRER.net.

Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba earlier said that the water from other provinces and the water released from Magat Dam flowed toward Cagayan which caused the flooding in the province during the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses.

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA), which oversees the operation of the Magat River Integrated Irrigation System, however, said it has been releasing water from the dam since November 9 ahead of the landfall of Ulysses and then opened seven of Magat’s spillway gates to control the reservoir’s overflow at the height of the typhoon.

NIA earlier maintained it followed proper protocols in releasing water from the Magat Dam’s reservoir.

But despite some groups blaming NIA, presidential spokesperson Harry Roque, a former trial lawyer, also doubted that legal action against the management of Magat Dam over the massive flooding in Cagayan will not prosper, saying the release of water from the dam’s reservoir was just one of the factors that caused the deluge in the province.

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1362618/magat-dam-aggravates-impacts-of-mining-logging-land-conversion-ibon#ixzz6eHSpTOxe>

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Black sand mining dahilan ng massive flood sa Cagayan at Isabela

By [Joy Cantos](#)(Pang-Masa)

- November 19, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Inihayag ng grupong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) na ang umano’y talamak na black sand mining ang isa sa dahilan na “worst flood” sa Cagayan at Isabela sa pananalasa ng bagyong Ulysses.

Bukod sa black sand mining ay talamak din ang illegal at legal logging sa lalawigan kaya hindi na nakapagtataka na ngayon nararanasan ang epekto nito.

Wala umanong dapat na sisihin sa paglubog ng Cagayan at Isabela kundi ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na nagbibigay permit sa ganitong operasyon na may pag-apruba din mula sa local na pamahalaan.

Ayon kay KMP President Danilo Ramos na matagal nang ipinanawagan ng mga mangingisda ang dredging sa Cagayan River, subalit hindi ito binibigyang pansin at ngayong nagkaroon na ng pagbaha saka nakita ang kahalagayan nito.

Inamin ni Ramos na bagama’t naghigpit sa black sand mining ay marami pa rin silang nakikitang mga Chinese vessel na nagsasagawa nito at ikinukubli ang illegal na operasyon sa dredging, ibinunyag pa nito na mismong mga kawani pa ng LGUs ang kanilang nakikitang nagbabantay sa mga Chinese vessel.

Sa mga nakalipas na taon ay nakapagsagawa na ang Kamara at Senado ng imbestigasyon ukol sa black sand mining sa Cagayan, subalit wala namang naparusahan dito, kaya naman apela ni Ramos sa liderato ni House Speaker Lord Allan Velasco na isama sa kanilang ginagawang House Inquiry sa dahilan ng massive flooding na nararanasan sa Bagyong Ulysses at kung hindi isasama ang illegal na mining at logging sa imbestigasyon ay mababalewala lamang.



Candaba swamp area still likely submerged this weekend

By Catherine Teves November 19, 2020, 3:47 pm



(PNA file photo of Candaba Swamp)

MANILA – Floodwater will likely persist in the Candaba swamp area this weekend in the aftermath of Typhoon Ulysses.

Water in the area continued to recede slowly and may be above the 4.5-meter alarm level even by Sunday, Pampanga River Basin Flood Forecasting and Warning Center (PRFFWC) senior weather specialist Nestor Nimes said Thursday.

"There's still (a) possibility for flooding then," Nimes said.

Contributing to the slow water recession is soil saturation due to rain and runoff caused by "Ulysses" and other weather disturbances that earlier affected the area, he said.

The Candaba swamp area is located in the plains downstream of Mt. Arayat on the left bank of the Pampanga River channel. It encompasses, either partly or wholly, the towns of San Miguel, San Ildefonso, Pulilan, Baliuag, Calumpit, and Plaridel in Bulacan; Cabiao in Nueva Ecija; and Candaba, San Luis, San Simon, and Apalit in Pampanga.

The swamp acts as a natural flood retention basin during the rainy season. It holds the overflow from five smaller rivers – the Maasim, San Miguel, Garlang, Bulu, and Peñaranda – then drains into the larger Pampanga River.

Nimes said the Candaba swamp area's water level at 6 a.m. on Thursday was at 5.2 meters, higher than the 5-meter critical water level.

The 6 a.m. water level was also just 0.01 meter lower than the 5.21 meters an hour earlier, he said, noting that water in the area has been receding by that much only since the night of November 18.

"That just shows how slow water there is receding," Nimes said.

He expected the above-critical water level in the swamp area to linger until Friday, adding that afterwards, its water level might dip to between 4.5 meters and 5 meters.



Candaba swamp area still likely submerged this weekend

The latest forecast of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) indicated nil chance for the Candaba swamp area's water level to significantly rise again soon.

Fair weather with isolated thunderstorms will prevail during the next five days in the area and the rest of Pampanga and Bulacan, PAGASA forecaster Raymond Ordinario said.

"We don't expect heavy rainfall there this weekend," he added. (*PNA*)



More coastal LGUs calling for ban on single-use plastics

Published November 19, 2020, 11:22 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

More local government units (LGUs) are ramping up calls for a nationwide ban on single-use plastics amid the increasing household and medical wastes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



(PIXABAY / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Environmental group Oceana Philippines noted that when the country began the community quarantine due to COVID-19 in March, only Cebu and two cities and two municipalities initiated the adoption of a resolution addressed to the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) to ban single-use plastics nationwide and include it in the priority list of Non-Environmentally Acceptable Products and Packaging (NEAPP) as mandated to perform by the Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

At present, the number increased to 31 coastal local governments — six provinces and 25 cities and municipalities with similar resolutions.

Oceana pointed out that the growing clamor from the coastal local governments for the NSWMC to ban the nationwide production, distribution, and trade of single-use plastics should be given serious attention before there will be more plastics than fish in the ocean.

