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**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





## Cimatu sa mga Pinoy: Gumawa ng climate action kahit may health crisis



March 25, 2021 @ 7:54 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Hinikayat ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang mga Pilipino na makilahok sa gaganaping global Earth Hour movement sa Sabado, Marso 27, bilang suporta sa pagsisikap ng ahensiya na mapahupa ang dumaraming epekto ng climate change.

Ang worldwide event na ito ay gaganapin sa Pilipinas dakong 8:30 ng gabi.

“I enjoin all households and businesses across the country to jointly switch off their lights and other energy-consuming devices for an hour, and to encourage action towards the environment even after the lights are turned back on,” sabi ni Cimatu.

Kaugnay nito kabilang ang computers, television sets, air conditioning units at iba pang non-essential lights sa mga maaaring i-switch-off bilang pagmamalasakit sa ating kapaligiran

“Now more than ever, environmental responsibility is critical and must be sustained. Let us do our share and switch off for an hour in support of a healthy future for humankind and the environment,” dagdag pa ni Cimatu.

Samantala, binigyang diin pa ng DENR chief na sa pamamagitan ng symbolic action na ito ay mababawasan ng mga Filipino ang electrical consumption na makababawas din sa carbon footprint at emissions na pinagmumulan ng carbon dioxide at fossil fuel na siyang pangunahing dahilan ng climate change.

Iminungkahi din ni Cimatu ang paggamit ng renewable sources ng enerhiya tulad ng solar technology at light-emitting diode (LED) light bulbs na kumukunsumo nang mas kaunting kuryente kumpara sa incandescent at fluorescent lights.

Ayon pa kay Cimatu, ang pagsuporta sa Earth Hour movement ay napapanahon dahil napakahalaga na mapangalagaan natin ang ating kalikasan na paraan upang malabanan ang climate change, ang pagkawala ng biodiversity at maging ang panganib sa ating kalusugan.

“As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage, let us recognize the inevitable truth that the state of our planet and our health and well-being are inherently related. We should persist against harmful human activities and shift towards environment-friendly lifestyle choices,” dagdag pa nito.

Aniya, habang tinutugunan ng DENR ang deforestation, plastic pollution at illegal wildlife trade sa pamamagitan ng mga polisiya at programa nito, kinakailangang makipagtulungan din ang mga Filipino.



“Educate yourselves, spread awareness, support government campaigns, and rethink ways how to eat, buy and travel. Let us take climate actions especially now that we are in the midst of a health crisis. When we protect our climate, we protect our health,” apela ni Cimatú.

Ang Earth Hour ay ang taunang global environmental movement na inoorganisa ng World Wildlife Fund (WWF) na humihikayat sa bawat isa at sa mga organisasyon na gumawa ng konkretong aksiyon at obligasyon sa planeta sa pamamagitan ng pag switch off ng mga hindi kinakailangang ilaw sa loob ng isang oras.

Ang movement na ito ay sinimulan noong 2007 sa Sydney, Australia hanggang sa lumaganap ito sa 7,000 cities at 180 countries at territories. **(Santi Celario)**



# Pinoys urged to join Earth Hour to ease effects of climate change

March 25, 2021, 8:22 pm



MANILA – Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu is once again calling on all Filipinos to participate in the global Earth Hour movement on March 27 in support of the agency's efforts to mitigate the increasing effects of climate change.

The worldwide event will be observed in the Philippines from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

"I enjoin all households and businesses across the country to jointly switch off their lights and other energy-consuming devices for an hour, and to encourage action towards the environment even after the lights are turned back on," Cimatu said in a news release on Thursday.

Computers, television sets, air conditioning units and non-essential lights may be switched off to express a shared concern for the environment.

"Now more than ever, environmental responsibility is critical and must be sustained. Let us do our share and switch off for an hour in support of a healthy future for humankind and the environment," Cimatu said.

However, he emphasized that beyond this symbolic action, Filipinos should reduce electrical consumption to lessen carbon footprint and emissions generated by carbon dioxide and fossil fuel, which are major causes of climate change.

He also proposed shifting to renewable sources of energy such as solar technology and use of light-emitting diode (LED) light bulbs, which draw less power compared to incandescent and fluorescent lights.

Supporting worthy causes like the Earth Hour movement has become more significant than ever, Cimatu said as he noted the importance of nature conservation in combatting climate change, biodiversity loss, and even health risks.

"As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to rage, let us recognize the inevitable truth that the state of our planet and our health and well-being are inherently related. We should persist against harmful human activities and shift towards environment-friendly lifestyle choices," he added.

He said while the DENR addresses deforestation, plastic pollution, and illegal wildlife trade through its policies and programs, Filipinos are also encouraged to do their share.

"Educate yourselves, spread awareness, support government campaigns, and rethink ways how to eat, buy and travel. Let us take climate actions especially now that we are in the midst of a health crisis. When we protect our climate, we protect our health," Cimatu said.

Earth Hour is an annual global environmental movement organized by the World Wildlife Fund to encourage individuals and organizations in taking tangible actions and commitments for the planet by jointly turning off non-essential lights for an hour.

The movement started in 2007 in Sydney, Australia, and eventually spread to over 7,000 cities and 180 countries and territories. (PR)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1134934>



# Don't worry, proper handling of vaccine-related waste already in place—DENR

Published March 25, 2021, 7:27 PM

by [Bethena Unite](#)

Even before the arrival of vaccines, the country actually knows the proper handling of vaccine-related waste, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.



DENR Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda (PIA / MANILA BULLETIN)

In fact, guidelines and procedures for the proper disposal of medical vials and syringes used for coronavirus vaccine injections were already established in 2020, according to DENR Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda .

Since then, he said 53 transporters and 23 treatment, storage and disposal (TSD) facilities have been registered nationwide. These transporters and TSD facilities receive the healthcare wastes from hospitals for safe transport, treatment and disposal.

“We have already laid down the guidelines ever since the lockdown started last year, and one of the requirements in the memo is to monitor the healthcare wastes coming from healthcare institutions as well as COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) -designated quarantine facilities,” said Antiporda.

The existing guidelines on managing hazardous waste are stated in the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau memorandum circulars 2020-14, 2020-15 and 2020-16 on the issuance of Special Permit to Transport for the treatment and disposal of healthcare wastes.

Under the memorandum circulars, syringes and vials used for inoculation are classified as hazardous waste and require special permit for transport. These hazardous wastes are also treated by the DENR-registered service providers before disposal.

Antiporda, who heads the department's Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns, said that the DENR is also following the standards set by the Asian Development Bank under its Due Diligence on the Philippine COVID-19 Immunization Waste Management Plan.

