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**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# DENR receives land donation for installation of Puerto Galera sewage treatment plant

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by [Faith Argosino](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has received a land donation for the proposed installation of a sewage treatment plant (STP) in Puerto Galera's white beach.

In a statement released on Wednesday, Feb. 23, DENR OIC Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said the donation of the Locsin Foundation would boost the agency's efforts to preserve Puerto Galera's marine resources.

"We are thankful for the Locsin Foundation's generous contribution in protecting and conserving the waters and natural resources of Puerto Galera. This next step will be a great stand-in preventing a Boracay-like scenario," Sampulna said during the turnover of the Transfer Certificate of Title held at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City.

Headed by Leandro Locsin Jr. and Luis Locsin, the foundation donated 11,444 square meters of land for the island's second wastewater treatment facility.

The island's first sewage treatment plant — which has been treating 1,750 cubic meters of uncontrolled wastewater daily — is located in Barangay Sabang. It started operating in 2020.

Aside from the proposed second STP, the DENR and Puerto Galera's local government also plan to build a DENR regional office and tourist police for the safety and security of tourists.

Meanwhile, Retired Col. Noel J. Detoyato, representative of Locsin Foundation, said their partnership with the agency and Puerto Galera local government symbolizes their commitment to a common environmental cause and the welfare of future generations.

"Pareho lang kami ng advocacy to protect our environment. Gusto rin naming ma-preserve [ang] ating kalikasan dahil kawawa naman 'yong mga magiging anak natin at apo, [kung hindi natin pangangalagaan ito ngayon,] wala na silang makikitang natural environment (Our advocacy is to protect the environment. We want to preserve it for future generations to see)," Detoyato said.





## Puerto Galera soon to have STP

February 24, 2022 [Cory Martinez](#)

**A SEWAGE** treatment plant (STP) will soon be installed near Puerto Galera's popular beach in Mindoro with the donation of land to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) where the said facility will be constructed.

DENR Officer-in-charge Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said the donation will be a big boost in the agency's efforts to preserve Puerto Galera's marine resources and to make it one of the country's top tourist destinations.

The Locsin Foundation, headed by Leandro Locsin Jr. and Luis Locsin, heirs of the National Artist of the Philippines for Architecture Leandro Locsin, donated 11,444 square meters of land to be used for a second wastewater treatment facility on the island.

"We are thankful for the Locsin Foundation's generous contribution in protecting and conserving the waters and natural resources of Puerto Galera. This next step will be a great stand-in preventing a Boracay-like scenario," Sampulna said during the turnover of the Transfer Certificate of Title held at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City on Feb. 21.

Sampulna commended the Locsin family for being environmental advocates, and for Puerto Galera Mayor Rocky D. Ilagan for being proactive in taking a step towards partnering with a landowner to install STPs in his town.

He added that the Locsin family has been responsible for the preservation of several lands in Puerto Galera to keep marine resources and natural habitats safe from further destruction, including repopulating giant clams and keeping them on the island.

For his part, Retired Col. Noel J. Detogato, a representative of the Locsin Foundation, said their partnership with the DENR and local government of Puerto Galera exhibits a serious commitment for them to come together for a common environmental cause and the welfare of future generations.

"Pareho lang kami ng advocacy to protect our environment. Gusto rin naming ma-preserve [ang] ating kalikasan dahil kawawa naman 'yung mga magiging anak natin at apo, [kung hindi natin pangangalagaan ito ngayon,] wala na silang makikitang natural environment," Delgato added.

Puerto Galera's first STP is located at Bgy. Sabang and became fully operational in 2020. It has since been treating about 1,750 cubic meters of uncontrolled wastewater daily.



Aside from the proposed second STP, the DENR and Puerto Galera's local government are also in talks of building a DENR regional office and tourist police for the safety and security of tourists on the island.

After receiving the transfer certificate of title from Detogato, Sampulna then turned it over to DENR-MIMAROPA OIC Regional Executive Director Lormelyn E. Claudio.



## WWF-Philippines calls for support for global treaty on plastic pollution

February 24, 2022 | 4:25 pm



REUTERS

Environmental group World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines asserted on Wednesday the importance of pushing for a new global treaty on plastic pollution in the upcoming United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) 5.2.

“In the Philippines, we are working with the DENR [Department of Natural Resources] very closely, especially for this whole UNEA 5.2 process,” said Francesca “Ina” C. Guingona, WWF’s No Plastics in Nature policy officer, at the virtual roundtable.

“We’ve been relaying our concerns to the representatives and we really hope to continue this onwards,” she said.

UNEA will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, from February 28 to March 4, with physical and virtual delegations from governments and non-governmental organizations. The event is expected to establish a committee that will prepare a global agreement for the treaty on plastic pollution.

Ms. Guingona added that while WWF has a [three-year roadmap](#) to create and operate a national recycling system, a holistic global effort is needed.

Over three-fourths of UN member states support the development of the treaty, along with over 2.1 million individuals, 25 financial institutions, and 60 companies globally.

Albert A. Magalang, DENR climate change division chief, acknowledged the role of government in discussing the needs and wants of the Philippines for a global treaty.

“We would like to work with the global community on how to address this plastic problem as we know that plastic pollution is a transboundary and cross-sectoral problem that cannot be solved through national or regional initiatives alone,” he said.

Climate and environmental consultancy group Parabukas also reiterated the importance of working toward the goal of zero plastics.

“It’s really in the hammering out of details that the challenges will arise,” said Cecilia Therese T. Guiao, Parabukas’ co-founder and managing director. “One particular aspect of a treaty like this would include financial mechanisms and support of developed countries to developing countries.” — **Brontë H. Lacsamana**

Source: [https://www.bworldonline.com/wwf-philippines-calls-for-support-for-global-treaty-on-plastic-pollution/?fbclid=IwAR20X-AEIVs2sXdxfmYeX6piGyWGVQmmpyYOQMxur3uFJn3btQ4C\\_BnZYPo](https://www.bworldonline.com/wwf-philippines-calls-for-support-for-global-treaty-on-plastic-pollution/?fbclid=IwAR20X-AEIVs2sXdxfmYeX6piGyWGVQmmpyYOQMxur3uFJn3btQ4C_BnZYPo)



## Emerging markets could benefit from green investments—Diokno

BY **BIANCA CUARESMA** FEBRUARY 24, 2022

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) governor Benjamin Diokno said emerging markets like the Philippines could stand to benefit from green investments, especially in its growth momentum from the pandemic disruptions, if countries adopt a sustainable path to recovery.

Citing data from the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, Diokno said that investments in the Philippines and in three other big emerging markets—China, Indonesia, and Vietnam—may reach \$5.1 trillion if these economies adopt a post-pandemic green recovery approach.

This approach includes investing in energy efficiency, green infrastructure, supporting environment-related research and development, and incentives for low-carbon vehicles.

“For its part, the BSP has incorporated sustainability principles in its portfolio management as part of its sustainable central banking strategy.

The BSP invested \$550 million in the Green Bond Fund managed by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and plans to invest in the BIS Asian Green Bond Fund in 2022.

The governor also encouraged banks and other supervised financial institutions to offer sustainable financial instruments that may support the post-pandemic recovery of the agriculture and the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) sectors.

“Since the Philippines is vulnerable to typhoons and climate-related risks due to its geographical location, green recovery is the ideal approach to strike a balance between implementing economic strategies and building climate and disaster resilience,” Diokno said.

“The BSP remains committed to fostering the country's sustainability efforts to ensure a more stable, resilient, and inclusive Philippine financial system,” he added.

In mid-2021, the BSP also said it wants to include sustainable financing—or extending so-called “green loans” to corporations—as part of the proposed revisions to the mandated lending to the agriculture sector.





## Million trees foundation plants 5.2 million saplings in watershed projects

by [Manila Standard](#) February 24, 2022, 10:15 pm in [National](#), [News](#)

More than five million seedlings have been planted from 2017-to 2021 through the Annual Million Trees Challenge project of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

This was jointly reported by MWSS Administrator Leonor Cleofas and Million Trees Foundation, Inc. (MFTI) president Melandrew Velasco during the strategic planning activity to develop a watershed restoration roadmap held at MWSS La Mesa Guesthouse inside the La Mesa Dam Compound in Novaliches, Quezon City.



WATERSHED PLANNING. Million Trees Foundation, Inc. (MFTI) president Melandrew Velasco leads the distribution of token awards to participants of a strategic planning activity to develop a watershed restoration roadmap. The sessions took place inside the La Mesa Dam Compound in Novaliches, Quezon City.

According to the report from 2017-2021, a total of 5,212,344 seedlings have been planted in beneficiary watersheds. Of this number, 2,512,754 were planted in Ipo-Angat; 853,580 in La Mesa; 404,043 in Laguna de Bay; 257,099 in Kaliwa Umiray; 1,040,964 in Upper Marikina; and 143,904 in Manila Bay. Thus far, the AMTC has met its targets.

The tree-planting activities have resulted in the reforestation of 12,486.09 hectares in the watersheds as of end 2021: Ipo-Angat, 5,653.21 hectares; La Mesa, 1,913.59 hectares; Laguna de Bay, 802.73 hectares; Kaliwa-Umiray, 642.44 hectares; Upper Marikina, 3,150.99 hectares; and Manila Bay, 323.13 hectares.

AMTC is a five-year watershed rehabilitation project with seven critical watersheds as its beneficiaries. The project's target was to plant at least one million trees yearly and has successfully met its targets. It was launched in 2017 by then MWSS Administrator Gen, Reynaldo V. Velasco (ret.) who is now chairman emeritus of MTFI.

Reforestation activities were undertaken through collaborative efforts of various organizations from national government agencies, local government units, civil society groups and the private sector.

Among AMTC's partners and their respective scorecard of planted trees from 2017 to 2021 are Manila Water Company (Manila Water) with 386,000; Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) with 337,720; Luzon Clean Water Development Corporation (6,900); DENR NCR (382,930); DENR II (1,922,999); DENR IV-A (990,964); Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) with 360,552; local government of General Nakar (Quezon) with 76,980; ALKFI-BK (ABS CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Inc. – Bantay Kalikasan) with 144,600; and, WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines) with 297,400.



Tackled at the strategic planning activity were the gaps, challenges, and opportunities to improve watershed restoration. It was also a venue to formulate goals, strategies, and arrangements to enhance the restoration of the seven critical watersheds (Umiray, Angat, Ipo, La Mesa, Laguna de Bay, Kaliwa, and Upper Marikina) supporting Metro Manila's water supply.





# South Cotabato execs feel people's pulse on open-pit mining ban

By: [Bong Sarmiento](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Mindanao](#) / 05:00 AM February 25, 2022



KORONADAL CITY—Farmers belonging to the group Magsasaka at Siyentipiko Para sa Pag-Unlad ng Agrikultura (Masipag) are opposing moves to lift the open-pit mining ban in South Cotabato, fearing that it will destroy the province's mountains and threaten their capacity to produce food.

"Large-scale mining and agriculture can never coexist harmoniously," the farmers said in a position paper that they distributed after Thursday's public hearing at South Cotabato Gymnasium and Cultural Center here on the proposed lifting of the open-pit mining ban.

"Responsible mining is nothing but an illusion and propaganda. Organic farming that is anchored in the principle of self-reliance remains to be the reliable alternative and a way to sustainable development," the statement said.