“The Philippines is an archipelagic country and wastes are sure to flow and swell into marine litter that endangers our fisheries and ocean ecosystem. No wonder that these provinces, cities, and municipalities upon whose shoulders the responsibility is lodged to manage the unmanageable plastics wastes are speaking out. May the political will of the Commission be harnessed to reduce the plastic menace from the source,” Oceana Vice President Gloria Estenzo Ramos said.

The group noted that six provinces have passed Sangguniang Panlalawigan resolutions – Cebu, Southern Leyte, Masbate, Davao Oriental, Bohol, and Aklan.

Twenty-five cities and municipalities have passed Sangguniang Pambayan resolutions – Libagon, Southern Leyte; Liloan, Southern Leyte; Limasawa, Southern Leyte; Maasin, Southern Leyte; Padre Burgos, Southern Leyte; Pintuyan, Southern Leyte; San Juan, Southern Leyte; Silago, Southern



More coastal LGUs calling for ban on single-use plastics

Published November 19, 2020, 11:22 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Leyte; Cebu City; Lapu-Lapu City; Badian, Cebu; Bantayan, Cebu; Bogo City, Cebu; Ginatilan, Cebu; San Remigio, Cebu; Sibonga, Cebu; Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental; Antequera, Bohol; Panglao, Bohol; Bien Unido, Bohol; President Carlos P. Garcia, Bohol; Trinidad, Bohol; Libmanan, Camarines Sur; Baguio City; and Angeles City, Pampanga.

The local governments passed the resolution calling on the NSWMC to release the NEAPP list, considering the “deleterious” effects of the disposal of plastic bags and packaging materials into the environment.

The resolution affirmed that disposable plastic is a pollution problem and the only way to prevent it is to stop it at the source.

It upheld the “Philippine legal framework that if a material such as single-use plastic is listed as non-environmentally acceptable, the manufacture, distribution, or use of non-environmentally acceptable packaging materials and importation of consumer products packaged in non-environmentally acceptable materials are prohibited and meted heavy penalties, such as P500,000 fine for the first offense.”

Oceana explained that the Commission was established under RA 9003 composed of 14 members from the government sector and three members from the private sector.

The Secretary of each member agency is tasked “to formulate action plans for their respective agencies to complement the National Solid Waste Management Framework.”

The Commission is also tasked to formulate and update a list of non-environmentally acceptable materials under the law.

Ramos said the local governments are sending a strong signal to the Commission to fulfill its almost two decades-long unperformed mandate to submit a list of banned items that are unsafe in production, use, post-consumer use, or that produce or release harmful by-products when discarded. If the production and trade of hundreds of millions of single use plastics are not banned, its management is the sole responsibility of the municipality or city.

“Had the Commission did its job 19 years ago and included single-use plastics, in particular, in the list, and update it yearly, we will not be facing this aggravating waste that is adding up to the already critical volume of plastic waste coming from the protective equipment of our health workers and frontliners. We recognize the foremost objective of saving lives,” Ramos said.

“However, the government can stop the continuous production of single-use plastics for other purposes and packaging to save our waterways, rivers and seas, and marine organisms that have become the dumping ground of humans’ unbridled consumption and utilization of plastics.”



Naga City sets 'No Plastic Day'

By [Le Phyllis F. Antojado](#)(The Freeman)

- November 20, 2020 - 12:00am



This requires all the food chains, restaurants, supermarkets, eateries and other similar establishments or businesses operating in the City of Naga to use environmentally-friendly materials and not plastics.

STAR/Edd Gumban, file

CEBU, Philippines — The city government of Naga in Cebu will make the “No Plastic Day” or “The Green Days” in the city daily starting January next year.

This requires all the food chains, restaurants, supermarkets, eateries and other similar establishments or businesses operating in the City of Naga to use environmentally-friendly materials and not plastics.

“(They)..shall not later than six months from the effectivity of this ordinance, dispose of all their stocks of food and products packages made from plastics, styrofoams and similar non-biodegradable materials and shall replace them with environmentally-friendly materials such as paper plates, paper bags, paper cups, paper board-food packs and other similar biodegradable materials” read the Ordinance 2020-11 which was approved by the city council last January 8, 2020.

Since July this year, the “No Plastic Day” in Naga City is scheduled every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday or five times a week.

But by the start of January next year, it will be implemented daily.

The policy is part of the “Integrated Solid Waste Management Ordinance of the City of Naga, Cebu.”

Those who violate the ordinance will be meted a fine of at least P500 to P5,000 and community service or an imprisonment of at least one month to six months.

Under the ordinance, residents and establishments in the city are also required to segregate the biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes which have a schedule of collection. — **GMR (FREEMAN)**



B'laans warned of mining impact



By [Jerry N. Adlaw](#)
November 20, 2020

BAYAN Muna Rep. Eufemia Cullamat has warned fellow indigenous B'laans to consider the long-term implications of the large mining project in the municipality of Tampakan on the environment and their culture.



BAYAN Muna Rep. Eufemia Cullamat. Screenshot from House of Representatives of the Philippines Video

In a statement sent to The Manila Times, Cullamat said the tribal leaders, who agreed to the mining project should not just think of the economic benefits, but also the significant harm it could do to their ancestral lands and the future of the B'laan tribe.

“Kasaysayan at aktwal na mga kalamidad ang pinakasyentipikong batayan kung may pakinabang nga ba ang malakihang operasyon ng mga minahan, o perwisyo ang mas malaking epekto nito sa kabuhayan at buhay mismo ng mga katutubo. Wag sana silang magpalinlang sa mga proyektong nagkukubli sa tawag na ‘development projects’ (History and the actual calamities would give the scientific proof if these large scale mining projects could actually bring harm and how they would impact the lives of the indigenous peoples. I hope they would see beyond and perceive the truth hiding under the guise of ‘development projects’),” said Cullamat.

Tribal leaders of the B'laan indigenous tribe in Tampakan municipality had declared Cullamat as persona non grata for opposing and condemning the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in granting a Certification of Precondition (CP) to Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI), the developer of the Tampakan gold and copper mining in Tampakan municipality in South Cotabato.