He noted that in addition to the existing guidelines, the DENR will also issue a memorandum to highlight the disposal of the vaccines based on the existing laws and mandates “to avoid confusion and misinterpretation.”

“We want to assure every Filipino that we are doing our job in the DENR for the proper disposal of the vials and syringes for the government's immunization program so that we can do our part to mitigate the spread of the deadly virus,” Antiporda said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/03/25/dont-worry-proper-handling-of-vaccine-related-waste-already-in-place-denr/>





## Republic Cement recognized for Environmental Preservation and Safety Achievements at Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards

By [BMPLUS](#) MARCH 25, 2021



Republic Cement wins big at the prestigious Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards (PMIEA), held last March 18, 2021 at the DENR Social Hall in Quezon City.

For its achievements in environmental preservation and safety excellence, Republic Cement was awarded with the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards for Quarry Operations for its Bulacan and Batangas Plants, the highest honor for these respective categories. Republic Cement & Building Materials, Inc. President Lloyd Vicente (center) is flanked by DENR Usec Jim O. Sampulna (left) and Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) Chairman Gerald Brimo (right).

In addition to these awards, Republic Cement was also recognized for having the Safest Quarry at its Batangas Plant, Best Mining Forest Program – Non-metallic Category for its Bulacan Plant, and a Platinum Achievement Award for Quarry Operations for its Iligan Plant.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/03/25/republic-cement-recognized-for-environmental-preservation-and-safety-achievements-at-presidential-mineral-industry-environmental-awards/>



# Republic Cement Recognized For Environmental Preservation And Safety Achievements



By [Featuresdesk \(MD\)](#)

March 25, 2021

Republic Cement Recognized for Environmental Preservation and Safety Achievements at Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards. Republic Cement wins big at the prestigious Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards (PMIEA) held last March 18, 2021 at the DENR Social Hall in Quezon City. For its achievements in environmental preservation and safety excellence, Republic Cement was awarded with the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards for Quarry Operations for its Bulacan and Batangas Plants, the highest honor for these respective categories. Republic Cement & Building Materials Inc. President Lloyd Vicente (center) is flanked by DENR Undersecretary Jim O. Sampulna (left) and Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) Chairman Gerald Brimo (right). In addition to these awards, Republic Cement was also recognized for having the Safest Quarry at its Batangas Plant, Best Mining Forest Program – Non-metallic Category for its Bulacan Plant, and a Platinum Achievement Award for Quarry Operations for its Iligan Plant.

Photo Credit: MGB-MSESDD

Source: <http://pageone.ph/republic-cement-recognized-for-environmental-preservation-and-safety-achievements/>



## San Carlos holds training on climate change



SAN CARLOS. Olive Seruelo, Information Officer of the Provincial Environment Management Office talks during the Training on Climate Change to school heads of DepEd San Carlos at Carmels Inn and Restaurant Thursday. (Contributed photo)

March 25, 2021

THE City Government of San Carlos through its City Environment Management Office (Cemo) conducted a three-day training seminar on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures for the teachers in the different school levels starting March 24 and ending on March 26.

Topics discussed include a symposium on climate change by Olive Seruelo, information officer of the Provincial Environment Management Office; a symposium on solid waste management and other related laws by Ma. Theresa Robles, information officer of the Provincial and Natural Resources Office; orientation to the revised search for sustainable and eco-friendly school criteria by Analou Gomo of the Cemo.

The launching of the search for sustainable and eco-friendly school year VII and distribution of entry forms were also made.

Seruelo cited the changes in the weather condition and other factors creating a negative impact on the environment which need to be addressed. Marietta Lomocso, IEC team leader of the Cemo, said teachers have a big role in inculcating to schoolchildren the value of protecting the environment and how to care for it. She also acknowledged the help of the Department of Education as a government partner in the implementation of various environmental programs.

Lomocso encouraged the different local schools including colleges particularly the Central Philippines State University to join the

search for a sustainable and eco-friendly school. **(PR)**





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PARA mapigilan po ang pagdami ng water hyacinths o water lilies sa major waterways partikular na sa Pasig River at Laguna de Bay ay plano ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na kunin ang serbisyo ng fisherfolk.

Ang problema sa pagdami ng water hyacinths ang isa sa napag-usapang isyu sa pakikipagpulong ni Environment Undersecretary

for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns Benny D. Antiporda sa mga miyembro ng Manila Bay Anti-Pollution Task Force (APTF) noong Marso 11 bilang bahagi ng isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Ang pagkalat ng "invasive water species" ay isa sa nakikitang dahilan kung bakit nahahadlangan ang maayos na pagdaloy ng tubig sa mga waterways.

Inatasan din ni Antipor-

## MANGINGISDA GAGAMITIN SA PAGLILINIS NG PASIG RIVER

da, na siyang chair ng MBAPTF, ang mga miyembro ng task force na bigyang prayoridad ang pagtanggap ng water hyacinths sa Pasig River at Laguna de Bay.

Bumuo rin ng isang subcommittee on water hyacinths upang makontrol at mabawasan ang pagdami ng water plant habang ang Manila Bay APTF ay tinitingnan ang posibilidad na kunin ang serbisyo ng local fisherfolk para tangalin ang mga water lilies.

"We want to make a drastic change in the quality of water in Manila Bay," pahayag ni Antiporda habang binigyang diin nito ang layunin ng task

force na suportahan ang mga aksiyon ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu bilang chair ng Manila Bay Task Force.

"To see is to believe, to smell is to believe and to test is to believe," aniya, bilang paalala sa mga miyembro tungkol sa tatlong pangunahing layunin ng task force na siya ring batayan upang masabi na napanalo na ang Battle for Manila Bay.

Sinabi pa ni Antiporda na ang isa sa target ng task force ay tiyaking walang makikitang floating debris sa Manila Bay at tributaries nito.

"With the improvement of the water quality, there

should also be no foul odor coming from the bay," saad ni Antiporda.

"Most important is the drastic change of the water quality in Manila Bay," dagdag pa nito.

Ipinag-utos din nito sa mga miyembro ng Manila Bay APTF na magsagawa ng epektibong monitoring system na may "complete standard operating procedure with corresponding timeline to ensure the compliance of environmental polluters."

"We need to double up our effort in running after them. We will deal with them head-on," diin ni Antiporda.



# Ocean conservation group urges gov't to protect maritime resources in Julian Felipe Reef

**ABS-CBN News**

Posted at Mar 25 2021 10:48 PM

MANILA - An ocean conservation group urged the Philippine government to ensure the protection of maritime resources in the West Philippine Sea amid the reported presence of more than 200 Chinese vessels near the Julian Felipe Reef.