"If you vote 'yes' to the lifting of the ban, it would be like a slap to the people of South Cotabato," Ignacio Sulit, chair of the advocacy committee of Masipag, told the 14 members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (provincial board) who attended the public hearing on the ban that has been in effect in the last 12 years.

## More hearings

COVID-19 safety protocols had limited the number of people allowed inside the gym, forcing hundreds of pro- and antimining supporters to stay outside, the crowd spilling over to the main Alunan Avenue.

Sulit, one of the people allowed to speak at the forum, pleaded with provincial legislators to retain the ban on open-pit mining, the method that will be used to extract the massive deposit in the \$5.9-billion Tampakan project, the largest untapped copper-gold reserve in Southeast Asia.

The farmers' group also urged the provincial board to hold more public hearings in all towns of South Cotabato and nearby areas because Tampakan and Koronadal City would not be the only places affected by the lifting of the ban.

"We are ashamed of the members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan who attempt to amend the environmental code in the middle of the pandemic to protect and cater to the interest of large corporations instead of addressing people's needs ...," part of their statement read.



Domingo “Amay” Collado, the indigenous peoples’ mandatory representative in Tampakan who spoke for promining groups, urged board members to lift the ban.

“We want the development of the mines inside our ancestral domain,” he said. “Please respect our decision, don’t undermine us, don’t discriminate against us,” he added.

### **‘We will listen’**

Vice Gov. Vicente de Jesus, presiding officer of the provincial board, told the crowd that all 14 board members attended the public hearing, which showed the importance they gave to the forum.

“This is how important this occasion is; this will determine the future of South Cotabato,” De Jesus said.

It was the second public hearing called by the board outside its legislative hall after the Feb. 18 hearing at Tampakan municipal gymnasium. The board would decide whether to lift or retain the ban on open-pit mining methods, contained in the province’s landmark Environment Code approved on June 9, 2010.

In 2015, the South Cotabato board unanimously affirmed the open-pit mining ban. But in March 2021, representatives of indigenous peoples in the province petitioned the board to review the Environment Code and amend the ordinance that instituted the ban.

De Jesus said the petition was referred to the joint committees on environment and Muslim affairs and indigenous peoples, which recommended amending the ban on open-pit mining. “Don’t worry, we will not stop. We will listen,” he said.

Acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna, who once served as director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos) also attended the public hearing but assured the people he did not come to influence the decision of the board members.

“Open-pit mining is a globally accepted method most feasible for shallow deposits,” he said.

Sagittarius Mines Inc., operator of the Tampakan project, confirmed in an earlier study that the best way to extract copper and gold reserves in the area would be through open-pit mining methods.

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# 'Responsible mining' is a form of misinformation, fake news

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:01 AM February 25, 2022

In his Feb. 17, 2022 opinion piece titled "Them thar hills," Peter Wallace argues for "responsible mining" to address what he calls the concern of the opposition on the environmental damages that mining brings. There is a need to disabuse Wallace and those from the mining industry who tout "responsible mining" as a way to secure the acceptability of large-scale mining projects. From our experience and perspective, "responsible mining" is a form of misinformation or, simply put, "fake news."

The latest evidence would be the Responsible Mining Index 2022 report of the Responsible Mining Foundation, which concluded that "The vast majority of the 250 assessed mine sites across 53 countries cannot demonstrate that they are informing and engaging with host communities and workers on basic risk factors such as environmental impacts, safety issues or grievances." See their report here: [https://2022.responsibleminingindex.org/resources/RMI\\_Report\\_2022-Summary\\_EN.pdf](https://2022.responsibleminingindex.org/resources/RMI_Report_2022-Summary_EN.pdf).

Related to the concept of "responsible mining" is "sustainable mining," which was first floated in 2012 during the Rio+20 Summit in Brazil, by the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM). In less than a year, global environmental groups denounced and exposed this concept as unscientific and socially unacceptable. The ICMM immediately dropped any pretense about "sustainable mining."

By 2015, the concept of "responsible mining" was introduced to replace the fully-debunked "sustainable mining." To this date, there is no legal definition of this "responsible mining." But the mining industry is trying very hard to sell the idea to allow themselves to be branded as "part of the solutions" of climate change, poverty, environmental destruction, and natural disasters.

The rebranding effort is interesting, but reality depicts a different story for mining-affected communities in particular and for national sustainable development in general.

Wallace himself posits that for "responsible mining" to happen, "it just needs firm, strict control by both the national and local governments." He adds that "as we know that won't happen without pressure" and that "we, the public, must exert

It sounds as if Wallace himself thinks "responsible mining" is far-fetched as he asserts that "if the government only licenses reputable companies (I suggest with an international partner who has an international reputation to protect), the risk is much reduced. If the opposition takes an active stance, any misdemeanors can be brought to attention early on."

We would like to remind Mr. Wallace that this was specifically done when environmental groups actively engaged the mine audit led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under Gina Lopez in 2016, which resulted in the closure and suspension orders against 28 operating mines. Sadly, almost all of these mines that violated environmental laws or failed to comply with their own contractual obligations have been allowed to operate again.

There goes effective regulation by the government.

Given the corruption in the government and the presence of corporate capture in government policy and regulation, "responsible mining" is unlikely to happen here in the Philippines.

Latest scientific evidence on climate change concludes that because of human abuse of the environment, the planet is now in crisis as climate catastrophes are expected to happen if nations





fail to curb global temperatures. It is imperative that stewardship over natural resources and the environment be exercised in order to preserve it for future generations.

Certainly, the issue is not only about grabbing the country's land, as Wallace puts it. But the impact of mining on communities—displacement, land-use change, deforestation, erosion, contamination of soil, local streams and wetlands, water use impacts, among others.

Indiscriminate and destructive mining must be stopped. We need to be rational about mining. "Responsible mining" is a myth. Or fake news, as this generation likes to put it.

Jaybee Garganera, national coordinator, Alyansa Tigil Mina, [nc@alyansatigilmina.net](mailto:nc@alyansatigilmina.net)

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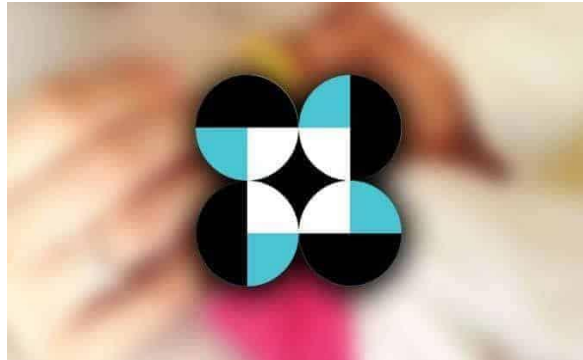


# 'Science in bloom': DOST's CRADLE program features technologies for environment, wellness

Published February 24, 2022, 8:16 PM

by [Charie Mae F. Abarca](#)

In an online event, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) through its Collaborative Research and Development to Leverage Philippine Economy (CRADLE) program featured various research collaborations and technologies developed mainly for wellness, community, and the environment sector.



(Department of Science and Technology)

The symposium was held on Thursday, Feb. 24, and it was entitled "Science in Bloom: Innovative breakthroughs for wellness, community, and the environment."

One of the projects was the collaboration of Sarnimian Small Scale Mining Corporation and Caraga State University. The project, according to DOST, aims to develop alternative solutions to the waste of gold-processing plants called mill tailings.

Another project presented was the "Driver Air ni Juan: Aluminosilicate Technology for Compact Air Purification."

"[It was created] in partnership between Manly Plastics Inc., MC Home Depot, Global One Shuttle Service Inc., and the University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD). This project will develop a powerful yet portable air purifier for automotive air filtration systems which works as a particulate filter, harmful gas remover, and anti-microbial filler," said DOST.

For wellness, the CRADLE project between Adamson University and Compact Pharmaceutical Corporation seeks to determine the formulation, quality control, and immediate-release tablets of "fixed-dose combinations" of Aspirin and Cilostazol.

Meanwhile, for community and arts, the collaborative project made by the Agricultural Sustainability Initiatives for Nature Inc. and UPD aims to help coastal communities in Macalelon, Quezon by using a science-based approach to increase the supply of oysters in the area and ensure its sustainability.

"CRADLE empowers our local Filipino companies to shift and adapt the needs of their clientele. The partnership between industry and academe allows sharing of knowledge and insight.

CRADLE improves the capabilities of our local companies, and at the same time broadens the understanding of our scientists and researchers on the needs of the industry," said DOST Secretary Fortunato de la Peña.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2022/02/24/science-in-bloom-dosts-cradle-program-features-technologies-for-environment-wellness/>



# AboitizPower breaks ground for second solar venture, to create ‘brighter future’ for Pangasinan

Published 14 hours ago on February 24, 2022 04:32 PM

By [TDI](#) [@tribunephil](#)



AboitizPower team members plant a narra tree sapling on the site in Cayanga, Bugallon, Pangasinan province where the company’s 94-MW peak solar power plant will soon rise. The sturdy and durable narra, considered as the Philippines’ national tree, also symbolizes AboitizPower’s strong resolve to contribute to a more reliable, cost-efficient, and sustainable power system for the country.

Aboitiz Power Corporation (AboitizPower) on Thursday held a virtual groundbreaking ceremony for its 94-MW peak solar power project in Pangasinan, an undertaking seen to create a “brighter future” for the province.

Pangasinan Governor Amado I. Espino III welcomed AboitizPower’s multi-billion-peso project, saying that this significant investment in sustainable power generation will help address the country’s need for more and cleaner energy sources to fuel the nation’s growth.

“Today marks a milestone in Pangasinan as we break new grounds to provide a safe and brighter future for our province and for our fellow Filipinos. This starts our tie-up to provide safe and renewable electric power to our people while protecting the environment for the next generations to enjoy,” Gov. Espino said in his message of support during the virtual event.

AboitizPower, through a special-purpose vehicle wholly owned by subsidiary Aboitiz Renewables, Inc. (ARI), in December last year awarded to JGC Philippines, Inc. the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contract for the project, with a total investment of ₱4.5 billion.

“Cayanga Solar is a very significant project for us at ARI. This marks the beginning of our exciting journey ahead — growing our renewable energy portfolio over the next 10 years to accelerate the Philippine energy transition to more environmentally sustainable sources,” ARI Executive Director David J. Smith said.

The project will soon rise on a 196-hectare site in Barangay Cayanga, about 13 kilometers southwest of the province’s capital. This will be the company’s second solar facility after its 59-MW peak solar plant in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental.

Construction is set to begin on the project immediately and is targeted to be operational by the fourth quarter of 2022. JGC had completed the site investigation works and the results were used for the ongoing detailed engineering and design of the facilities. Temporary facilities are being erected and completion of the access road going to the plant is currently underway.





Once completed, the power plant is expected to produce about 147 million kWh of clean energy annually or equivalent to the yearly power consumption of 60,000 average Filipino homes. The majority of the facility's capacity will be contracted for retail electricity supply, which can help bring cleaner and more sustainable energy to power consumers across the country.

"In our partnership with you, the Department of Energy (DOE) hopes that other companies and individuals will follow and do their advocacy for renewable energy and lessen our dependence on fossil fuels. The groundbreaking of this solar farm proves that solar energy is technically and economically competitive and could deliver clean and green energy, helping our nation to mitigate climate change impacts through the reduction of carbon footprints by offsetting the energy produced by these fossil fuels," DOE Undersecretary Felix William B. Fuentebella said.