Some leaders of the B'laan tribe strongly favors NCIP's action granting the Certificate of Precondition to the SMI's Tampakan gold and copper mining project.



B'laans warned of mining impact

SMI is the developer of the \$5.9-billion Tampakan mining project with the largest untapped gold and copper minefield in Southeast Asia has been granted the right to extract the mammoth mineral deposit in the ancestral claims of the b'laan community in the Tampakan town in South Cotabato.

The NCIP granted the Certificate of Precondition to SMI after decades of process evaluation and validation of the Pre-Prior Inform Consent as it conformed and favored by the majority of the members of the B'laan tribe in the area.

SMI's Tampakan project will be able to produce an average of 375,000 tons of copper and 360,000 ounces of gold in concentrate per annum within the 17 year life span of the mining operation as their data revealed here.

NCIP Region 12 Director lawyer Mike Mamakid said the CP was approved and signed by NCIP Chairman Allen Capuyan issued to SMI "the CP is a certification that the indigenous cultural communities have given their consent favoring the SMI's mining operation within their claimed ancestral domain in which Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) process have been satisfactorily complied by the company.

Gold and Copper deposits are located in the tri-boundary of Columbio town in Sultan Kudarat, Tampakan town in South Cotabato, Davao del Sur and Sarangani.

The CP certifies that SMI company has complied with the procedure and process requirements and the FPIC, which is an essential requirement that would allow the SMI to explore and extract mineral deposits within the ancestral domain covered by the Tampakan project.

Dalina Samling, a 50-year-old B'laan tribal chief of Barangay Danlag, denied that they opposed the operation of the SMI's Tampakan mining project and looks forward to the financial and economic benefits of the mining operations to their lives.

COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas 413,430 na; patay lumobo sa 7,998

By [James Relativo](#)(Philstar.com)
- November 19, 2020 - 4:00pm



Habangnaka-face mask, nagmomotorsiklo ang lalaking ito sa maputik na kalsada ng Marikina City ilang araw matapos malubog sa baha ng nagdaang bagyong "Ulysses," ika-13 ng Nobyembre, 2020
AFP/Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — Parami pa rin nang parami ang bilang ng dinadapuan ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19) ngayong ika-19 ng Nobyembre sa pagpapatuloy ng ika-36 na linggo ng community quarantine laban sa worldwide pandemic.

Nakapagtala pa kasi ng karagdagang 413,430 kaso ang Department of Health (DOH), dahilan para sumabit na ito sa 413,430 ngayong Huwebes.

Sa kabila ng maliit-liit na bilang ng bagong kaso, 11 na laboratoryo pa ang hindi nakapagsumite ng kanilang mga datos noong Miyerkules.

Kaugnay niyan, natagpuan naman ang sariwang pinakamaraming COVID-19 cases sa mga sumusunod na lugar:

- Lungsod ng Davao (110)
- Laguna (74)
- Lungsod ng Quezon (66)
- Batangas (54)
- Lungsod ng Maynila (53)

Nasa 30,493 naman sa ngayon ang mga nananatiling aktibong kaso, bagay na kumakatawan sa mga COVID-19 patients na hindi pa gumagaling o namamatay sa kasalukuyan.

Sa ngayon, patay na mula sa nasabing pathogen ang 7,998 katao. Mas marami ito ng 41 kumpara sa mga bilang na inilabas ng DOH kahapon.



COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas 413,430 na; patay lumobo sa 7,998

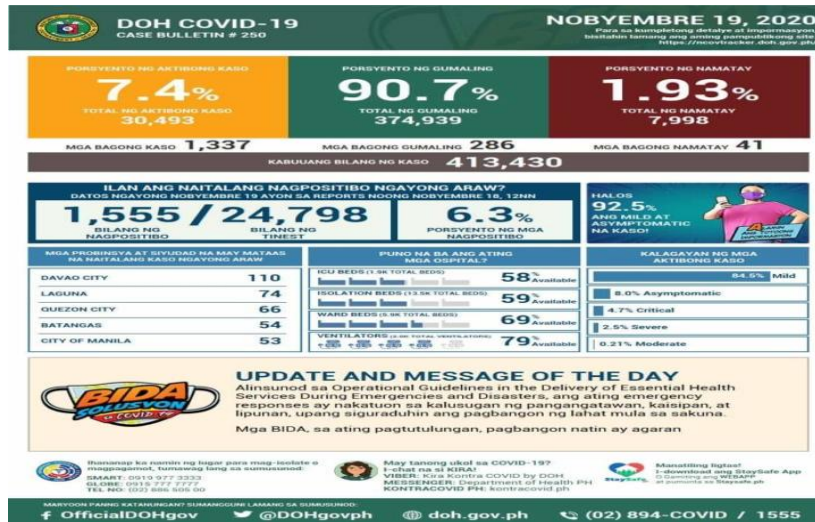
Gayunpaman, 286 naman ang sinasabing new recoveries kaugnay ng karamdaman. Sumatutal, umabot na sa 374,939 ang gumagaling sa COVID-19 sa bansa.

Tinanggal naman na mula sa total case count ang apat na duplicates sa ngayon, matapos mapag-alamang tatlo sa kanila ay gumaling na.

Kaugnay niyan, ni-reclassify naman bilang deaths ang mga naunang naibalitang paggaling ng 10 katao mula sa COVID-19.

BREAKING: Mga nagpositibo sa COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, umabot na sa 413,430

By Angellic Jordan November 19, 2020 - 04:05 PM



Mahigit 1,000 muli ang panibagong kaso ng Coronavirus Disease o COVID-19 sa Pilipinas. Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) bandang araw ng Huwebes (November 19), umabot na sa 413,430 ang confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa. Sa nasabing bilang, 30,493 o 7.4 porsyento ang aktibong kaso. Sinabi ng kagawaran na 1,337 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa. 84.5 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 8.0 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 0.21 porsyento ang moderate; 2.5 porsyento ang severe habang 4.7 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon. Nasa 41 naman ang napaulat na nasawi. Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 7,998 o 1.93 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa. Ayon pa sa DOH, 286 naman ang gumaling pa sa COVID-19. Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 374,939 o 90.7 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Read more: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/275996/breaking-mga-nagpositibo-sa-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-umabot-na-sa-413430#ixzz6eHJuLT4Y>

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Second wave in Europe a warning to PH

By ...