In a statement, Atty. Gloria Estenzo-Ramos, vice president at Oceana Philippines, urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, to protect the area and its maritime resources from outsiders.

"The Constitution makes the State the duty-bearer in protecting our marine wealth. The government, specifically our law enforcement agencies, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources have the duty to protect our ocean, the important marine habitats and ecosystem to ensure we are able to sustainably manage our fisheries and marine resources and ensure that livelihoods of our fisherfolks are not put at risk. There is a big penalty for illegal fishers including poachers in our waters and the question is: are we implementing our law, without fear or favor?" she said.

The Julian Felipe Reef (Whitsun Reef) is within the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf, over which the country owns the exclusive rights to use resources, including fish, oil and natural gas.

The West Philippine Sea covers the country's EEZ in the disputed South China Sea, where China lays expansive claims.

Over the weekend, the Philippine Coast Guard released a report revealing that 220 Chinese maritime militia vessels were sighted moored in the West Philippine Sea.

The report, which was received by the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS), showed that the PCG counted around 220 CMM vessels massed at Julian Felipe Reef (Whitsun Reef) on March 7, 2021.

The Philippine military on Thursday said its chief Gen. Cirilito Sobejana has ordered the deployment of more Navy ships to the West Philippine Sea to beef up the country's maritime sovereignty patrols in the area, but not in the reef where Chinese militia ships were seen to avoid confrontation.



# The next pandemic ahead – the waste from our discarded face masks

Published March 26, 2021, 12:12 AM

by [Johannes Chua](#)



It is dubbed as the “plastic water bottle” of the pandemic. Those face masks, a “must” these days, are set to become the looming environment crisis that we would face.

Though light as a feather (at least four grams each), millions of face masks are discarded each day, some even thrown on the road, flushed in toilets, or discarded by the river—one can imagine the mountain of trash filling up garbage trucks and landfills.

A study revealed that around 100 billion face masks (and 65 billion plastic gloves) are discarded per month. And with the Philippine government mandating strict mask use in public spaces with the rise of new cases from new variants, it is inevitable that we contribute to the rise of that 100 billion number.

How did we arrive at this problem?

The pandemic has drastically changed our lives, and that includes our habits and routines. As vaccinating everyone remains elusive, the best way to protect ourselves from COVID-19 is by wearing face masks.

Now, all medical experts, even the World Health Organization (WHO), has specifically instructed that “face masks should be disposed as soon as it is damp.”

The WHO even presented a guideline on how to remove a mask, saying, “First, clean your hands; remove face mask from behind with the ear or head strap; do not touch the front of the mask; pull the mask away from your face; discard immediately in a closed bin; wash hands properly with soap and water.”

With this, it is clear that face masks, specifically the single-use ones, “cannot be recycled,” adding that those who feel unwell or suspect themselves to be exposed with the virus to “store face masks for 72 hours before disposing in the bin.”

Various environment organizations have raised the red flag on this issue, highlighting the fact that there is a significant spike in the number of personal protective equipment (PPE) that are littered everywhere, which sometimes ends up in our bodies of water.

One government agency, the Climate Change Commission (CCC), has already warned the public on the surge of plastic pollution due to the global production and consumption of single-use masks, latex gloves, PPE, alcohol and hand sanitizer bottles, and disposable cleaning agents. It added that “plastic waste may end up in our oceans, break into microplastics, and be mistaken for food by marine animals, such as fish, which humans also consume.”





“(We) express our concern on the increasing volume of single-use plastic wastes from take-out and online shopping deliveries. As COVID-19 restricted public mobility, online shopping and food delivery services often using single-use plastics... and these have further encumbered our waste management system,” said a statement from the agency.

“We are calling on local governments and citizens to help in addressing plastic pollution generated during this global health crisis.”

This was also the alarm raised by global environment organization The Worldwide Wildlife Fund (WWF). In a study, it said that “if even only one percent of the masks were disposed of incorrectly, this would result in 10 million masks per month dispersed in the environment.”

What can we do to help the environment?

So, how should we dispose our face masks properly without harming the environment? Here is a list we compiled from recommendations of health and policy experts.

First, do not dispose face masks in public spaces. Be responsible. Throw them in bins or waste baskets.

Just recently, a message circulating online asked for this small request—“Kindly cut used disposable masks into two pieces before putting them in the bin. There is a huge market where discarded masks are sold to the poor. Please inform family and friends. It will take barely five seconds to cut them into half. Your action can save hundreds from getting infected.” Whether this is true or not, it’s prudent to be extra safe and avert any health crises.

Eco groups, however, say that even though we dispose our face masks properly in bins, these could still end up in our seas and landfills. They recommend that we “should just avoid single-use face masks, if possible.”

A medical expert has this advice: “Unless you are in the medical field, it is practical to use a reusable face mask, which can be worn and washed again and again. It also saves you from the cost of purchasing face masks.” So if wearing face masks is now part of our lives, isn’t this a wise (and budget-friendly) advice?

In terms of government policy, the CCC is calling on the implementation of Administrative Order No. 22-2013, issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), on the proper management and disposal of used masks, PPEs, and other considered hazardous (infectious) waste from hospitals, barangay health centers, and clinics.

“We stress the importance of enacting the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Act of 2000, which provides guidance on proper segregation at source, transportation, storage, transfer, processing, treatment, and disposal of solid waste and other waste management activities that do not harm the environment,” the agency said.

Like face masks, we can also cut our own plastic wastes by refusing disposable plastic cutlery (especially when having food delivered) and by supporting businesses that offer more sustainable delivery packaging, such as cardboard or compostable bags.

“The biggest challenge in adopting a more sustainable lifestyle is breaking old habits and making sacrifices for the climate and environment,” says the CCC. “But by slowly incorporating sustainable practices into our everyday activities, we would be able to protect both the health of the people, natural systems, and the planet.”

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/03/26/the-next-pandemic-ahead-the-waste-from-our-discarded-face-masks/>



# Gov't has obligation to provide clean water, sanitation — CHR

Published March 25, 2021, 3:09 PM

by [Czarina Nicole Ong Ki](#)

The government has the responsibility to guarantee every Filipino's right to clean water and sanitation amidst the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) said on Thursday, March 25.



(Unsplash)

The state's obligation to provide water and sanitation was underscored by the CHR after it received reports that thousands of households in the country have experienced water service disconnection due to people's inability to pay their bills on time.