AboitizPower is also looking to develop other renewable energy projects in the region, particularly wind and solar, with tendering on the 167-megawatt peak Laoag solar project in Aguilar, Pangasinan ongoing, and having already erected two met masts in the municipality back in February 2021 as well as two more in Bugallon in September 2021. Met mast refers to the structure where measuring equipment used for gathering resource data such as temperature, wind speed, and wind direction, among others, is installed to estimate energy production and understand the suitability of the site.

AboitizPower's 10-year growth strategy aims to contribute to a more reliable, cost-efficient, and sustainable power system for the country. With a projected investment of around ₱190 billion, the company is looking to grow its Cleanergy capacity to 4,600 MW, which will make up 50 percent of its total generation portfolio of 9,200 MW by 2030.

#### About AboitizPower

AboitizPower is the holding company for the Aboitiz Group's investments in power generation, distribution, and retail electricity services. It advances business and communities by providing reliable and ample power supply at a reasonable and competitive price, and with the least adverse effects on the environment and host communities.

The company is one of the largest power producers in the Philippines with a balanced portfolio of assets located across the country. It is a major producer of Cleanergy, the company's brand for clean and renewable energy with several hydroelectric, geothermal, and solar power generation facilities. It also has thermal power plants in its generation portfolio to support the country's baseload and peak energy demands.

The company also owns distribution utilities that operate in high-growth areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, including the country's second and third largest private utilities.

AboitizPower, together with its partners, is the Philippines' largest owner and operator of renewable energy based on installed capacity. In the next 10 years, the company will significantly expand its Cleanergy portfolio, in support of the government's efforts to promote renewable energy in the country. AboitizPower will build an additional 3,700 MW of renewable energy, growing its existing Cleanergy capacity threefold by 2030.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2022/02/24/abotizpower-breaks-ground-for-second-solar-venture-to-create-brighter-future-for-pangasinan/>



# Filipinos, Indonesians, Malaysians back new nature goals, as nations bide time

By MICHAEL TAYLOR, Reuters

Published February 24, 2022 6:53pm



This photo taken on February 23, 2017, shows trees in a forest near the tourist town of El Nido in Palawan where the Palawan NGO Network Inc (PNNI) say illegal logging is rampant. Karl Malakunas/ AFP/ File photo

KUALA LUMPUR — People living in three of the world's most biodiversity-rich nations in Southeast Asia strongly back efforts to protect 30% of the planet's land and oceans by 2030, according to a survey published on Thursday.

The online poll of more than 3,000 people living in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines found that almost all—96% in Malaysia, 98% in Indonesia and 95% in the Philippines—supported a proposed "30x30" nature protection goal.

Just slightly lower numbers—84% of Malaysians, 94% of Indonesians and 85% of Filipinos—wanted their governments to do so as well—something they have not yet done, found the researched conducted this month by polling company Vase.ai and commissioned by consultancy Atri Advisory.

It asked questions about the central goal of a planned new global nature treaty that hopes to curb climate change and the loss of plant and animal species.

Zakri Abdul Hamid, chairman of Atri Advisory and an advisor to the US-based Campaign for Nature, which is calling on world leaders to back the pledge, said the poll results were "amazing and a breath of fresh air."

Deforestation rates have fallen in recent years and "countries in SE Asia still have a high percentage of pristine forests in their territories," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Protecting those avoids "a series of negative impacts, including accelerating climate change and biodiversity loss," Hamid added.

Improving protection of natural areas, such as parks, oceans, forests and wildernesses, is seen as vital to maintaining the ecosystems on which humans depend, and to limiting global warming to internationally agreed targets.

The 30x30 goal is part of a draft global treaty to safeguard plants, animals and ecosystems, due to be finalized in May at the COP15 nature summit in the Chinese city of Kunming.

A coalition of more than 80 countries have already backed the 30x30 pledge, and in-person negotiations on the nature treaty are due to resume next month in Geneva, Switzerland.



"There is strong scientific evidence showing that the 30x30 target is the minimum amount of protections needed globally," said Hamid, urging countries to "strike a better balance between development and conservation."

Southeast Asian nations cover just 3% of the Earth's surface but are home to three of the world's 17 "megadiverse" countries—Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines—identified by conservationists as being the richest in species.

To date, Cambodia is the only nation in the region to have signed up to the 30x30 goal.

"Southeast Asia is one of the few biodiversity hotspots in the world, but the region also happens to be the quietest in the Kunming process," said Li Shuo, a policy advisor at Greenpeace China and observer of the nature pact discussions.

### **Hop on board**

The survey found that 80% of Malaysian respondents, 92% of Indonesians and 95% of Filipinos said they were either extremely or very concerned about the biodiversity crisis.

In addition, 87% of Malaysians polled, 93% of Indonesians and 91% of Filipinos said they were highly or somewhat aware of talks on a global nature pact.

Linda Krueger, director of biodiversity at The Nature Conservancy, said she believed the governments of the three nations polled wanted to see how the new pact comes together before committing to any one element.

Developing nations often rely on their natural resources—such as palm oil, mining and timber—to bolster their economies, especially after being hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As well, vested interests of politicians can be a hindrance to conservation efforts, environmentalists said.

A delay in Southeast Asian nations backing the 30x30 target could also be a tactic to secure more funding from richer countries to invest in nature, they added.

But "Southeast Asian country support for the final agreement will be essential," Krueger said.

"I hope and expect Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines will hop on board when the time is right," she added. — **Reuters**

Source: [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/822980/filipinos-indonesians-malaysians-back-new-nature-goals-as-nations-bide-time/story/?fbclid=IwAR3SzG7sm\\_Se7xZm85aqz\\_EbTyGq4PS3G-0\\_JzGauCaekGHaFHmX865IIMM](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/822980/filipinos-indonesians-malaysians-back-new-nature-goals-as-nations-bide-time/story/?fbclid=IwAR3SzG7sm_Se7xZm85aqz_EbTyGq4PS3G-0_JzGauCaekGHaFHmX865IIMM)





"There is strong scientific evidence showing that the 30x30 target is the minimum amount of protections needed globally," said Hamid, urging countries to "strike a better balance between development and conservation."

Southeast Asian nations cover just 3% of the Earth's surface but are home to three of the world's 17 "megadiverse" countries—Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines—identified by conservationists as being the richest in species.

To date, Cambodia is the only nation in the region to have signed up to the 30x30 goal.

"Southeast Asia is one of the few biodiversity hotspots in the world, but the region also happens to be the quietest in the Kunming process," said Li Shuo, a policy advisor at Greenpeace China and observer of the nature pact discussions.

### **Hop on board**

The survey found that 80% of Malaysian respondents, 92% of Indonesians and 95% of Filipinos said they were either extremely or very concerned about the biodiversity crisis.

In addition, 87% of Malaysians polled, 93% of Indonesians and 91% of Filipinos said they were highly or somewhat aware of talks on a global nature pact.

Linda Krueger, director of biodiversity at The Nature Conservancy, said she believed the governments of the three nations polled wanted to see how the new pact comes together before committing to any one element.

Developing nations often rely on their natural resources—such as palm oil, mining and timber—to bolster their economies, especially after being hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As well, vested interests of politicians can be a hindrance to conservation efforts, environmentalists said.

A delay in Southeast Asian nations backing the 30x30 target could also be a tactic to secure more funding from richer countries to invest in nature, they added.

But "Southeast Asian country support for the final agreement will be essential," Krueger said.

"I hope and expect Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines will hop on board when the time is right," she added. — **Reuters**

Source: [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/822980/filipinos-indonesians-malaysians-back-new-nature-goals-as-nations-bide-time/story/?fbclid=IwAR3SzG7sm\\_Se7xZm85aqz\\_EbTyGq4PS3G-0\\_JzGauCaekGHaFHmX865IIMM](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/822980/filipinos-indonesians-malaysians-back-new-nature-goals-as-nations-bide-time/story/?fbclid=IwAR3SzG7sm_Se7xZm85aqz_EbTyGq4PS3G-0_JzGauCaekGHaFHmX865IIMM)



# Masungi calls for 'firm, fearless' enforcement to protect Upper Marikina watershed and its defenders

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) - Philstar.com February 23, 2022 | 4:28pm



A forest ranger opens a checkpoint inside the reforestation area on July 22, 2021.

Philstar.com / EC Toledo

MANILA, Philippines — The Masungi Georeserve Foundation called for “firm and fearless” implementation of environmental laws and regulations as it criticized the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for its alleged failure to address the violent attacks against forest rangers and illegal activities in the watershed.

In a statement, the conservation organization in Baras, Rizal said it is holding DENR accountable for the mauling of Masungi employees last week and [the shooting of two forest rangers](#) by men suspected to be working for resorts inside the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL) in July 2021.

The foundation said it begged the environment department to prosecute, penalize and evict illegal occupants in the reforestation site it is managing inside the protected area “to no avail.”

Masungi is restoring a 2,700-hectare land within the Upper Marikina watershed in partnership with the government.

Under an agreement signed with the DENR in 2017, Masungi will plant and maintain trees to help heal the degraded watershed, while the DENR will be in charge of ejecting illegal occupants from the project site and canceling tenurial instruments with violations.

The foundation also asked the department to install a checkpoint in the area to prevent encroachment and protect the rangers who defend the watershed, but it said the DENR refused.

“Clearly, had the DENR heeded our pleas and done its job, all the violence against the rangers, as well as the irreparable injury to the watershed, could have been avoided,” Masungi said.

“We sorely miss a display of genuine concern for the watershed from the DENR upon whom the people and the state entrusted its care and protection. The people want to see and feel staunch environmental advocates, not apologists for its plunderers,” Masungi said.

## **DENR: Monitoring watershed, probing attack**

The foundation issued the remark in response to [DENR Calabarzon’s statement](#) on the attack of Masungi forest rangers, which it said was “highly insensitive and misguided... which seemingly tries to justify the acts of violence against rangers.”



Last Friday, about 30 people composed of resort owners and employees “ganged up, clobbered and mauled” seven rangers of Masungi after they refused to get accosted without a search warrant. The incident left two rangers injured and one vehicle damaged after it was smashed with a rock.

In a statement Wednesday, DENR Calabarzon condemned the attack against environmental defenders. The regional office said it is monitoring the area and coordinating with environmental protection agencies.

According to DENR Calabarzon, the Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office conducted an investigation on Saturday. Citing an account of a resident, the DENR office said four Masungi employees were seen carrying a sack, which was suspected by residents to contain a gun.

Ann Dumaliang, trustee and project manager of the foundation, told **Philstar.com** the accusation was “completely untrue.”

“When we asked the police and when we talked to the mob, it was clear they did not have any evidence and no one saw an actual gun even if they were claiming that one of our rangers has one,” Dumaliang said.

DENR Calabarzon also said that before the incident, the Protected Area Management Board of the Upper Marikina watershed was supposed to conduct a visit inside Masungi Georeserve but they were not allowed entry by the organization due to lack of clearance. Dumaliang said the visit was not coordinated ahead of time.

“Ang insidenteng ito ay hindi kumpirmadong kaugnay ng sumunod na kaguluhan ngunit patuloy ang pakikipagtulungan ng DENR Calabarzon sa PNP para sa masusing pag-iimbestiga,” DENR Calabarzon said.

(The incident is not confirmed to be related to the attack, but DENR Calabarzon is constantly working with the PNP for the probe.)