-November 20, 2020

‘Europe’s second wave of COVID-19 infections should remind Filipinos that the fight against the coronavirus is still ongoing...’

THERE is an air of optimism being felt in the Philippines with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily because the Department of Health has tallied new confirmed cases of less than 2,000 for nine days in a row.

The DOH reported on Wednesday evening that there were 1,383 more cases nationwide, raising the number of active cases to 29,474. There are now 412,097 reported cases in the country. Most of the new cases were found in Cavite (81), Laguna (74), Batangas (71), Quezon City (69), and Rizal province (67).

A total of 95 more deaths have been confirmed, bringing the number of fatalities to 7,957.

Meanwhile, 143 new survivors were recorded, taking the recovery count to 374,666, which is 90.9 percent of the country’s total caseload.

Compare these figures to the global situation: COVID-19 cases have already passed 54 million, with listed deaths at 1.3 million, according to the World Health Organization.

The concerning news is that Europe is experiencing a second wave of infections and it remains as the hardest-hit region in the planet. The continent accounted for 46 percent of new global cases and 49 percent of deaths last week, the death toll surging 18 percent with the elderly Europeans bearing the brunt of the epidemic.

The lay of the land is appalling. Switzerland’s hospitals are practically all full, the French government is unlikely to lift a partial lockdown any time soon, while Portugal was preparing to extend measures for two more weeks. Health authorities in Russia reported a total of 1.99 million infections which is the fifth-highest caseload in the world.

In the Middle East, Iran vowed to impose severe restrictions across many districts, after obstinate religious policies had prevented it from imposing a full lockdown since the first COVID-19 cases were reported last February. In the United States, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that all 1,800 public schools will be closed and will revert to remote learning after the city recorded a seven-day average positivity rate of 3 percent.

All over the world, elections and approval ratings of international leaders are being decided by how well their countries cope with the pandemic. You want proof of this? Remember the recent electoral defeat of President Donald Trump and the landslide victory in New Zealand by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. And may we cite the high approval and trust ratings of President Duterte and the support and reverence the Chinese people bestow upon China President Xi Jinping.

Europe’s second wave of COVID-19 infections should remind Filipinos that the fight against the coronavirus is still ongoing and there should be no reason to lower one’s guard.



Panaka-nakang pag-ulan mararanasan sa Batanes, Babuyan Islands — PAGASA



November 19, 2020 @ 5:59 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Makararanas nang panaka-nakang pag-ulan at maulap na kalangitan sa Batanes at Babuyan Islands dahil sa Amihan, batay sa PAGASA.

Samantala, localized thunderstorm naman ang iiral sa Metro Manila at nalalabing bahagi ng bansa.

Nagbabala na rin ang PAGASA sa posibilidad ng pagbaha o pagguho ng lupa sa kasagsagan ng buhos ng ulan, kulog, at kidlat. **RNT/FGDC**



State of calamity declaration to expedite rehab efforts

By Priam Nepomuceno and Christopher Lloyd Caliwan November 19, 2020, 3:51 pm



MANILA – Placing the entire Luzon under a state of calamity will expedite rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts in the areas ravaged by Typhoon Quinta, Super Typhoon Rolly and Typhoon Ulysses, an official said on Thursday.

"This can help hasten all the rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts of all government and private sectors that have been assisting us and including international humanitarian assistance," National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) spokesperson Dr. Peter Paul Galvez said during an online press conference.

Galvez said the move will effectively control the prices of basic goods and commodities and allow local government units (LGUs) to use more of their funds for rehabilitation work.

President Rodrigo R. Duterte, in a taped speech Tuesday, said he signed the proposal of the NDRRMC to place Luzon under a state of calamity.

On Monday, the NDRRMC announced that it approved a resolution recommending to Duterte to put Luzon under a state of calamity due to the damage brought by the successive weather disturbances.

Malacañang released a copy of Proclamation No. 1051 on Wednesday night. Law enforcement agencies, with the support from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, are directed to undertake all necessary measures to ensure peace and order in the affected areas.

The state of calamity will remain in effect until lifted by the President.

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) has been relentless in driving efforts with non-government organizations and stakeholders to aid communities hardest hit by "Ulysses".

PNP Chief, Gen. Debold Sinas, together with Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar, Deputy Chief for Administration, and Lt. Gen. Cesar Hawthorne R. Binag, Deputy Chief for Operations, led Thursday's send-off ceremony for six trucks of relief goods, held in front of the PNP National Headquarters in Camp Crame.

Sinas said the six trucks containing relief items would pass by the Police Regional Office 3 (Central Luzon) and join four other trucks of relief goods that would be led by regional director, Brig. Gen. Valeriano de Leon. (*PNA*)



PH joins call for climate justice at CCC

By -November 20, 2020

The Philippines must sustain calls for broader climate justice, even as the country transitions to more sustainable economic activities domestically, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said in a statement yesterday.

Dominguez has urged the Climate Change Commission (CCC) to help the country pursue climate justice from the international community.

“The Philippines is definitely not one of the world’s heaviest emitters of greenhouse gases, but it is undoubtedly among the most vulnerable to their harmful effects,” Dominguez, who was recently appointed as chairman of the CCC, said yesterday.

He also challenged the CCC to more aggressively advocate for the protection of the environment.

“It should advance concrete policy proposals while building public awareness and public support,” Dominguez said in his pre-recorded message to the CCC as it celebrated the 13th Climate Change Consciousness Week.