CHR Spokesperson and lawyer Jacqueline Ann de Guia said that it is the basic right of every human being to have access to clean water and sanitation, and it is more crucial than ever since the whole world is dealing with a deadly virus.

She stressed: "Water, a universally-recognized human right, is essential for most aspects of everyday life and crucial for public health. If water services were disrupted, it could mean spikes in coronavirus outbreaks, particularly in high-density communities where social distancing is not possible."

At the same time, De Guia said that curtailing people's access to water is a human rights violation. Without water, people are denied protection from the disease and they are exposed to more serious health complications, she said.

She lamented that COVID-19 has created a major economic fallout as countless Filipinos lost their jobs. The CHR is urging the government to help ease the financial hardships of Filipinos by making sure that they don't lose access to clean water, she also said.

"Previous issuances regarding deferred payment of bills and non-suspension of water supply should still be put in place, especially that the current COVID-19 situation in the country has not improved yet after a year of being into community quarantine," she suggested.

"Similarly, the government must also financially support water utilities to guarantee the sustainability of services, while prioritizing the welfare of people over profit," she added.



## Trees for greener and healthier communities and cities

By Architect Felino "Jun" A. Palafox, Jr.

March 25, 2021

MARCH 21 was International Day of Forests, and this year's theme was "Forest restoration: A path to recovery and well-being." According to the United Nations, our forests are key to achieving a green recovery, building resilience against future pandemics, and creating a more sustainable world for future generations. In addition, the UN stated that "Sustainable forest management can play a vital role in lifting millions out of poverty, and in building resilient economies and societies that can withstand pandemics, climate change and other global challenges."

The earth's forests cover approximately 4 billion hectares, which is 30 percent of the planet's land area. Forest ecosystems not only consist of the trees but the thousands of species of plants, animals and microorganisms that live in them. More than half of our forests are located in five countries — Brazil, the United States, Canada, Russia and China — while the remaining percentage is found in 10 countries.

Our forests have invaluable benefits: from supplying food, water, herbal medicine, pharmaceutical products, and other essential items; providing income and livelihood; and serving as carbon sinks that clean one-third of the world's greenhouse gas emissions to help mitigate climate change; preventing land degradation; and reducing risks of landslides, flooding and other disasters. Forests also help prevent food shortages and malnutrition since the trees and plants in these ecosystems offer a variety of healthy food. Not only that, but forests are also rich reserves for compounds used in nutraceuticals and pharmaceuticals. Moreover, forests are essential to the global water cycle. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, 75 percent of the world's freshwater are sourced from forested watersheds, and drinking water for one-third of the world's largest cities come from forests.

Based on a study conducted by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), protecting our forests will help decrease the risk of future pandemics. In 2016, the UNEP estimated that 75 percent of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, stemming from "the transfer of pathogens from animals to humans." This typically occurs when natural environments like forests are converted for human settlements or agricultural or commercial use. Wide-scale deforestation, ecosystem degradation and illegal wildlife trade have been the common causes of zoonotic diseases. Losing habitats leads to the reduction of natural buffer zones that separate people and animals and the pathogens they carry.

Green spaces are the lungs of our cities, and preserving forested areas and expanding city parks and other green open spaces are crucial in prioritizing the health and wellness of communities. During this pandemic, green outdoor spaces like parks and forests allow people to observe social distancing while they enjoy recreational and fitness activities. These green spaces are also inexpensive to visit. There is increasing evidence that spending time in restorative environments confers numerous health benefits like relieving stress, boosting the immune system, improving mental well-being, lowering blood pressure, and encouraging a more active and healthier lifestyle, among others.

In 2018, the World Economic Forum and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology identified several cities with the most trees. The top cities with the highest percentage of canopy coverage are Tampa in Florida with 36.1 percent, Singapore with 29.3 percent, Oslo with 28.8 percent, Vancouver with 25.9 percent and Sydney with 25.9 percent.

No other city in the world has acquired the title of "a city in a garden" than Singapore. It is a well-deserved distinction that the city-state worked hard for. Within 50 years, Singapore was able to transform its image into one of the cleanest and greenest places in the world. The project, "Singapore, a city in a garden," began in 1970 with the mission of improving the quality of life of its population by increasing vegetation in public spaces. By the end of 1970, more than 55,000 trees were planted.





Singapore has since flourished, and it is now a model for environmentalism and sustainability by establishing urban plans that promote the creation of world-class gardens and nature reserves, revitalization of urban parks and streetscapes, construction of green infrastructure, strengthening of their landscape and horticultural industry, and community engagement.

As Singapore's population grew, so did its green spaces. Singapore's land area is extremely limited, so the next step was to merge greenery with architecture. Another key component that has contributed to Singapore's success and continued progress is the active involvement of its citizens. Its National Tree Planting Day and other awareness strategies have produced more than 1.4 million trees in 2014. To assure sustained environment-centric development, they instill principles of nature conservation in younger generations early on.

In 2019, Oslo was accorded the European Green Capital Award for 2019 for its efforts in sustainable development, which include preserving their natural areas, rehabilitating their waterway network, reducing carbon emissions by 50 percent, being the world's electric vehicle capital, and enhancing cycling and public transport infrastructure, among others. Likewise, Vancouver is lauded for its Urban Forest Strategy that aims to "protect, plant, and manage trees to create a diverse, resilient, and beautiful urban forest on public and private lands across the city" and engage citizens to be actively involved in community stewardship. It is also the city's objective to increase their urban forest canopy by 22percent before 2050, which will require planting more than 3,000 trees per year especially in critical parts of the city's ecological network and in priority neighborhoods.

Let us hope that our communities and cities here in the Philippines will share the same determination to obtain a greener, healthier, and more resilient future for all.



## Republic Cement inks partnership with Colgate-Palmolive to tackle PHL plastic waste problem

By **BMPLUS**

MARCH 25, 2021



Stronger Partnerships for a Stronger Republic. Colgate-Palmolive Philippines President Arvind Sachdev (left) with Republic Cement President and CEO Nabil Francis during the **ecoloop** plastic neutrality co-processing partnership.

Republic Cement, a leading construction solutions provider in the country, and Colgate-Palmolive Philippines, makers of leading oral care and personal care health & hygiene products, have joined together to address the Philippine plastic problem. During the Memorandum of Agreement signing last December 18, 2020 at Republic Cement's Teresa Plant, both companies committed to using Republic's co-processing initiative to reduce the amount of plastic waste ending up in landfills and waterways.

"Republic Cement is proud to be working with Colgate to support their plastic waste reduction goals through **ecoloop**, our resource recovery arm. We are excited to be a part of their journey and we are confident that through our shared commitment towards sustainability, we will be able to help support Colgate achieve their goals in the Philippines," said Republic Cement President and Chief Executive Officer Nabil Francis.