**Philstar.com** reached out to the local police for comment but they have yet to respond.

Located upstream of Metro Manila, the 26,126-hectare UMRBPL serves as the capital region's “safety net” against typhoons and high density rain. Conservationists said the continued forest loss in the watershed due to illegal logging, quarrying and construction of resorts threatens low-lying areas.

In July, DENR Calabarzon issued 80 show-cause orders and 43 cease-and-desist orders to people illegally occupying portions of the watershed, including owners of houses constructed along river easement and of resorts, retreat centers and piggeries.

Stronger climate, environment agenda

Masungi earlier said the threats and attacks against rangers likely stemmed from “underhanded moves” of the DENR to endorse clearances to illegal resorts.

“We need firm and fearless implementation of environmental laws from our leaders,” Dumaliang said.

In a statement, environmental organization Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment called on candidates in the May elections speak up and use their platform to address the violence faced by protectors of nature.





“The longer these land grabbers encroaching Masungi are not prosecuted, the more we will see bolder acts of violence against its defenders,” Kalikasan PNE national coordinator Leon Dulce said.

Dumaliang called on poll candidates to present stronger climate and environment agenda.

“2030 is a year relevant to the restoration movement and climate crisis targets. It is the next administration’s term that will determine if we make it or break it,” the Masungi trustee said.

“What we need is a firm and strong leader who can push for this change, put the quality of life of Filipinos front and center.”



# Masungi: Watershed protecting NCR under attack with impunity

By: [Kurt Dela Peña](#) - Content Researcher Writer / [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:54 PM February 24, 2022



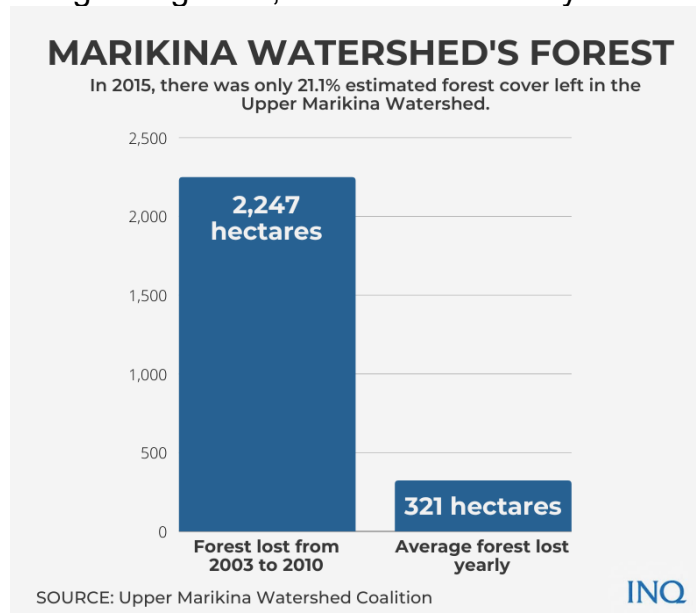
**POOLS IN PROTECTED AREA.** Through a drone shot, swimming pools are seen inside the Masungi Geopark Project which is part of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape. Photo courtesy of Masungi Georeserve

MANILA, Philippines—Environmentalists are in a race with time to save whatever forest cover is left in the Philippines—only 7 million hectares from 27.5 million hectares in the 1500s.

One of these forest sites is now known as Masungi Georeserve, which in 1996 was dedicated to conservation and restoration of the threatened landscape of Rizal province. It was born out of a deal with the government.

The Masungi Georeserve, which is within the rainforests of Rizal, is a 400-hectare land in the Sierra Madre Mountain Range that was hit by deforestation and massive land-grabbing activities.

Since the 2000s, the Masungi Georeserve Foundation (MGF) conserved and rehabilitated the landscape: “Trees are now growing taller, the wildlife is slowly but certainly getting richer.”

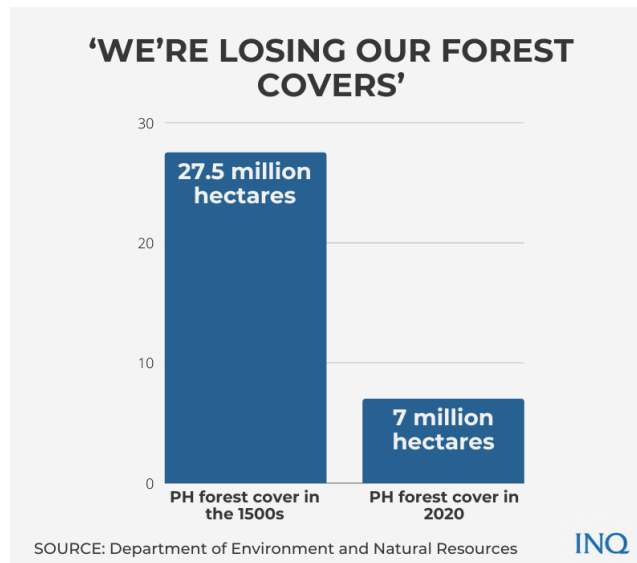


GRAPHIC: Kurt Dela Peña

While the rock spine, which serves as a filter for essential waterways, was already preserved, the mountains on its edges “remain desperately threatened” by illegal activities.

The Global Water Partnership stressed that these illegal activities were even exacerbated by decades of institutional problems, like the lack of resources, corrupt practices and neglect.

This was the reason that in 2017, then Environment Secretary Gina Lopez asked MGF to help her preserve protected landscapes, especially the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL).



GRAPHIC: Kurt Dela Peña

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the UMRBPL, with a land area of 26,126 hectares, was established through Presidential Proclamation 296 in 2001.

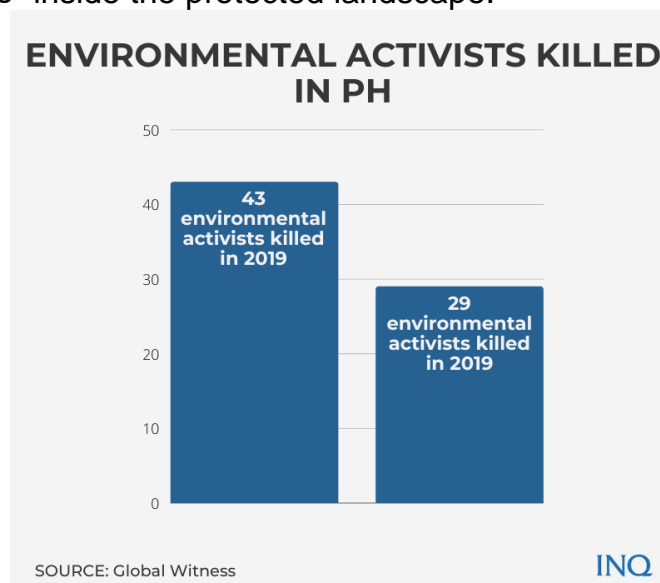
Anne Dumaliang, Masungi Georeserve's managing trustee, told INQUIRER.net that they are now conserving 2,700 hectares of the UMRBPL—the Masungi Geopark Project (MGP).

### Violence hits Masungi

With self-generated finances and experiences in preserving the environment, the MGF signed a landmark deal with the government to restore the MGP, but defending it from illegal activities was never easy.

Last Friday (Feb. 18), seven park rangers, who were then eating, were violently harassed by a mob of 20 to 30 people. Dumaliang said the rangers were punched and hit with rocks. Two of the rangers were hospitalized.

Dumaliang said the mob that was responsible for the violence were individuals working for owners of "illegal resorts" inside the protected landscape.



GRAPHIC: Kurt Dela Peña



The Feb. 18 incident was the latest in a string of violence committed against park rangers, she said, stressing the need for an end to impunity and lawlessness. “They don’t deserve this,” she said.

On July 25, 2021, two park rangers, who were then stationed in Sitio San Roque, Barangay Pinugay in Baras, Rizal, were shot—one in the head while the other in the neck.

Traps and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) targeted at park rangers were likewise discovered on Oct. 6, 2021. MGF said these placed rangers, the landscape, communities and even the wildlife in extreme danger.

On Dec. 22, 2021, five park rangers were “illegally detained, mistreated, and verbally abused by elements of the Baras police” on the “say-so” of an environmental offender.



GRAPHIC: Kurt Dela Peña

The Philippines, Global Witness said, was the deadliest place in Asia and third worldwide for environmental activists. In 2020, at least 29 land rights and environmental activists were killed in the country, just behind Colombia (60 killed) and Mexico (30 killed).

With 43 deaths in 2019, the Philippines was likewise the deadliest place in Asia and second worldwide for environmental activists. It was behind Colombia which had 64 killings while Brazil was third with 24 cases of killing of land rights and environmental activists.

MGF cited data from the International Ranger Federation which said that 44 percent of “line of duty deaths” among rangers was homicide.

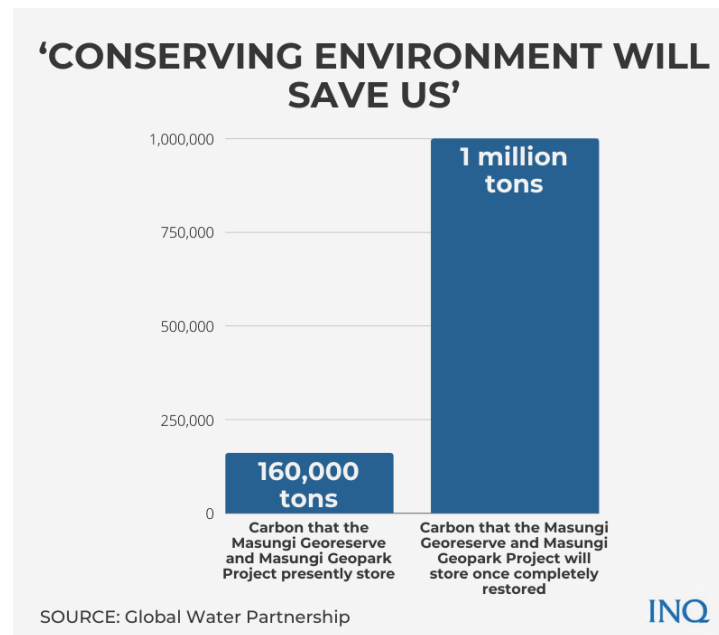
This, as there is only one ranger per 4,000 hectares of protected area in the Philippines, the MGF said, citing data from the United Nations Development Programme.

### Law’s provisions

Right next to Metro Manila, MGF said the UMRBPL is a natural protection mechanism against severe disasters, like typhoons. This was one of the reasons MGF strives to shield it from illegal activities.

Since 1904, when the United States was still governing the Philippines, the Marikina Watershed has been “protected from settlement, entry, sale and disposition.”





GRAPHIC: Kurt Dela Peña

The MGP, since it's a part of the UMRBPL, is protected by the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018 (E-NIPAS), Dumaliang said.

The E-NIPAS, which amended the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992, was a piece of legislation meant to assure the ecological integrity of all protected areas, like the UMRBPL.