He added the recent spate of super typhoons and floods that occurred in the midst of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic underscore the urgency and complexity of the CCC’s tasks.

But the COVID-19-induced crisis can also be used as an opportunity to tailor the country’s economic recovery programs to mobilize investments in domestic renewable energy, sustainable urban planning and climate-smart agriculture, Dominguez said.

“The Philippines is well-positioned to make a difference in this battle against the climate crisis. Let us work hand in hand to achieve a new, low carbon economy and a greener future for all,” he said.

Dominguez recalled that since last month, five strong typhoons battered 12 of the country’s 17 regions; claimed dozens of lives; and damaged billions of pesos worth of infrastructure, crops, livelihoods and properties.

Unless all concerned sectors move fast to implement mitigation measures, he said these human, social and economic costs will continue to accumulate and dampen the country’s economic progress.

“Evidence-informed climate action is crucial to providing a safe, comfortable life for every law-abiding Filipino. We need to put forward stronger adaptation and mitigation measures to ensure that Filipinos will not just survive, but thrive in the new and resilient economy,” Dominguez said.

“We can address the climate emergency better and with a more informed approach. Unlike COVID-19 that caught the world off-guard, we have a wealth of information and innovative solutions to deal with the climate crisis. We must be prepared to save lives and prevent the worst possible outcomes,” he added.

He said the government must ensure the coherence of climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, as well as programs on disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, at both the national and local government levels.



PH joins call for climate justice at CCC

“We must deploy financial tools to build resiliency from the household to the national levels. We must widen the inclusivity of our financial system to mobilize investment and protect families,” Dominguez said.

He said the government’s rule should be simple: “projects that are not green and sustainable should not see the light of day.”

Dominguez cited, for instance, the need to make the restoration and conservation of existing forests an integral part of the country’s disaster risk reduction strategy.

“It is time to update our agroforestry policies to prevent the clearing of mountain slopes to make way for agriculture,” he said. – **A. Celis**



Climate change clear, present danger to Filipinos

Published November 19, 2020, 2:19 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

An official of the Climate Change Commission has stressed that a climate emergency is at hand and “climate change, previously regarded as scientific observation is now a clear and present danger to the Filipino nation.”



(Zaldy Comanda / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Speaking during the virtual opening ceremony of the 13th Annual Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week Thursday, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Emmanuel de Guzman said the occurrence of more intense typhoons and heavy rainfall attest that “climate change is real and is here.”

He pointed out how the country has once again witnessed widespread loss and damage caused by extremely strong winds and heavy rainfall brought by typhoons “Quinta,” “Rolly,” and “Ulysses” that triggered devastating landslides and unprecedented floods in Luzon.

“Global warming has made natural hazards deadlier than ever disproportionately affecting the poorest and the most vulnerable among our people,” he said.

He expressed hope that the observance of the 13th Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week will be “an opportune time to renew our collective resolve as a people to survive and thrive amid the changing climate.”

“To arrest this runaway global warming is nothing less than a moral imperative, unless we act immediately the worst is yet to come,” De Guzman added.

As the local governments act as the frontliners in climate action, he called on local leaders to recognize the prevailing climate emergency and address the risk in their communities.

“We enjoin you to revisit and enhance your strategies and plans for reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change informed by the latest science and risk assessment,” De Guzman said. “Recovering stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic and adapting better to climate change must also go hand in hand on the local level.”



Climate change clear, present danger to Filipinos

He also asked the private sector and civil society leaders “to sustain and strengthen cooperation in greening our economy and building the resilience of our communities to climate impacts.”

De Guzman underscored the need for developing nations to demand climate justice from the developed countries.

“Our President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has conveyed clearly, developed countries must lead in deep and drastic cuts in carbon emissions. They must also deliver on their commitment to finance and invest in adaptation solutions in the developing world. So we too can have a fair shot at progress and sustainable development,” he said.

Commissioner Rachel Herrera noted that the Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week will provide the public “on the ways that we could lead through our own means and capacity to help raise awareness and arrest the climate crisis from becoming even worse.”

“Holding COP26 (26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) will be critical in urging countries to submit more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs. These NDCs are decarbonization targets, as part of their commitment to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius,” Herrera said.

“In spite of the delay, we welcome pronouncements from high carbon-emitting economies, such as the USA, European Union, China, Japan, and South Korea, about their plans of going carbon neutral by 2050 or nearer,” she added.



Climate Change 101

By: [Crispin C. Maslog](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:03 AM November 19, 2020

The older folks among us have noticed that typhoons and hurricanes are coming more frequently, are more destructive, and no longer follow the seasons.

In the old days, for example, the typhoon season in the Philippines usually started in July and ended in September. Nowadays, the most powerful ones are in the last two months of the year and come even in the first half of the year.

Why? Scientists say this is because of climate change. Climate change affects rainfall patterns, storms and droughts, growing seasons, humidity and sea levels.

Farmers who depend on the rains to water their crops are not sure now when to plant or harvest. The winds and rains have become more severe. The rains which come with the winds come irregularly. A few areas might even get cooler than warmer and vice versa.

Located along the typhoon belt in the Pacific, the Philippines is visited by an average of 20 typhoons every year, the latest of which were “Ulysses,” “Rolly,” and “Quinta.” In the Philippines and Southeast Asia, the typhoons have become more frequent, violent, and destructive. Hurricanes, the American equivalent of our typhoons, have also become more frequent and destructive in the United States.

But the most destructive was Supertyphoon “Yolanda” (Haiyan) in 2013. That Category 5 typhoon smashed into Central Philippines and flattened the city of Tacloban and nearby cities in Leyte and Samar, killing some 10,000 people and causing property damage in the billions of dollars. It was the strongest typhoon to hit land at 350 kilometers per hour.

What has caused climate to change? Global warming. Scientists have identified global warming as the phenomenon that leads to specific changes in climate, with unique impacts on local plants, animals, and people.

Global warming also causes the water level of oceans to rise. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has predicted that warming oceans and melting glaciers due to global warming could cause sea levels to rise 7-23 inches by the year 2100.