Co-processing is the reuse or recovery of thermal and mineral properties of qualified waste materials while manufacturing cement in a single combined operation. Through **ecoloop's** co-processing and the use of plastic waste as alternative fuels, Republic can manufacture cement with reduced dependence on fossil fuels, such as coal. Residual wastes are effectively diverted from landfills and waterways, thereby addressing the plastic pollution crisis by capturing pre- and post-consumer waste in direct partnership with fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies.

"At Colgate-Palmolive Philippines, we can and will create a healthier and more sustainable future for all. This means preserving our environment and integrating sustainability in all that we do, by developing sustainable products that are recyclable, reusable or compostable, helping to change behavior through waste management education, and by collecting and recycling plastic to help eliminate plastic waste. Through our partnership with Republic Cement, we look forward to achieving our shared vision of eliminating plastic waste and creating a sustainable world we can all smile about," said Arvind Sachdev, Colgate-Palmolive Philippines President and General Manager.

"Colgate-Palmolive is doing its part by helping to provide Filipino homes with sustainable products. In 2020, Colgate-Palmolive launched its first eco-friendly toothbrush made with a natural biodegradable bamboo handle and packaged in plastic-free recycled cardboard. We also moved into recycle-ready packaging with our Palmolive sachets. Palmolive Sachets are now made of a mono-material – a packaging type with only one form of plastic that makes it ready for recycling. Our Palmolive Soap cartons use paper with high-recycled content. These recycle-ready cartons are non-laminated, making it possible to re-process. This way, we are increasing the acceptability of our products' packaging in the recycling stream", added Mr. Sachdev.

Republic Cement is licensed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to utilize and dispose of qualified waste streams through cement kiln co-processing. Co-processing is a superior waste management method by which waste materials are processed at a very high temperature. This breaks down complex materials into simpler compounds and the energy or mineral content of wastes are completely recovered and utilized in the process of producing cement. Emissions from the process are filtered and monitored in compliance with DENR standards.



While co-processing involves the application of heat to destroy waste, it is distinct from the traditional waste management practice of incineration. “**ecoloop** utilizes the cement kiln co-processing method, where emissions are contained and managed within the kiln and any ash produced fully integrated into the stable microstructure of clinker, a key ingredient of cement,” shared **ecoloop** Director Angela Edralin-Valencia. On the other hand, some forms of incineration are purely for waste disposal without any energy or material recovery aspects. There is also a higher chance of noxious gases being released into the atmosphere and while the ash byproduct from incineration usually still ending up in landfills.

For close to two decades, Republic Cement has mastered the art of alternative fuels at its five integrated cement plants across the country. Backed by its 60 years manufacturing expertise, Republic Cement aims to establish co-processing through **ecoloop** as a viable and sustainable waste management solution, especially for plastics and other residual waste.

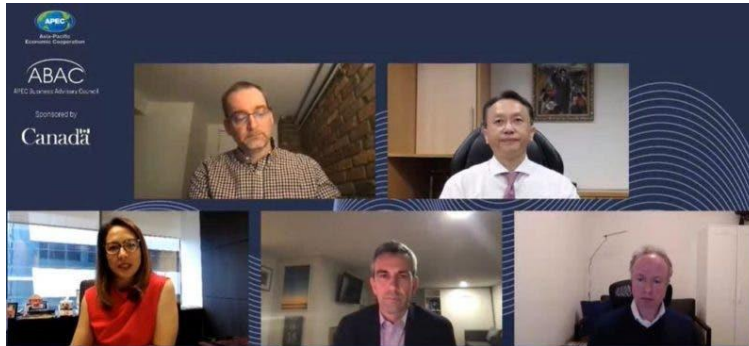
“Our partnership with Colgate paves the way in setting a great example in our two companies working together to provide clear solutions towards managing the Philippine plastic waste problem and together, building a greener, stronger Republic” said Francis.



# Aboitiz InfraCapital leads innovative water infra solutions

By The Manila Times

March 26, 2021



Aboitiz InfraCapital President and CEO Cosette Canilao (bottom, leftmost) joined the panel on “Funding Sustainable Infrastructure” with Acer Inc. Chairman and CEO Jason Chen (top, right), CarbonCure Technologies CEO and Founder Robert Niven (bottom, center), and Carbon Engineering CEO Steve Oldham (bottom, right). The panel was moderated by MaRS Discovery District Director of Cleantech Tyler Hamilton (top, left) on March 12.

THE Aboitiz Group, through its infrastructure arm Aboitiz InfraCapital, Inc. (AIC) is championing the country’s capability to implement innovative and sustainable solutions to address a common global challenge access to clean and safe water at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Advisory Council (ABAC) 2021 Digital Symposium held on March 10 to 12.

In a panel discussion with global business leaders, AIC President and CEO Cosette Canilao presented the Davao City Bulk Water Supply Project (DCBWSP), a landmark public-private partnership project with Davao City Water District (DCWD) that would serve as the newest sustainable source of water for the Davaoños.

The water project, led by Apo Agua Infraestructura, Inc. (Apo Agua), a joint venture between AIC and J.V. Angeles Construction Corporation (JVACC), will make use of Tamugan River as a more sustainable surface water source for Davao City. Using the water energy nexus concept, Tamugan river will also be the source of energy for the treatment plant, the first of its kind in the country. A run-of-river hydroelectric power plant will generate over two megawatts of renewable energy to power the water treatment process, making the facility self-sufficient.

“The Aboitiz Group believes in striking a balance between the interests of people, planet, and profit, and that is why it has made proactive investments to ensure that our success in business continues to bring meaningful societal change,” Canilao said, adding one of these investments is Apo Agua.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/03/26/public-square/abotiz-infracapital-leads-innovative-water-infra-solutions/855566/>



# ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, partners launch gender, biodiversity training materials

By Jimmyley E. Guzman Published on March 25, 2021



PASIG CITY, March 25 (PIA) -- The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, has launched a set of gender and biodiversity training materials for South East Asia and the Pacific designed to promote greater gender-responsiveness in biodiversity policy and programming.

The training materials, launched during a two-part webinar, include three modules containing a variety of exercises to address key gender concepts and biodiversity linkages, international policy commitments, and programming aspects. These were pilot-tested on 11 to 12 December 2019 in Manila, Philippines, through a regional Training of Trainers session, followed by the training of the ACB staff and other organisations.

Inputs from these sessions, with case studies from the ASEAN, helped in further developing these materials.