Section 18 (o) of the law said without clearance from the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) and the DENR, these will be prohibited within the protected landscape:

- Construction and maintenance of any kind of structure, fence or enclosure, conducting any business enterprise
- Conduct of these activities in a way that is inconsistent with the management plan that was approved by the PAMB

The law, which recognized that all protected landscapes possess common ecological values which are essential to conserve and protect natural heritage, likewise prohibited these:

- Poaching, killing, destroying, disturbing of any wildlife
- Hunting, taking, collecting, or possessing of any wildlife
- Cutting, gathering, removing or collecting timber
- Possessing or transporting outside the protected area any timber, forest products, wildlife
- Engaging in commercial or large-scale quarrying
- Prospecting, hunting or otherwise locating hidden treasure

MGF said quarrying can completely change the landscape, destroy habitats, pollute water sources and increase risk of disasters in ecologically sensitive areas.

### **Resorts in protected landscape**

MGF said occupying and building permanent structures in the protected landscape without clearance is a violation of the E-NIPAS Act, the Building Code and Forestry Code.

While it's not often implemented, MGF said, the penalty for violating the law could be P5 million and six years of imprisonment: "Building permanent structures is a form of land conversion and can encourage more occupation."

This was the reason that concerns were raised regarding the existence of resorts and permanent structures inside the UMRBPL "even without permits or titles".



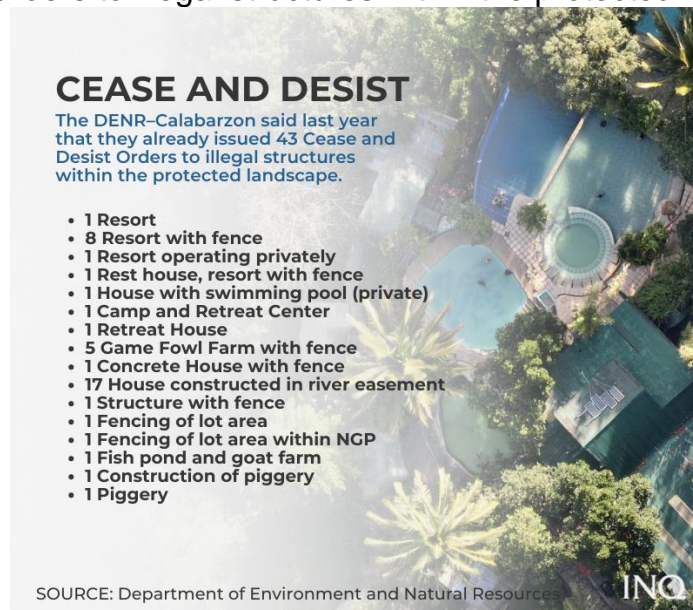
The MGF asked: “How can big swimming pool resorts exist inside a critical watershed, protected area, and wildlife sanctuary, where water is already scarce?”

When pools without clearances operate within a protected landscape, they can take precious large amounts of water from the mountains: “This will result in water loss and the decrease in clean water quality.”

“They can also be breeding grounds for parasites that can affect biodiversity,” MGF said.

“Business can be helpful to society but not at the expense of the environment and the public. There is no excuse in bullying and harming rangers who are only doing their job to protect our watershed,” it said.

The DENR–Calabarzon said last year that it had already issued 80 Show Cause Orders and 43 Cease and Desist Orders to illegal structures within the protected landscape.



GRAPHIC: Kurt Dela Peña

Here’s the breakdown of the violations. The DENR-Calabarzon said all of these were already given Cease and Desist Orders:

- 1 Resort
- 8 Resorts with fence
- 1 Resort operating privately
- 1 Rest house, resort with fence
- 1 House with swimming pool (private)
- 1 Camp and Retreat Center
- 1 Retreat House
- 5 Game Fowl Farms with fence
- 1 Concrete House with fence
- 17 Houses constructed in river easement
- 1 Structure with fence
- 1 Fencing of lot area
- 1 Fencing of lot area within NGP
- 1 Fish pond and goat farm
- 1 Construction of piggery
- 1 Piggery

Dumaliang said the violence, especially against park rangers, has intensified because of MGF’s resistance to the illegal activities, especially the resorts. “It’s because they know that they can no longer get away with this,” she said.



On Nov. 15, 2021 the DENR "finally filed charges against the owner of GSB Resort" for violations of the Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines and E-NIPAS.

The MGF said the resort was found "encroaching and expanding deep into the UMRBPL and the Masungi Geopark reforestation sites [and that] it continued to construct despite multiple stop orders."

Last Feb. 4, charges were likewise filed by the two park rangers, who were shot last year: "With our presence and your vigilance, sadly, they can longer do business as usual."

"This is a step towards the effective enforcement of environmental laws against those who break them in bad faith and believe that they can simply get away with it," the MGF said.

MGF likewise disproved allegations that thousands have lost their homes because of reforestation, saying that the site is located outside the sitio proper where most of the existing 150 to 200 households are located.

### 'Hold DENR responsible'

Dumaliang said two of the main problems in the protected landscape are "land-grabbing and land speculation." She said those who commit these "can't get away with it without a level of consent from government officials."

Last Wednesday (Feb. 23), the DENR-Calabarzon said it is already investigating the attack on the rangers, saying that it condemns violence committed against individuals who defend the environment.

However, MGF said the DENR-Calabarzon's remarks on the Feb. 18 incident was "insensitive and misguided," saying MGF would like to "set the record straight".

The DENR-Calabarzon said residents told police that the park rangers allegedly had firearms with them: "This was not proven because there was no search warrant".

It said officials of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office of Rizal went to the San Roque Road that day to investigate. It said that the residents prevented the park rangers from leaving the area because "they had firearms".



GRAPHIC: Kurt Dela Peña



The DENR-Calabarzon said the residents told them that the firearms were allegedly inside a sack and that the violence started when the residents tried to take the guns.

However, MGF said individuals who work for resort owners conceal themselves as farmers or residents to spread lies regarding park rangers and the conservation of the protected landscape.

It said they hold the DENR “accountable” for the incidents—the Feb. 18, 2022 and the July 24, 2021 attacks on rangers—saying that they already asked the DENR countless times to prosecute, penalize, and evict those violating the law.

“It is the contractual obligation of the DENR to evict the illegal pool resorts, quarry companies, and other unscrupulous illegal occupants within the conservation project area.”

MGF said instead of heeding their call “the DENR Protected Area Superintendent and PAMBs rewarded the resorts with endorsements, despite standing Cease and Desist Orders towards their continued harmful operation.”

It said the owners were emboldened by the approvals and advise that only the MGF stands in the way of their business. This resulted in a comprehensive disinformation, hate, and violent campaign against MGF.

Dumaliang stressed that they only wanted the DENR to establish a checkpoint “to track who are the individuals in and out since July 2021.” However, she said “everything was for assessment.”

“We’re on the ground 24/7 and we know what’s happening. We will not ask for it if there’s no immediate threat against us, the park rangers, and everyone here,” she said.

The MGF said: “Clearly, had the DENR heeded our pleas and done its job, all the violence against the rangers, as well as all the irreparable injury to the watershed, could have been avoided.”

The DENR-Calabarzon told INQUIRER.net that they will hold a press conference on Monday (Feb. 28) regarding the matter.

The DENR has not yet responded to our request for comment but it said last month that it is hoping to remove illegal occupants within protected landscapes and that the UMRBPL will be a priority.

### **‘Still committed’**

With the escalating violence against park rangers, it’s easy to cower in fear and back out, but MGF and its park rangers remain relentless in committing themselves to conserve the environment.

The DENR said the UMRBPL and the Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve “play an important role in regulating the flow of water” toward the National Capital Region (NCR).

Dumaliang told INQUIRER.net that UMRBPL is very critical not only for the communities within and on its edges because it’s also significant for Metro Manila.

“It’s really something that affects some 20 million Filipinos who rely on this watershed,” she said, stressing that illegal activities have deep impacts on the quality and amount of water, siltation of waterways, and even soil quality.





A watershed is an area of land that drains or “sheds” water into another body of water. In this case, water from the Sierra Madre flows through these areas all the way down the Pasig River, Marikina River, and Laguna de Bay:

- Antipolo
- Baras
- General Nakar
- Rodriguez
- San Mateo
- Tanay

However, the continued destruction of the forest has affected the watershed’s natural ability to hold stormwater. In 2009, when Typhoon Ondoy hit, the failure of the watershed to hold water led to one of the deadliest disasters to hit NCR.

The Upper Marikina Watershed Coalition said that from 2003 to 2010, the UMRBPL lost a significant area of 2,247 hectares or an average of 321 hectares every year.

“In 2015, there was only 21.1% estimated forest cover left in the Upper Marikina Watershed. Parts of the watershed are still under threat as mining, quarrying, professional squatting, and large-scale illegal logging continues,” it said.

In 2020, when Typhoon Ulysses hit, the Advocates of Science and Technology for the People (Agham) said the degraded condition of watersheds upstream the Marikina-Pasig was also a critical factor in the floods that hit communities.

“If a watershed is no longer healthy, when there are no trees and no vegetation, runoff water can easily travel down from the mountains and toward the rivers and other channels,” Agham said.

A conserved UMRBPL would likewise translate to the preservation of the Masungi Georeserve—the home of 60-year-old limestone formations and 400 species of flora and fauna.



GRAPHIC: Kurt Dela Peña

Some of the flora and fauna that are thriving there are the Wisteria, White Lauan, Saligongon, Malabulak, Northern Luzon Giant Cloud Rat, Indigo-banded Kingfisher, Civet Cat, and the Scale-feathered Malkoha.



The Global Water Partnership said conserving the MGP will help strengthen resilience to climate changes, especially by protecting and restoring the forests in the watershed and its biodiversity.

It said when landscapes are saved from threats, they act as carbon sink, stressing that so far, the Masungi Georeserve and MGP presently store an estimate of 160,000 tons of carbon or the equivalent of 66 million gallons of gasoline consumed.

“Once fully restored, the area will be able to store almost one million tons of Carbon and sequester even more every year,” it said.

TSB



## Severe wildfires to rise further – UN

By [Global Times](#) February 25, 2022



INFERNO Firefighters light a backfire to stop the Dixie Fire from spreading near Prattville in Plumas County, California on July 23, 2021. Massive wildfires have been battling parts of the United States and Canada for almost three weeks now. AP FILE PHOTO

**BOGOR:** The number of severe wildfires worldwide will rise sharply in the coming decades due to global warming, and governments are ill-prepared for the death and destruction of such mega-blazes trail in their wake, the UN warned.

Even the most ambitious efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions will not prevent a dramatic surge in the frequency of extreme fire conditions, a report commissioned by the UN Environment Programme concluded.

"By the end of the century, the probability of wildfire events similar to Australia's 2019-20 Black Summer or the huge Arctic fires in 2020 occurring in a given year is likely to increase by 31-57 percent," it said.

The heating of the planet is turning landscapes into tinderboxes, and more extreme weather means stronger, hotter and drier winds to fan the flames. Such wildfires are burning where they have always occurred, and are flaring up in unexpected places such as drying peatlands and thawing permafrost.

"Fires are not good things," said co-author Peter, an expert in forest fire management at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

"The impacts on people — socially, health-wise, psychologically — are phenomenal and long term," he told journalists in a briefing. A recent study in *The Lancet* concluded that exposure to wildfire smoke results, on average, in more than 30,000 deaths each year across 43 nations for which data was available.

Economic damages in the US — one of the few countries to calculate such costs — have varied between \$71 to \$348 billion in recent years, according to an assessment cited in the report. Major blazes can also be devastating for wildlife, pushing some endangered species closer to the brink of extinction.