And what causes global warming? The short answer is human activities, according to the IPCC. Human activities lead to increased levels of “heat trapping” of “greenhouse gases” such as carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Because the heat cannot escape into space, our globe gets warmer.

The most common way people contribute to greenhouses gases is by burning fossil fuels, or oil pumped from the earth, which converts into gasoline to run our industries. We use coal, oil, and natural gas to generate electricity, heat our homes, power our factories, and run our cars.

As the levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases increase, more heat is “trapped” and global temperatures rise. This causes significant changes in the timing and length of the seasons as well as the amount and frequency of precipitation (IPCC 2017).



Climate Change 101

So what can be done to avoid global warming? The answer is simple but difficult to implement: Stop burning fossil fuels. The world's superpowers—the United States, Europe, China, Japan, and India—must lead the way in finding substitutes for their gasoline and other fossil fuel needs to run their industries. The substitutes can be found in green energy—mainly solar, wind, waves, waste, hydroelectric, and geothermal energy.

* * *

Crispin C. Maslog (cmaslog@hotmail.com) is a former journalist with Agence France-Presse and retired science journalism professor from Silliman University, the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication, and UP Los Baños. His latest book is "Science Writing and Climate Change."



Dominguez urges CCC to push PRRD call for ‘climate justice’

By DOF Published on November 20, 2020

MANILA, Nov. 20 -- Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III has called on the Climate Change Commission (CCC) to sustain President Duterte’s call for climate justice before the international community as the Philippines continues to bear the devastating impact of global warming even though it remains among the world’s lowest emitters of greenhouse gases.

Dominguez also challenged the CCC to aggressively advocate and put forward concrete policy proposals for the protection of the environment while building public awareness and support about these initiatives.

The recent spate of super typhoons and floods that occurred in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the urgency and complexity of the CCC’s tasks, he said.

But the COVID-19-induced crisis can also be used as an opportunity to tailor the country’s economic recovery programs to mobilize investments in domestic renewable energy, sustainable urban planning and climate-smart agriculture, said Dominguez, who was recently appointed by President Duterte as chairman of the CCC.

“Even as we transition to more sustainable economic activities domestically, the Philippines must sustain calls for broader climate justice. President Duterte has already led the way. We in government must stand firmly behind the President in this fight,” said Dominguez in his pre-recorded message to the CCC as it celebrated the 13th Climate Change Consciousness Week.

“The Philippines is well-positioned to make a difference in this battle against the climate crisis. Let us work hand in hand to achieve a new, low carbon economy and a greener future for all,” Dominguez added.

At the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit last Nov. 12, President Duterte called on other vulnerable countries like the Philippines to demand climate justice from developed nations, which are the most responsible for fueling the climate crisis.

The President said at the annual summit that developed countries must lead in effecting deep and drastic cuts in carbon emissions.

Dominguez recalled that since last month, five strong typhoons battered 12 of the country’s 17 regions; claimed dozens of lives; and damaged billions of pesos worth of infrastructure, crops, livelihoods and properties.

Unless all concerned sectors move fast to implement mitigation measures, he said these human, social and economic costs will continue to accumulate and dampen the country’s economic progress.



Dominguez urges CCC to push PRRD call for ‘climate justice’

“Evidence-informed climate action is crucial to providing a safe, comfortable life for every law-abiding Filipino. We need to put forward stronger adaptation and mitigation measures to ensure that Filipinos will not just survive, but thrive in the new and resilient economy,” Dominguez said.

“We can address the climate emergency better and with a more informed approach. Unlike COVID-19 that caught the world off-guard, we have a wealth of information and innovative solutions to deal with the climate crisis. We must be prepared to save lives and prevent the worst possible outcomes,” he said.

Dominguez said the government must ensure the coherence of climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, as well as programs on disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, at both the national and local government levels.

“We must deploy financial tools to build resiliency from the household to the national levels. We must widen the inclusivity of our financial system to mobilize investment and protect families,” Dominguez added.

He said the government’s rule should be simple: “projects that are not green and sustainable should not see the light of day.”

Dominguez cited, for instance, the need to make the restoration and conservation of existing forests an integral part of the country’s disaster risk reduction strategy.

“It is time to update our agroforestry policies to prevent the clearing of mountain slopes to make way for agriculture,” he added. (DOF)



DepEd tackles eco-anxiety in Nat'l Climate Change Conference

Published November 19, 2020, 3:11 PM

by [Merlina Hernando-Malipot](#)

The Department of Education kicked off a virtual conference Thursday to elevate the discussion of the impact of climate change on mental health especially among students.



(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

DepEd has been hosting the National Climate Change Conference (NCCC) since 2017.

DepEd conducted the fourth NCCC online due to the new normal from the COVID-19 pandemic.

DepEd holds this year's NCCC from Nov. 19 to 25 through a series of learning sessions live-streamed at the DepEd Philippines Facebook page.

With the theme, "Alpas: Channeling youth eco-anxiety to climate action," this year's NCCC aims to discuss further the impact of climate change on mental health and what actions can be done to make meaningful change.

"Eco-anxiety" refers to the amplified anxiety brought by one's knowledge of environmental changes, which includes the feeling of loss, helplessness, and frustration in the face of climate change. "Children are known to be more vulnerable to eco-anxiety as their generation will bear the consequences of climate change," DepEd said.

This year placed the climate crisis into a different spotlight as the world responds to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The DepEd, through the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service, serves at the forefront of advocating and empowering learners and personnel amidst the pandemic.

In line with this, the DepEd DRRMS hopes to lead the conversation on youth eco-anxiety and how it can be transformed into powerful actions of adaptation and mitigation.

The general objectives of this year's conference include the strengthening of awareness on eco-anxiety and its effects on young people and increase the participation of learners and DepEd personnel in addressing climate change concerns in their immediate communities.