As part of the celebrations of International Women's Day, and the Philippines' National Women's Month of March, the actual launch took place on 25 March 2021 via Zoom and Facebook live. Titled Gender Matters in Biodiversity Conservation: Launch of regional training materials, the online event moderated by Miss Earth England 2015 and Philippines Protected Area Ambassador, Ms. Katrina Kendall.

Before the launch, there was a review session with the participants of the previous workshops who shared their experiences and inputs on the dissemination of the materials and training of target actors in the region.

"More and more women are getting actively involved in nature conservation and resource management from the community to decision-making levels. Developing and disseminating this set of training materials that will serve as a tool to mainstream gender is a crucial step to enhance our efforts in biodiversity," ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim said.

Among the resource persons in the webinar include Alexander Sheshtakov, Director of the Science Society and Sustainable Futures Division of Secretariat of the CBD; Ms. Tanya McGregor, Gender Programme Officer of the Secretariat of the CBD; Ms. Maricel Aguilar, Gender Specialist in Philippines; Dr. Mary Kristerie Baleva, ACB External Relations and Policy Specialist; and Ms. Katherine Viñegas, Senior Advisor of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH.



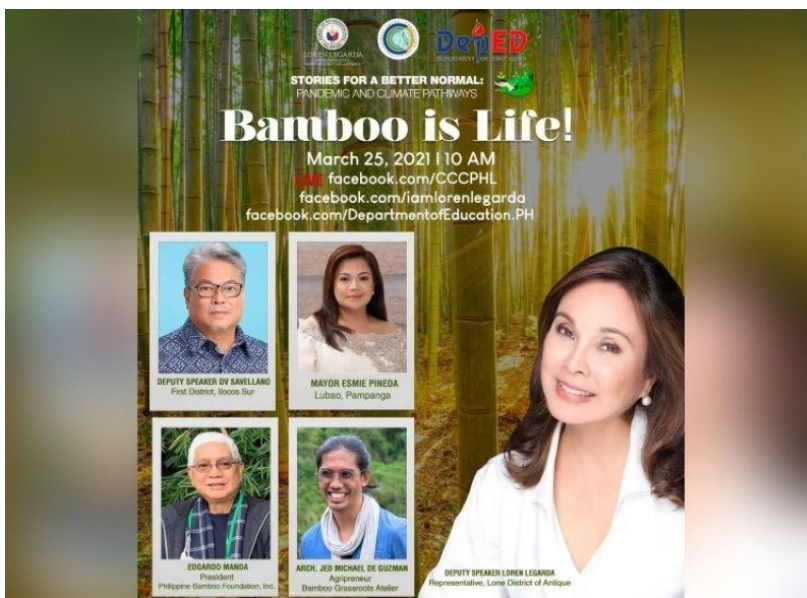
The initiative to develop regional training materials on gender and biodiversity began in late 2017, when the Secretariat of the CBD, with support from the Government of Sweden, United Nations Environment Programme's Asia Pacific Office, and GIZ Philippines, held a consultative regional expert workshop on gender and biodiversity training materials in Bangkok, Thailand.

Participants from national governments, civil society, and international organizations in the South East Asia and Pacific regions contributed to the development of a rich compilation of knowledge, which informed a set of regional training materials. (PIA NCR)





## Lubao mayor shares benefits of bamboo farming in webinar



WEBINAR (1)

### [PRINCESS CLEA ARCELLAZ](#)

March 25, 2021

BENEFITS and opportunities of bamboo farming were showcased in the 39th episode of online webinar "Stories for a Better Normal: Pandemic and Climate Change Pathways."

The virtual conversation hosted by three-term senator, now Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda aired Thursday, March 25, 2021, featured experts and advocates of bamboo farming for the topic "Bamboo Is Life!"

The said episode aimed to highlight the potential of the bamboo industry as a nature-based solution that can help in poverty alleviation, environmental protection, and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Among the guest speakers was Lubao Mayor Esmie Pineda, who shared the economic, tourism and livelihood benefits of bamboo propagation at the Lubao Bamboo Hub.

According to Pineda, planting of bamboos in Barangay Sta. Catalina started in 2010 primarily to protect the Gumain Riverbank from eroding.

Over the years, the area was developed into the now Lubao Bamboo Hub and Ecopark, which has become a tourist destination, the mayor said.

Apart from boosting the town's tourism, Pineda said bamboo propagation also provided livelihood to residents through speakers and lamp-making using bamboo.

Also joining the virtual conversation were Deputy Speaker and Ilocos Sur First District Representative Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano; Philippine Bamboo Foundation President Ed Manda; and Architect Jed Michael de Guzman, a bamboo material expert and agripreneur.

The online discussion was organized in partnership with the Office of Deputy Speaker Legarda and the Climate Change Commission, with support from the Department of Education, Philippine Information Agency, Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, The Climate Reality Project-Philippines and Mother Earth Foundation.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1889894>



# Environment takes center stage in the City of Firsts

Araneta City is actively taking part in this year's celebration of Earth Hour through several activities that reinforce its commitment to promote sustainability and the welfare of the environment.

From 15 to 27 March, the Trash to Cashback program goes to Araneta City in partnership with Basic Environmental System and Technologies (BEST) Inc. and the Environmental Protection and

Waste Management Department of Quezon City.

The City of Firsts will be accepting recyclable waste materials like PET bottles and old newspapers at the kiosk located at the Araneta City Bus Station in exchange for bXTRA environmental points that can be used to purchase from select establishments.

Online, the Araneta City Facebook page will turn green that

started on 22 March for the Three R Digital Promise. Establishments at the City of Firsts will express their pledges to Reuse, Reduce, and Recycle virtually through the unique artwork of MM Dacanay using leaves.

This aims to underscore Araneta City's commitment to a greener future for all of us.

And on 27 March, Araneta City will take part in the largest global movement for nature as they mark Earth Hour at exactly 8:30 p.m.

The City of Firsts will turn off the lights to mark this important occasion.

Aside from that, Araneta City will have an Earth Hour Virtual Spotlight which will feature on all social media channels a special video produced by the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF).

Araneta City and WWF encourage everyone to share the video to their friends and family to cast a light on the state of our planet, the issues we face, and our place within it all during that said hour.

"Araneta City is one with the entire nation and the world as we put the spotlight on our planet," Marjorie Go, assistant vice president for Marketing, said. "We have prepared several activities that aim to empower all of us to do our part in protecting our environment and promoting sustainability in every aspect of our lives."