Nearly 3 billion mammals, reptiles, birds and frogs were killed or harmed, for example, by Australia's devastating 2019-20 bushfires, scientists have calculated. Wildfires are made worse by climate change.

Heat waves, drought conditions and reduced soil moisture amplified by global warming have contributed to unprecedented fires in the western US, Australia and the Mediterranean basin just in the last three years.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/02/25/news/world/severe-wildfires-to-rise-further-un/1834220>



25 FEBRUARY 2022, FRIDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





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## Puerto Galera soon to have STP

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

A SEWAGE treatment plant (STP) will soon be installed near Puerto Galera's popular beach in Mindoro with the donation of land to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) where the said facility will be constructed.

DENR Officer-in-charge Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said the donation will be a big boost in the agency's efforts to preserve Puerto Galera's marine resources and to make it one of the country's top tourist destinations.

The Locsin Foundation, headed by Leandro Locsin Jr. and Luis Locsin, heirs of the National Artist of the Philippines for Architecture Leandro Locsin, donated 11,444 square meters of land to be used for a second wastewater treatment facility on the island.

"We are thankful for the Locsin Foundation's generous contribution in protecting and conserving the waters and natural resources

of Puerto Galera. This next step will be a great stand-in preventing a Boracay-like scenario," Sampulna said during the turnover of the Transfer Certificate of Title held at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City on Feb. 21.

Sampulna commended the Locsin family for being environmental advocates, and for Puerto Galera Mayor Rocky D. Ilagan for being proactive in taking a step towards partnering with a landowner to install STPs in his town.

He added that the Locsin family has been responsible for the preservation of several lands in Puerto Galera to keep marine resources and natural habitats safe from further destruction, including repopulating giant clams and keeping them on the island.

For his part, Retired Col. Noel J. Detogato, a representative of the Locsin Foundation, said their partnership with the DENR and local government of Puerto Galera exhibits a serious commitment for them to come together for a com-

mon environmental cause and the welfare of future generations.

"Pareho lang kami ng advocacy to protect our environment. Gusto rin naming ma-preserve [ang] ating kalikasan dahil kawa-wa naman 'yung mga magiging anak natin at apo, [kung hindi natin pangangalagaan ito ngayon,] wala na silang makikitang natural environment," Delgado added.

Puerto Galera's first STP is located at Bgy. Sabang and became fully operational in 2020. It has since been treating about 1,750 cubic meters of uncontrolled wastewater daily.

Aside from the proposed second STP, the DENR and Puerto Galera's local government are also in talks of building a DENR regional office and tourist police for the safety and security of tourists on the island.

After receiving the transfer certificate of title from Detogato, Sampulna then turned it over to DENR-MIMAROPA OIC Regional Executive Director Lormelyn E. Claudio.



## Emerging markets could benefit from green investments—Diokno

**B**ANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) governor Benjamin Diokno said emerging markets like the Philippines could stand to benefit from green investments, especially in its growth momentum from the pandemic disruptions, if countries adopt a sustainable path to recovery.

Citing data from the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, Diokno said that investments in the Philippines and in three other big emerging markets—China, Indonesia, and Vietnam—may reach \$5.1 trillion if these economies adopt a post-pandemic green recovery approach.

This approach includes investing in energy efficiency, green infrastructure, supporting environment-related research and development, and incentives for low-carbon vehicles.

"For its part, the BSP has incorporated sustainability principles in its portfolio management as part of its sustainable central banking strategy.

The BSP invested \$550 million in the Green Bond Fund managed by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and

plans to invest in the BIS Asian Green Bond Fund in 2022.

The governor also encouraged banks and other supervised financial institutions to offer sustainable financial instruments that may support the post-pandemic recovery of the agriculture and the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) sectors.

"Since the Philippines is vulnerable to typhoons and climate-related risks due to its geographical location, green recovery is the ideal approach to strike a balance between implementing economic strategies and building climate and disaster resilience," Diokno said.

"The BSP remains committed to fostering the country's sustainability efforts to ensure a more stable, resilient, and inclusive Philippine financial system," he added.

In mid-2021, the BSP also said it wants to include sustainable financing—or extending so-called "green loans" to corporations—as part of the proposed revisions to the mandated lending to the agriculture sector. *Bianca Cuaresma*





## Million Trees foundation plants 5.2 million saplings in watershed projects

MORE than five million seedlings have been planted from 2017-to 2021 through the Annual Million Trees Challenge project of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

This was jointly reported by MWSS Administrator Leonor Cleofas and Million Trees Foundation, Inc. (MFTI) president Melandrew Velasco during the strategic planning activity to develop a watershed restoration roadmap held at MWSS La Mesa

Guesthouse inside the La Mesa Dam Compound in Novaliches, Quezon City.

According to the report from 2017-2021, a total of 5,212,344 seedlings have been planted in beneficiary watersheds. Of this number, 2,512,754 were planted in Ipo-Angat; 853,580 in La Mesa; 404,043 in Laguna de Bay; 257,099 in Kaliwa Umiray; 1,040,964 in Upper Marikina; and 143,904 in Manila Bay. Thus far, the AMTC has met its targets.







02-25-22

FILE:

PAGE 1/

DATE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

# SOUTH COTABATO EXEGS FEEL PEOPLE'S PULSE ON OPEN-PIT MINING BAN

**By Bong Sarmiento**  
@InqNational.

KORONADAL CITY—Farmers belonging to the group Mag-sasaka at Siyentipiko Para sa Pag-Unlad ng Agrikultura (Masipag) are opposing moves to lift the open-pit mining ban in South Cotabato, fearing that it will destroy the province's mountains and threaten their capacity to produce food.

"Large-scale mining and agriculture can never coexist harmoniously," the farmers said in a position paper that they distributed after Thursday's public hearing at South Cotabato Gymnasium and Cultural Center here on the proposed lifting of the open-pit mining ban.

"Responsible mining is nothing but an illusion and propaganda. Organic farming that

is anchored in the principle of self-reliance remains to be the reliable alternative and a way to sustainable development," the statement said.

"If you vote 'yes' to the lifting of the ban, it would be like a slap to the people of South Cotabato," Ignacio Sulit, chair of the advocacy committee of Masipag, told the 14 members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (provincial board) who attended the public hearing on the ban that has been in effect in the last 12 years.

### More hearings

COVID-19 safety protocols had limited the number of people allowed inside the gym, forcing hundreds of pro- and antimining supporters to stay outside, the crowd spilling over to the main Alunan Avenue.

Sulit, one of the people al-

lowed to speak at the forum, pleaded with provincial legislators to retain the ban on open-pit mining, the method that will be used to extract the massive deposit in the \$5.9-billion Tampakan project, the largest untapped copper-gold reserve in Southeast Asia.

The farmers' group also urged the provincial board to hold more public hearings in all towns of South Cotabato and nearby areas because Tampakan and Koronadal City would not be the only places affected by the lifting of the ban.

"We are ashamed of the members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan who attempt to amend the environmental code in the middle of the pandemic to protect and cater to the interest of large corporations instead of addressing people's needs ..."

part of their statement read.

Domingo "Amay" Collado, the indigenous peoples' mandatory representative in Tampakan who spoke for promining groups, urged board members to lift the ban.

"We want the development of the mines inside our ancestral domain," he said. "Please respect our decision, don't undermine us, don't discriminate against us," he added.

### 'We will listen'

Vice Gov. Vicente de Jesus, presiding officer of the provincial board, told the crowd that all 14 board members attended the public hearing, which showed the importance they gave to the forum.

"This is how important this occasion is; this will determine the future of South Cotabato,"

De Jesus said.

It was the second public hearing called by the board outside its legislative hall after the Feb. 18 hearing at Tampakan municipal gymnasium. The board would decide whether to lift or retain the ban on open-pit mining methods, contained in the province's landmark Environment Code approved on June 9, 2010.

In 2015, the South Cotabato board unanimously affirmed the open-pit mining ban. But in March 2021, representatives of indigenous peoples in the province petitioned the board to review the Environment Code and amend the ordinance that instituted the ban.

De Jesus said the petition was referred to the joint committees on environment and Muslim affairs and indigenous peoples, which recommended amending

the ban on open-pit mining.

"Don't worry, we will not stop. We will listen," he said.

Acting Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna, who once served as director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos) also attended the public hearing but assured the people he did not come to influence the decision of the board members.

"Open-pit mining is a globally accepted method most feasible for shallow deposits," he said.

Sagittarius Mines Inc., operator of the Tampakan project, confirmed in an earlier study that the best way to extract copper and gold reserves in the area would be through open-pit mining methods. **INQ**



Never be so loyal that you  
betray your country  
Jake Ejercito,  
@unoemilio

Edsa is not Cory Aquino or  
those other personalities.  
Edsa is a reminder that  
our cherished freedoms/  
liberties will always be  
threatened if we do not  
fight for them. BE vigilant.  
Mayroon pa rin gusto lang  
ang kapangyarihan para  
mangnakaw at mang-abuso  
Mel Sta. Maria,  
@attymeltweet

Utterly unimaginative to  
keep blaming the masses  
for the state of our  
politics. Comes in many  
forms: Filipinos are "lazy,"  
"degenerate," "immature,"  
"bayaran," "bobo." No.  
The problem is that  
we have people like the  
Marcoses who exploit the  
political system for their  
own benefit.  
@jayeel\_cornelio

## 'RESPONSIBLE MINING' IS A FORM OF MISINFORMATION, FAKE NEWS

IN his Feb. 17, 2022 opinion piece titled "Them thar hills," Peter Wallace argues for "responsible mining" to address what he calls the concern of the opposition on the environmental damages that mining brings. There is a need to disabuse Wallace and those from the mining industry who tout "responsible mining" as a way to secure the acceptability of large-scale mining projects. From our experience and perspective, "responsible mining" is a form of misinformation or, simply put, "fake news."

The latest evidence would be the Responsible Mining Index 2022 report of the Responsible Mining Foundation, which concluded that "The vast majority of the 250 assessed mine sites across 53 countries cannot demonstrate that they are informing and engaging with host communities and workers on basic risk

factors such as environmental impacts, safety issues or grievances." See their report here: [https://2022.responsibleminingindex.org/resources/RMI\\_Report\\_2022-Summary\\_EN.pdf](https://2022.responsibleminingindex.org/resources/RMI_Report_2022-Summary_EN.pdf).

Related to the concept of "responsible mining" is "sustainable mining," which was first floated in 2012 during the Rio+20 Summit in Brazil, by the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM). In less than a year, global environmental groups denounced and exposed this concept as unscientific and socially unacceptable. The ICMM immediately dropped any pretense about "sustainable mining."

By 2015, the concept of "responsible mining" was introduced to replace the fully-debunked "sustainable mining." To this date, there is no legal definition of this "responsible mining." But the mining industry is trying very hard to sell the idea to allow themselves to be branded as

"part of the solutions" of climate change, poverty, environmental destruction, and natural disasters.

The rebranding effort is interesting, but reality depicts a different story for mining-affected communities in particular and for national sustainable development in general.

Wallace himself posits that for "responsible mining" to happen, "it just needs firm, strict control by both the national and local governments." He adds that "as we know that won't happen without pressure" and that "we, the public, must exert that pressure."

It sounds as if Wallace himself thinks "responsible mining" is far-fetched as he asserts that "if the government only licenses reputable companies (I suggest with an international partner who has an international reputation to protect), the risk is much reduced. If the opposition takes an active stance, any mis-

demeanors can be brought to attention early on."