Megaprojects flagged as Trojan horse to develop remaining rainforests

November 19, 2020 | 4:08 pm



Megaprojects based around economic corridors, linking roads, waterways, and railways with natural resource extraction and big dams, are planned in most critical tropical-forest areas, said the report, produced with 22 organizations. Photo of Indonesia's East Kalimantan region via Aidenvironment, 2005 / CC BY-SA 2.0 / Wikimedia Commons

KUALA LUMPUR — A rise in huge, opaque infrastructure and mining projects threatens to destroy and open up the world's last remaining rainforests to development, researchers warned on Thursday.

A report assessing progress on the 2014 New York Declaration on Forests—backed by more than 200 countries, companies and green groups—found that its 2020 goal to reduce natural forest loss by at least half would not be met.

Achieving its 2030 target to end deforestation would require an “unprecedented” reduction in the rate of forest loss, said the annual evaluation, led by advisory firm Climate Focus.

Berlin-based executive director Franziska Haupt, the report's lead author, warned remaining forest areas “are under severe threat from infrastructure and mining developments.”

“Economic corridors cut through these remaining areas, kettling in the indigenous communities and others that live there,” Ms. Haupt told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

In 2019, tropical rainforests—whose preservation is considered crucial to limiting planetary heating—disappeared at a rate of one football pitch every six seconds, according to data from online monitoring service Global Forest Watch.

Green groups blame the production of commodities and minerals for much of the destruction, as carbon-storing forests are cleared for plantations, ranches, farms, and mines.



Megaprojects flagged as Trojan horse to develop remaining rainforests

“Mining and infrastructure obviously has a direct impact—if you build a road or have an open-pit mine you have to cut trees,” said Ms. Haupt.

“The problem is not so much that deforestation, but it’s that these activities are making way for other economic activities and resource extraction.”

ROAD TO NOWHERE

Megaprojects based around economic corridors, linking roads, waterways, and railways with natural resource extraction and big dams, are planned in most critical tropical-forest areas, said the report, produced with 22 organizations.

Across five Amazon nations—Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador—investments totaling \$27 billion over the next five years would construct or update more than 12,000 km (7,456 miles) of roads, it said.

If all planned projects are realized, they will cause the deforestation of about 2.4 million hectares (5.9 million acres) over the next two decades, it added.

In Asia, Indonesia’s Trans Papua highway—a 4,000 km network—will cut through Lorentz National Park, a World Heritage site, increasing access to more than 50,000 hectares of mining concessions inside the park, the report said.

A railway planned for Indonesia’s forest-rich Kalimantan region will open areas for coal mining and palm oil production, it said, while neighboring Papua New Guinea is looking to double its road network by late 2022.

The unchecked rise in transportation networks is poised to do the most damage to forests, the report said.

Those networks make it easier for loggers, farmers, and others who chop down trees legally or illegally to get into forests, according to researchers.

Roads are responsible for between 9% and 17% of tropical and sub-tropical deforestation, with most new deforestation occurring within 1 km of a road, said the report.

Ms. Haupt said infrastructure was essential for economic development, especially in places without basic services.

“There needs to be roads and there is always a cost for forests but we’re really concerned about these huge projects,” she added.

BELT AND ROAD

The scale of many megaprojects was unprecedented, she said, citing China’s Belt and Road Initiative to link Asia to Europe and beyond, involving more than 100 countries.

Researchers found no evidence that megaprojects, which often lack transparency, are paired with investments in local development, such as public services, healthcare, and jobs.



Megaprojects flagged as Trojan horse to develop remaining rainforests

Governments should consider the value of forests and the economic benefits megaprojects bring to local people—and ensure they are properly consulted, said Ms. Haupt.

All countries need to develop partnerships to protect forests, and wean their industries off fossil fuels, she said, adding many had made international pledges and introduced good policies but implementation was lacking.

“It’s not a radical idea to strive towards sustainable development but the current (economic) models are in contention with these goals,” she said. “Is deforestation really justified by these other benefits?” — Michael Taylor/Thomson Reuters Foundation



Plastics an 'unfolding disaster' for US marine life

Published 3 hours ago



IMAGE COPYRIGHT GUMBO LIMBO NATURE CENTER VIA CBS
image caption A baby sea turtle stuck in plastic in Florida

A new decade-long survey of sea animals harmed by plastic rubbish in US waters has revealed data on which animals are being affected by plastic pollution.

Oceana, the world's largest ocean conservation group, tracked about 1,800 cases of animals hurt by plastic since 2009 for a new comprehensive report.

Of the animals surveyed, around 88% are listed as threatened or endangered under the US Endangered Species Act.

Oceana warns that the numbers are sure to be far higher than the data reveals.

[The survey](#) released on Thursday examines 1,792 examples of marine animals that became entangled in plastic or that had swallowed it.

Forty species studied in Oceana's report are listed as threatened or endangered, including Hawaiian monk seals, Florida manatees, Steller sea lions and all six species of sea turtle found in the US.

media caption BBC Science Editor David Shukman explains how plastic moves around the oceans

The report calls the crisis of plastic in the oceans an "unfolding disaster" that is one of several human-caused factors endangering the planet.

"While there may never be a complete account of the fate of all marine animals impacted by plastic, this report paints a grim picture," said Dr Kimberly Warner, a senior scientist at Oceana who authored the study.

"The world is hooked on plastic because the industry continues to find increasingly more ways to force this persistent pollutant into our everyday routines - and it's choking, strangling and drowning marine life."



Plastics an 'unfolding disaster' for US marine life

Around 90% of the cases involved animals swallowing plastic, including microscopic micro-plastic particles. Turtles as young as a few days old were found with plastic in their stomachs.

In other cases, animals became entangled in plastic, making it impossible for them to move.

In Florida, a dead Kemp's ridley sea turtle was found wrapped in a plastic bag. Scientists believe the animal drowned when the bag filled with sand.

In Virginia, a sei whale developed gastric ulcer after a DVD case she swallowed cut open her stomach.