**araneta city**

# DOWN TO EARTH

MARCH 15 - 27

**WWF's Earth Hour "Switch Off"**  
Araneta City Establishments  
Mar 27, 2021 8:30pm

**Trash to Cashback goes to Araneta City**  
ACBS P2P Lounge Area  
Mar 15 - 27, 2021

**The Three R Digital Promise (Leaf Art)**  
Araneta City Facebook Page  
Mar 22, 2021

For more details, visit Araneta City's Facebook page







# Iloilo City to build beach forest

By Leonard T. Pineda, IPublished on March 25, 2021

ILOILO CITY, March 25 (PIA) – The city government here will establish the “Iloilo City Beach Forest” as part of its priority projects to counter climate change and mitigate pollution.

Iloilo City mayor Jerry Treñas said that he has tasked the City Environment and Natural Resources Office to supervise the establishment of the 1.6-hectare Iloilo City Beach Forest in Molo district here.

“Boulevard Tree Park adds to the series of interconnected Tree Park Networks in Iloilo City,” he said.



The photo shows the site of the proposed Iloilo City beach forest in Molo district. (Photo courtesy of Ariel Gavan/Iloilo City Government)

The city government also plans to construct a Conservation Information Center to serve as display area of photos, IEC materials, briefing area for visitors, biodiversity conservation, environmental awareness activities, among others.

“As we continuously make infrastructural developments in the metro, we envision compensating through equally building greens all over the city,” Treñas said.

A small demo nursery will also be developed to serve as a source of seedlings for coastal tree planting activities.

Likewise, it is also being proposed to construct a small hatchery to promote marine turtle conservation, in case there will be "pawikan" that may nest in the area. (JSC/LTP/PIA6 Iloilo/Thumbnail photo courtesy of Ariel Gavan)





# BARMM bill filed to tap potentials of Liguasan marsh

By Noel Punzalan March 25, 2021, 2:34 pm



**LIGUASAN MARSH DEVELOPMENT.** The 220,000-hectare marshland situated in the boundaries of Maguindanao, North Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat provinces is reportedly rich in natural gas deposits and aquatic wildlife. Ali Sangki, Bangsamoro Transition Authority- Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Member of Parliament, on Thursday (March 25, 2021) said he authored a regional bill to develop and tap the resources of the vast Liguasan Marsh area. (Photo courtesy of BIO-BARMM)

COTABATO CITY – A member of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), the lawmaking body of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), has filed a bill to develop the potentials of the Liguasan marshland in Maguindanao.

“The marsh is just there sitting untapped. It (marsh) is reportedly rich in natural gas deposits,” BTA Member Ali B. Sangki, the author of the bill, said on Thursday.

The 220,000-hectare Liguasan Marsh, the biggest wetland in the country, borders the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat in Central Mindanao.

Sangki filed before the BARMM parliament BTA Bill No. 82 also known as “Liguasan Marsh Management Commission (LMMC)” which seeks to provide the overall direction for the management, development, and conservation of natural and cultural resources of the marsh.

The bill, co-authored by colleagues Mudjib C. Abu and Abdullah A. Ahang, was created under Section 9, Article 13 of R.A. 11054 or the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

The particular BOL provision states that “the management and protection of natural reserves and aquatic parks, forest, watersheds and reservation and other protected areas in the territorial jurisdiction of the Bangsamoro that have already been defined by and under the authority of the National Government shall be transferred to the Bangsamoro Government”.

Once formed, the LMMC will function under the Office of BARMM Chief Minister (OCM) Ahod B. Ebrahim.

“The OCM will ensure that local communities will continue to benefit from the resources on a long-term basis, and will also formulate plans to enhance the communities,” Sangki said.

It will also operationalize a management framework delineating appropriate and viable management zones for various parts of the marsh to create an area growth center, he added.

Under the bill, the LMMC shall be composed of the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy (MENRE) as chairman and the provincial governor of Maguindanao as the vice-chair.

Its members will include the region’s Ministry of Finance, Budget and Management (MFBM); the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism; the Ministry of Interior and Local Government; the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform; the Ministry of Public Works (MPW); and the director-general of the commission, among others. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1134841>



# Sorsogon Bay declared red tide-free

By Connie Calipay March 25, 2021, 1:07 pm



**RED-TIDE FREE.** The shellfish industry in the Bicol Region received good news on Thursday (March 25, 2021) after the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources declared Sorsogon Bay red-tide free. Samples were taken for three consecutive weeks, according to officials. (PNA file photo)

LEGAZPI CITY – Gathering, selling, and transporting all types of shellfish from Sorsogon Bay are now permitted after samples turned out negative for paralytic shellfish toxin (PSP) that causes red tide, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Bicol said.

BFAR-Bicol spokesperson Nonie Enolva, in an interview on Thursday, said Shellfish Advisory No. 23 lifted the shellfish ban imposed in December last year.

“Based on the results of the red tide monitoring activities of the BFAR and the local government units (LGUs), shellfish collected from Sorsogon Bay in Sorsogon are now negative for the red tide toxin,” the BFAR-Bicol advisory read.

The negative results for PSP were obtained from three consecutive weeks of sampling the area, Enolva added.

"The good news is very timely for those who are dependent on shellfish harvesting and for the coming Holy Week," she said.

Commodore Eduardo Gongona, BFAR National Director, said in a statement that the agency and LGUs are continuously monitoring Sorsogon to safeguard public health and to protect the shellfish industry.

“Shellfish samples harvested from Sorsogon Bay are now safe for human consumption,” he confirmed. (PNA)



# Red tide remains in 2 Leyte bays

By Sarwell Meniano March 25, 2021, 2:26 pm



**RED TIDE-HIT.** A portion of red tide-infested Cancabato Bay in Tacloban City in this undated photo. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) confirmed on Thursday (March 25, 2021) the presence of red tide toxins in the bay. (Photo courtesy of Camera ni Juan Photography)

**TACLOBAN CITY** – Red tide phenomenon continues to thrive in two areas in Leyte province, affecting the gathering and trading of shellfish, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) reported on Thursday.

In an advisory, the BFAR regional office confirmed that red tide toxins have affected coastal areas of Calubian, Leyte; and Cancabato Bay in Tacloban City since early this year.

“We urge local government units in these affected areas to impose the shellfish ban to ensure public safety. All types of shellfish and *Acetes* sp. locally known as ‘alamang’ gathered in Cancabato and Calubian are not safe for human consumption,” BFAR Regional Director Norberto Berida said in a phone interview.

Fish, squid, shrimp, and crab are safe to eat provided that they are fresh and washed thoroughly and internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed before cooking, the official said.

Berida said they expect that the dry season and sudden heavy downpour may prolong the red tide phenomenon in these areas and may trigger the recurrence in other areas traditionally hit by red tide.