We would like to remind Mr. Wallace that this was specifically done when environmental groups actively engaged the mine audit led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under Gina Lopez in 2016, which resulted in the closure and suspension orders against 28 operating mines. Sadly, almost all of these mines that violated environmental laws or failed to comply with their own contractual obligations have been allowed to operate again.

There goes effective regulation by the government.

Given the corruption in the government and the presence of corporate capture in government policy and regulation, "responsible mining" is unlikely to happen here in the Philippines.

Latest scientific evidence on climate change concludes that because of human abuse of the

environment, the planet is now in crisis as climate catastrophes are expected to happen if nations fail to curb global temperatures. It is imperative that stewardship over natural resources and the environment be exercised in order to preserve it for future generations.

Certainly, the issue is not only about grabbing the country's land, as Wallace puts it. But the impact of mining on communities—displacement, land-use change, deforestation, erosion, contamination of soil, local streams and wetlands, water use impacts, among others.

Indiscriminate and destructive mining must be stopped. We need to be rational about mining. "Responsible mining" is a myth. Or fake news, as this generation likes to put it.

JAYBEE GARGANERA,  
national coordinator,  
Alyansa Tigil Mina,  
nc@alyansatigilmina.net





02-25-22

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PAGE 1/

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LEISURE TRAVEL RESUMES

# SORSOGON WANTS TOURISTS TO SEE 'BUTANDING' AGAIN

By Mar S. Arguelles and Michael Jaucian @InquirerSLB



LEGAZPI CITY— Tourism industry players in Sorsogon province are hoping to recover from the

economic slump brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic after authorities recently downgraded the province's alert status to level 2, prompting the easing of restrictions and reopening of tourist establishments after two years.

Bobby Gigantone, chief of the Sorsogon tourism office, said the province reopened last week the "butanding" (whale shark) interaction in Donsol town following a multisectoral meeting which set the guidelines and protocols that would be implemented to ensure the safety of both tourists and locals.

In a recent meeting with Donsol Mayor Josephine Alcantara-Cruz and representatives of tourism-related businesses, Herbie Aguas, Department of Tourism Bicol director, said the reopening of tourism activities in Donsol town would boost the local economy, which took a beating from the lockdowns and restrictions imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19 and its variants during the past two years.

### Ready

Aguas said hotels in Donsol were ready to accept guests. "They are all fully vaccinated and the establishments are recipients of safety seal," he said.

Under alert level 2, indoor establishments would be allowed 50-percent capacity.

Outdoor areas are allowed up to 70-percent capacity.

Sorsogon requires visitors to present their vaccination cards before they are allowed to enter the province.

"But for tourists who are unvaccinated, a 48-hour negative antigen or RT-PCR (reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) test result would serve as a pass in entering Sorsogon so it won't be stressful on their part," Gigantone said.

Since Donsol reopened on Feb. 14, the town had entertained 60 guests, seven of them foreigners.

Before the pandemic triggered travel restrictions and closures in 2020, the town welcomed 2,375 guests (1,614 foreign) from January to March 15. In 2019, Donsol received 18,384 guests (9,573 foreign).

When restrictions relaxed for a short period in 2021, Donsol had only 364 local guests from March to June.

Cruz, in a text message, said the town lost at least P75 million in tourism revenues in 2020 and 2021 due to travel restrictions and closures.

### Losses

Aguas said the pandemic had hurt Bicol's tourism industry, with the region logging P10 billion in revenue losses.

He said it would take two to three years for the industry to gradually recover and for the government to pour in funds to assist in the recovery plan.

Sorsogon Gov. Francis Escudero said the reopening of the tourism sites would help local communities, particularly its workers, to bounce back. **INQ**





## The economic team

The one big saving grace of the Duterte watch is its economic team. The major accomplishments of this administration that really matters were done by the economic team led by Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez and NEDA Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua.

The fiscal reform that Sec. Sonny promised at the start of the term was vigorously pursued with the help of Rep. Joey Salceda who headed the House ways and means committee. Sonny and Joey didn't agree on everything, but they agreed on enough of the things that matter to make the difference the country needs.

### DEMAND AND SUPPLY



**BOO CHANCO**

Now, even as everyone in government is concerned about the elections, Sonny and his team are busy completing a fiscal consolidation plan for the next administration. Their message, Sonny's and Joey's, is the need to outgrow the country's pandemic-induced debt.

Sonny and Joey very early on warned that new tax measures are needed to give the new administration more fiscal space to do what it must to help the economy recover from the pandemic.

The new president must also ensure that job-generating infrastructure investments far out-

weigh state spending on its operational expenses. Our government has been spending more for salaries and other operating expenses through the years. This has to change. We must invest in infrastructure. Get the private sector involved again via PPP.

First thing on the agenda, Dominguez told the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (FINEX) last Tuesday, should be to outgrow the country's debt at the soonest possible time.

There is an urgent need to lower the share of debt in relation to the gross domestic product (GDP), a metric high in importance with credit rating agencies. This ratio spiked to 60.5 percent in 2021 from a historic low of 39.6 percent in 2019.

Dominguez explained that the government had to resort to emergency borrowings to cover the massive cost of COVID-19 response. There was also a substantial drop in revenues because of the mobility restrictions and economic slowdown arising from the global pandemic.

"The only way to make this sustainable is by growing the economy faster and investing in the future. The fiscal deficit should be lowered to cover only infrastructure investments and not operational expenses," Sec. Sonny said.

The Finance chief also said the second priority of the next administration should be controlling food inflation by accelerating the liberalization of the agriculture sector. This means populist calls to roll back reforms like rice tariffication would go in the wrong direction.

In January 2022, inflation was mostly fueled by the high costs of electricity and fuel, and almost half was a result of price increases in food, especially meat, as the domestic hog sector continued to struggle from the outbreak of the African swine fever (ASF).

Third, Dominguez said, the need for the next president to try harder to reduce poverty incidence, which reached 23.7 percent in the first semester of 2021 because of the pandemic. Poverty incidence in 2015, Sec. Sonny pointed out, was at 23.5 percent, which the Duterte administration was able to bring down to 16.7 percent by the beginning of 2019.

Dominguez said the fourth concern that should top the incoming administration's must-do list is addressing the mounting problems associated with climate change – and the huge cost this entails – without having to strain the country's fiscal resources.

"We cannot rely entirely on COP (United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties) and on the financing commitments of the Western countries. We should not sit and wait idly while the planet burns," Dominguez said.

Dominguez, who represents President Duterte in the Climate Change Commission (CCC), was referring to the annual \$100-billion financing commitment of industrialized economies to developing countries like the Philippines to help them achieve their climate ambitions. This 2009 commitment by wealthier economies remains unfulfilled up to now.

Dominguez also called on the next administration to continue modernizing our financial sector to achieve financial inclusion among the Filipino people.

He said these four priorities on the fiscal front that the next president needs to address are "complex issues." We will need the best and the brightest of our financial professionals who will be given the same freedom Sec. Sonny got from Duterte to get the job done.

Dominguez said he has always been grateful to the private sector for its staunch support for the administration's reform measures. Many of those reform measures have languished in Congress in the past because of the lack of political will.

Indeed, Sec. Sonny is so credible with the private business sector that he received enthusiastic support for the comprehensive tax reform program (CTRP); the measures to grow the corporate sector; and the initiatives to deepen, broaden, and digitalize the domestic capital market to make investment opportunities more inclusive for Filipinos – and also, modernization of our dated Public Service Act.

As the government's fundraiser, Dominguez said the DOF's responsibility is to put in place a taxation system that is simple, fair, and efficient so that citizens will be motivated to pay their taxes.

"The tax system should also catalyze, rather than paralyze economic growth. It is, therefore, important that we have efficient and honest tax collectors," he added.

The DOF, he said, must also manage public borrowings and ensure that they are sustainable. The agency is the principal guardian of fiscal discipline. This is the reason President Duterte often refers to me as "Dr. No," he said.

"It is essential that we maintain or even increase our high credit ratings so we can borrow at lower costs and longer payment terms. This will ensure lower interest rates and more accessible financing for our private enterprises and for the ordinary Filipino people," Dominguez said.

This is why I have called on the presidential candidates to name their finance secretary nominee. It will ease concerns of potential investors. Other than Leni Robredo, who has a degree in economics, the other presidential candidates know little about economic policy making.

Sec. Sonny showed what a competent economic team led by a credible Secretary can accomplish. The bar has been set high for Sec. Sonny's successor.

Boo Chanco's email address is [bchanco@gmail.com](mailto:bchanco@gmail.com). Follow him on Twitter @boochanco





# Severe wildfires to rise further – UN

**B**OGOR: The number of severe wildfires worldwide will rise sharply in the coming decades due to global warming, and governments are ill-prepared for the death and destruction of such mega-blazes trail in their wake, the UN warned.

Even the most ambitious efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions will not prevent a dramatic surge in the frequency of extreme fire conditions, a report

commissioned by the UN Environment Programme concluded. "By the end of the century, the probability of wildfire events similar to Australia's 2019-20

Black Summer or the huge Arctic fires in 2020 occurring in a given year is likely to increase by 31-57 percent," it said.

The heating of the planet is turning landscapes into tinderboxes, and more extreme weather means stronger, hotter and drier winds to fan the flames. Such wildfires are burning where they have always occurred, and are flaring up in unexpected places such as drying peatlands and thawing permafrost.

"Fires are not good things," said co-author Peter, an expert in forest fire management at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

"The impacts on people — socially, health-wise, psychologically — are phenomenal and long term," he told journalists in a briefing. A recent study in *The Lancet* concluded that exposure to wildfire smoke results, on average, in more than 30,000 deaths each year across 43 nations for

which data was available.

Economic damages in the US — one of the few countries to calculate such costs — have varied between \$71 to \$348 billion in recent years, according to an assessment cited in the report. Major blazes can also be devastating for wildlife, pushing some endangered species closer to the brink of extinction.

Nearly 3 billion mammals, reptiles, birds and frogs were

killed or harmed, for example, by Australia's devastating 2019-20 bushfires, scientists have calculated. Wildfires are made worse by climate change.

Heat waves, drought conditions and reduced soil moisture amplified by global warming have contributed to unprecedented fires in the western US, Australia and the Mediterranean basin just in the last three years.

**GLOBAL TIMES**



25 FEBRUARY 2022, FRIDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **COVID-19 NEWS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# PH logs 1,745 new Covid-19 cases, 2K recoveries

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor [February 24, 2022, 4:24 pm](#)



**MANILA** – The Department of Health on Thursday recorded 1,745 new cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) and 2,045 more recoveries.

The figures pushed the nation's overall tally of confirmed infections to 3,657,342 and recovered cases to 3,546,098.

The latest Covid-19 bulletin indicated 55,079 active cases. Out of the active cases, 49,927 are mild, 2,788 are moderate, 637 are asymptomatic, 1,428 are severe, and 299 are critical.

“Of the 1,745 reported cases today, 1,250 (72 percent) occurred within the recent 14 days – February 11 to 24, 2022,” the DOH reported.

The regions with the most cases in the recent two weeks were the National Capital Region (NCR) with 235 or 19 percent, Calabarzon with 153 or 12 percent, and Central Visayas with 133 or 11 percent.

The death toll has reached 56,165 with 188 new deaths, representing 1.54 percent of overall cases.