The report notes that the US produces more single-use plastic than any other nation, and argues that governments must do more to curtail disposable plastic.

Bags, balloons, recreational fishing line, plastic sheeting, food wrappers, bottles and bottle caps, and straws were all products frequently found either ingesting or linked to entanglement.

An estimated 15 million metric tonnes of plastic enter the oceans each year, the report states, adding that this is equivalent to about two bin lorries per minute.

"This will increase," the authors warn, estimating that the amount of plastic entering the ocean is projected to triple by 2040 due to increased production.

Oceana is recommending companies reduce the amount of plastic produced and offer plastic-free alternatives, and that governments pass policies to help reduce single-use plastics.



[CALL TO EARTH](#)

'The Greatest Shoal on Earth': Protecting South Africa's sardine run

Jo Munnik • Published 19th November 2020
Protecting South Africa's sardine run

Cape Town (CNN) — From above, it looks like a vast oil spill spreading across the ocean. It's been called the "Greatest Shoal on Earth" and it's one of the planet's biggest migrations in terms of biomass.

Along South Africa's east coast, between May and July, billions of spawning sardines travel north towards Mozambique. They are pursued by predators ranging from sharks to dolphins, whales and even humans.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the annual "Sardine Run" would attract tourists from across the globe. But this year, South African free diving champion [Beth Neale](#) was one of the few people who witnessed this phenomenon.

Armed with a GoPro and 360-camera, she swam beneath the big black slick of fish to film the incredible variety of marine wildlife it attracts. She believes her footage can help people appreciate how the ocean ecosystem depends on seemingly insignificant fish like the sardines.

"I know through seeing the beauty of the sardine run and the underwater world, people start to understand how connected everything is," Neale tells CNN. "From seeing a fish as something that's just a food source to seeing a fish as its integral role in the whole marine food chain and how that fish supplies so many marine animals."

[A recent study](#) in the South African Journal of Science shows changing weather patterns caused by the climate crisis may threaten the sardine run. It also means the sardines are migrating later in the year, which can cause food shortages for animals like the sharks that feed on them.

Protecting the oceans

As well as climate change, shoals like this are threatened worldwide by overfishing. The UN says [one third of commercial fish species are being over-exploited](#).

The sardine run passes through some of [South Africa's marine protected areas](#) (MPAs), where fishing is restricted by law, giving sea life a chance to recover. Neale has been diving these waters for years and says she can see a significant difference between the areas that are safeguarded versus those that aren't. "The most amazing thing about the ocean is once you implement a marine protected area, you can see the change really, really rapidly," she says.



CALL TO EARTH

'The Greatest Shoal on Earth': Protecting South Africa's sardine run



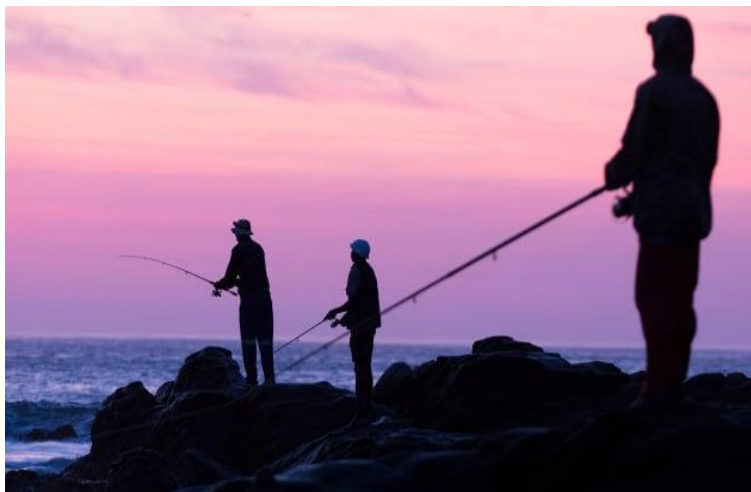


[CALL TO EARTH](#)

'The Greatest Shoal on Earth': Protecting South Africa's sardine run



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[CALL TO EARTH](#)

'The Greatest Shoal on Earth': Protecting South Africa's sardine run

South African [Steve Benjamin](#) is an underwater photographer based in Cape Town, which he refers to as a "Mecca" for marine wildlife. "Revealing and promoting the wealth of life around South Africa has developed into a life quest for me," he tells CNN. Benjamin, who has a degree in zoology, hopes that his underwater images will open people's eyes to the value of [marine protected areas](#) -- spaces set aside for nature conservation.

Jean Tresfon

South Africa is home to [42 MPAs](#), which aim to protect wildlife for the benefit of both nature and people.

Prior to 2019, only 0.4% of the country's ocean territory was protected, but that has recently increased to 5.4% with a target of reaching 10%, says marine biologist [Kerry Sink](#), who has played an instrumental role in advising the government on this expansion.

"The reason why it's really important to manage our fisheries well is because if we do that, we can fish forever," Sink tells CNN. "In a world with increasing pressure and increasing industrialization of the ocean, and in a time of climate change where there's even more uncertainty, we need to do everything that we can to have healthy oceans and healthy fish stocks."

Neale wholeheartedly agrees. "You protect what you love," she says. "The ocean is what I truly love the most."

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GMA News ✓

17 hrs · 🌐

Ilang libong ibon ang namataan ng mga residente sa Rome, Italy kahapon. Tinatawag itong "murmuration of starlings" na nagaganap tuwing autumn o winter kung saan sabay-sabay lumilipad ang mga ibon at gumagawa ng ilang pattern.

Photos: REUTERS/Guglielmo Mangiapane

Bisitahin ang www.gmanews.tv para sa ibang mga balita.

Several thousand birds were spotted by residents in Rome, Italy yesterday. It is called the "murmuration of starlings" that occurs during autumn or winter where birds simultaneously fly and create some patterns. Photos: REUTERS / William Eat Bread Visit www.gmanews.tv for more news.

Translated