“Of the 188 deaths, 94 occurred in February 2022 (50 percent), 36 in January 2022 (19 percent), 2 in December 2021 (1 percent), 1 in November 2021 (1 percent), 6 in October 2021 (3 percent), 44 in September 2021 (23 percent), 4 in August 2021 (2 percent), and 1 in June 2021 (1 percent) due to the late encoding of death information to COVIDKaya,” the DOH said.

COVIDKaya is a digital application used by healthcare workers to collect and share data about Covid-19 cases.

According to the February 22 data, about 6.3 percent of 28,246 who were tested turned out positive for coronavirus.

“About 112 duplicates were removed from the total case count as 104 of these are recoveries,” the DOH said.

Meanwhile, 126 cases previously tagged as recoveries were reclassified as deaths after validation.





All laboratories were operational on February 22 but three were not able to submit their data to the Covid-19 Document Repository System.

The DOH said the two laboratories contributed, on average, 0.6 percent of samples tested, and 0.1 percent among positive individuals based on data in the past 14 days.

To date, 28 percent of 3,800 intensive care unit (ICU) beds, 24 percent of 20,400 isolation beds, 17 percent of 13,800 ward beds, and 15 percent of 3,000 ventilators are used by patients with Covid-19 nationwide.

In the NCR, 26 percent of 1,300 ICU beds, 25 percent of 4,500 isolation beds, 25 percent of 3,600 ward beds, and 17 percent of 1,000 ventilators dedicated to patients with Covid-19 are in use. **(PNA)**



# IATF revises alert level metrics

By Filane Mikee Cervantes February 24, 2022, 7:53 pm



Acting Presidential Spokesperson Karlo Nograles (File photo)

**MANILA** – The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) approved on Thursday the revised metrics to determine the Covid-19 alert level classifications of all areas in the country effective March 1.

In a statement, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, acting presidential spokesperson, said under the new alert level matrix, the cutoffs for the average daily attack rate (ADAR) of Covid-19 cases shall be less than six for low risk classification; six to 18 for moderate risk; and more than 18 for high risk.

Nograles said areas can be de-escalated to Alert Level 1 upon meeting all of the following criteria: low to minimal risk case classification; total bed utilization rate of less than 50 percent; full vaccination of 70 percent of its target population; and full vaccination of 80 percent of the target population for senior citizens.

He said the alert level metrics were amended based on the recommendations of the Sub-Technical Working Group (sTWG) on Data Analytics.

"These revised metrics shall be applied in determining the alert level classification of provinces, highly urbanized cities and independent component cities beginning March 1, 2022," he said.

The Metro Manila Council (MMC) on Thursday said the Metro Manila mayors unanimously recommended to place the National Capital Region (NCR) under the lowest Alert Level 1 starting March 1 amid the declining Covid-19 cases in the region.

The IATF-IED met on Thursday to discuss the MMC's recommendation.

The Department of Health on Thursday recorded 1,745 new Covid-19 cases and 2,045 more recoveries, pushing the nation's overall tally of confirmed infections to 3,657,342 and recovered cases to 3,546,098.

The latest Covid-19 bulletin indicated 55,079 active cases. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1168532>





# IATF amends metrics for determining alert level classifications

[Alexis Romero](#) - Philstar.com February 24, 2022 | 7:52pm



Children with their guardian make their way inside Quiapo church as church management ease restrictions on kids entering the area provided that the minimum health protocols such as wearing face mask are observed.

The STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The government's pandemic task force on Thursday amended the metrics for determining the alert level classifications of areas, including the conditions and vaccination rates they should meet to be placed under the most lenient Alert Level 1 or "new normal."

Acting presidential spokesman Karlo Nograles said the revised metrics would be applied in determining the classification of areas beginning March 1.

Provinces, highly urbanized cities and independent component cities would be downgraded to Alert Level 1 if they meet all of the criteria stated in Resolution No. 146-D issued by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF). The new criteria emphasized the need to ramp up the vaccination of the target population, including senior citizens, one of the sectors most vulnerable to COVID-19.

To be placed under "new normal," an area should have a low to minimal risk case classification; a total bed utilization rate of less than 50%; fully vaccinated 70% of its target population, which is 80% of its total population; and fully inoculated 80% of its senior citizen target population, which is 85% of the people who belong to the sector.

If an area is deescalated to Alert Level 1, all of its establishments may operate and all activities may be done at full on-site or venue capacity but business owners and event organizers should ensure that minimum health measures like proper ventilation, wearing of face masks, and frequent handwashing, are complied with. Intrazonal and interzonal travel will also be allowed regardless of age and comorbidities.

Nograles said the alert level matrix, as determined by the sub-technical working group on data analytics, shall continue to use the cross-tabulation of case classification and total COVID-19 beds utilization.

However, the cutoffs for the average daily attack rate or the number of new COVID-19 infections per 100,000 population shall be less than six for low risk; six to 18 for moderate risk; and more than 18 for high risk.

Nograles said the IATF has also approved the acceptance and recognition of the national COVID-19 vaccination certificates of Romania and the British Virgin Islands for arrival quarantine protocols and for interzonal or intrazonal movement.



"The IATF directed the Bureau of Quarantine, the Department of Transportation - One-Stop-Shop and the Bureau of Immigration to recognize only the proofs of vaccination thus approved by the IATF," Nograles said in a statement.

The Philippine government has so far agreed to recognize the national pandemic vaccination certificates of 66 countries, territories, and jurisdictions.



# Metro Manila 'ripe' for downgrade to COVID-19 Alert Level 1 – Duque

By [Gaea Katreena Cabico](#)(Philstar.com) - February 24, 2022 - 3:25pm



A worker cleans along the railway tracks of a station in Manila on February 16, 2022.

MANILA, Philippines — Metro Manila is "ripe" for de-escalation to the lowest COVID-19 alert level, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said Thursday as the pandemic task force deliberates on measures that will be enforced next month.

The inter-agency task force on COVID-19 response is scheduled to discuss this afternoon the recommendation of the Metro Manila Council to downgrade the capital region's status to the most lenient Alert Level 1.

"Ang NCR ay pasado na sa kanilang mga metrics. Hinog in other words," Duque, who chairs the task force, told state broadcaster People's Television.

(NCR has already passed the metric. It's ripe, in other words.)

Metro Manila is currently at low risk for COVID-19. According to the health chief, less than 30% of hospital beds in the region are being used.

Local governments need to ensure that at least 80% of senior citizens and 70% of the eligible population in their localities have been fully immunized against COVID-19 before they can transition to Alert Level 1.

According to Duque, 83% of the metropolis' senior citizens and more than 100% of the 9.8 million target population in Metro Manila have received COVID-19 jabs.

The pandemic task force will also discuss the possible de-escalation of other areas to the lowest alert level, Duque added.

A region or an area will move to "new normal" once Alert Level 1 is declared. The DOH earlier said there will be no restrictions and capacity limits under the "new normal." The face mask mandate, however, will remain.

The Philippines has reported more than 3.65 million COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic, with nearly 56,000 deaths.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/02/24/2163106/metro-manila-ripe-downgrade-covid-19-alert-level-1-duque/amp/>





**#OneDENR**

**Covid-19  
Situation and Response**





# DOH COVID-19 CASE BULLETIN # 712

## PEBRERO 24, 2022

Para sa kumpletong detalye at impormasyon,  
bisitahin lamang ang aming pampublikong site:  
<https://ncovtracker.doh.gov.ph/>

### PORSYENTO NG AKTIBONG KASO

# 1.5%

TOTAL NG AKTIBONG KASO  
**55,079**

### PORSYENTO NG GUMALING

# 97.0%

TOTAL NG GUMALING  
**3,546,098**

### PORSYENTO NG NAMATAY

# 1.54%

TOTAL NG NAMATAY  
**56,165**

MGA BAGONG KASO **1,745**

MGA BAGONG GUMALING **2,045**

MGA BAGONG NAMATAY **188**

KABUANG BILANG NG KASO **3,657,342**

### MGA NAGPOSITIBO HULING PEBRERO 22

DATOS NGAYONG PEBRERO 24  
AYON SA REPORTS NOONG PEBRERO 22

# 6.3%

PORSYENTO NG MGA  
NAGPOSITIBO

# 28,246

BILANG NG  
TINIST

HALOS  
**91.8%**  
ANG MILD AT  
ASYMPTOMATIC  
NA KASO!

**SANITIZE ANG  
KAMAY AT IWASAN  
ANG KULOB NA LUGAR**

### KABUANG PILIPINAS

PUNO NA BA ANG ATING MGA OSPITAL?

### NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

PUNO NA BA ANG ATING MGA OSPITAL?

### KALAGAYAN NG MGA AKTIBONG KASO

ICU BEDS (3.9K TOTAL BEDS)  
**28%** Utilized

ISOLATION BEDS (20.4K TOTAL BEDS)  
**24%** Utilized

WARD BEDS (13.8K TOTAL BEDS)  
**17%** Utilized

VENTILATORS (3.0K TOTAL VENTILATORS)  
**15%** Utilized

ICU BEDS (1.4K TOTAL BEDS)  
**26%** Utilized

ISOLATION BEDS (4.5K TOTAL BEDS)  
**25%** Utilized

WARD BEDS (3.6K TOTAL BEDS)  
**25%** Utilized

VENTILATORS (1.0K TOTAL VENTILATORS)  
**17%** Utilized

637 Asymptomatic

49,927 Mild

2,788 Moderate

1,428 Severe

299 Critical

### DOH HOSPITAL HOTLINES

For health concerns and emergencies, you may access  
here the DOH hospital hotlines across the country:

[bit.ly/DOHHospitalHotlines](https://bit.ly/DOHHospitalHotlines)

### DOH ONE HOSPITAL COMMAND CENTER (OHCC) HOTLINES

• 1555 • 0915-777-7777  
• 02-886-505-00 • 0919-977-3333

[bit.ly/OHCCHotline](https://bit.ly/OHCCHotline)

### DOH TELEMEDICINE CONTACT DETAILS

[bit.ly/DOHTelemedicine](https://bit.ly/DOHTelemedicine)

SeeYouDoc  
seeyoudoc.com  
SeeYouDoc

KonsultaMD  
konsulta.md  
KonsultaMD

CloudPx  
cloudpx.ph/

Telimed and Medgate  
medgate.ph/shop/telimedplan/purchase

MedCheck  
medcheck.com.ph/find-a-doctor/SeeYouDoc

TelAventusMD  
TelAventusMD@aventusmedical.com.ph  
TelAventusMD

HealthNow  
healthnow.ph/  
help@healthnow.ph  
HealthNow



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I-download ang StaySafe App  
o gamitin ang WEBAPP  
at pumunta sa Staysafe.ph



Walang internet or load?  
Report via SMS

2158-5779 (for Globe users)  
225-655-779 (for other users)



May tanong ukol sa COVID-19?  
I-chat na si KIRA!

VIBER: Kira Kontra COVID by DOH  
MESSENGER: Department of Health PH  
KONTRACOVDPH: kontracovid.ph

MAYROON PANG KATANUNGAN? SUMANGGUNI LAMANG SA SUMUSUNOD:

[OfficialDOHgov](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialDOHgov)

[@DOHgovph](https://twitter.com/DOHgovph)

[doh.gov.ph](https://doh.gov.ph)

[\(02\) 894-COVID / 1555](tel:(02)894-COVID)



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# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **VLOGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**






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