Red tide is a term used to describe a phenomenon where the water is discolored by high algal biomass or the concentration of algae. (PNA)





# Pawikan natagpuang patay sa Capiz

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Mar 25 2021 10:32 PM



Isang patay na pawikan ang nakita sa baybayin ng Barangay Agojo sa Panay, Capiz. *Larawan mula kay Ralphine Forte Jr.*

Isang patay na pawikan ang nakita sa baybayin ng Barangay Agojo, Panay, Capiz, Huwebes ng umaga.

Tinatayang nasa 15 hanggang 20 kilos ang namatay na pawikan.

Kaagad na inilibing sa pangpang ang namatay na pawikan. Hindi naman matukoy ng awtoridad ang dahilan ng pagkamatay nito. Ulat ni Rolen Escaniel



## Climate and environment updates

**LATEST UPDATE:** March 25, 2021 - 9:09pm

9 hours ago

Decades of poaching and shrinking habitats have devastated elephant populations across Africa, conservationists said Thursday, warning one sub-species found in rainforests was a step away from extinction.

In an update of its "Red List" of threatened species, the International Union for Conservation of Nature said the African forest elephant population had shrunk by more than 86% in three decades and it was now considered "critically endangered".

The population of the African savanna elephants had meanwhile decreased by at least 60% over the past 50 years, IUCN said, with the Red List now listing that species as "endangered". — **AFP**

March 19, 2021

As part of its commitment to environmental protection and conservation, Globe joins the world in calling for consistent global recycling efforts, proper waste disposal, ban of single-use plastics and other sustainable initiatives during the worldwide celebration of Global Recycling Day.

It continues to encourage positive consumer behavior through its numerous environmental sustainability programs like E-waste Zero and 'Wag Sa Single Use plastic or WasSUP that call for the extended lifespan of electronic gadgets, plastics and endorse responsible recycling.

"We introduced our E-waste Zero program back in 2014 as a way to raise funds to put up new classrooms in Aklan which were devastated by typhoon Haiyan. Since then we were able to scale the program by partnering with the rest of the AC Group, corporate clients, schools, and NGOs," says Yoly Crisanto, Globe Chief Sustainability Officer and SVP for Corporate Communications.



Follow this page for updates about climate change and information on current environmental issues. Main photo by Efigenio Toledo IV

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/happens/946>



# 8,773 bagong COVID-19 cases naitala ng DOH, ika-2 'all time high' this week

(Philstar.com) - March 25, 2021 - 4:00pm



Binabantayan ng pulis na ito ang isang checkpoint sa Lungsod ng Quezon, ika-23 ng Marso, 2021, ngayong nagpapatupad ng mas mahigpit na NCR Plus bubble sa Kamaynilaan at ilang karatig na probinsya

AFP/Jam Sta. Rosa

MANILA, Philippines — Nakapagtala ang Department of Health ng 8,773 bagong infection ng coronavirus disease ngayong Huwebes, kung kaya nasa 693,048 na sumatutal ang nahahawaan nito sa bansa.

Batay sa mga bagong nakalap na datos ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan, narito ang bagong mga pasok na datos para araw na ito:

- **lahat ng kaso:** 693,048
- **nagpapagaling pa:** 99,891, o 14.4% ng total infections
- **bagong recover:** 574, dahilan para maging 580,062 na lahat ng gumagaling
- **kamamatay lang:** 56, na siyang nag-aakyat sa *total local death toll sa 13,095*

Anong bago ngayong araw?

- Ngayong araw inulat ang pinakamaraming bagong COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas sa iisang araw lang sa bilang na 8,773. Nahigitan na nito ang all-time high na 8,019 nitong Lunes.
- Record-breaking din ang local active cases ngayong Huwebes, na halos nasa 100,000 pasyenteng nagpapagaling pa.
- Kanina lang nang kumpirmahin ng National Bureau of Investigation na [hindi dumaan sa customs](#) ang mga COVID-19 vaccines na iligal na itinurok sa mga kawani ng Presidential Security Group, kolumnistang si Mon Tulfo atbp. Nangyari din ito habang wala pang emergency use authorization ang Sinopharm vaccine na ginamit sa kanila.





- Kaugnay nito, sinabi kanina ni presidential spokesperson Harry Roque na hindi pwedeng kasuhan si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte pagdating sa ilegal na pagtuturok ng Sinopharm ng PSG. Aniya, applicable lang daw ang "command responsibility" sa presidente "kapag may labanan."
- Bagama't binanatan ni Digong ang mga personalidad na "sumingit" sa priority list ng gobyerno sa pagpapaturok ng COVID-19 vaccines, aminado si Roque na walang malinaw na batas na magpaparusa sa mga tinaguriang line jumpers. Sa ngayon kasi, tanging mga healthworkers at iba pang A1 priority ang pwedeng bigyan ng bakuna.
- Kinumpirma naman ng Palasyo na merong "quick substitution list" na ginagamit ngayon ang gobyerno para sa mga pwedeng bigyan ng bakuna kung hindi dumating ang healthcare worker na scheduled para sa COVID-19 immunization. Gayunpaman, sinasabi sa [DOH Memorandum 2021-0099](#) na dapat ibigay sa "next priority group" ang bakuna bilang "last resort."
- Humihingi naman ngayon ng dagdag na mga healthworkers ang Lung Center of the Philippines at Philippine General Hospitals para i-augment ang kanilang workforce kasunod na rin ng biglang pagsipa ng COVID-19 patients sa kanilang lugar. We have requested at least 30 more nurses from the DOH since last week but it's not easy to get those manpower. I could imagine all hospitals are trying to get more manpower," ani LCP spokesperson Dr. Norberto Francisco kanina sa panayam ng ANC.
- Lumabas naman sa bagong pag-aaral ng OCTA Research Group kanina na [numero uno ang Fort Bonifacio, Taguig sa lahat ng mga baranggay sa Pilipinas pagdating sa mga bagong COVID-19 infections](#) magmula pa noong isang linggo, ika-18 ng Marso, 2021. Gayunpaman, bahagyang bumaba na ang "reproduction number" ng COVID-19 sa Metro Manila kasabay ng pagpapatupad ng NCR Plus bubble.
- Umaabot na sa halos 123.9 milyon ang tinatamaan ng COVID-19 sa buong mundo, ayon sa huling ulat ng World Health Organization (WHO). Sa bilang na 'yan, mahigit 2.72 milyon na ang patay.

— James Relativo



# 508,332 katao nabigyan ng unang dose ng COVID-19 vaccine

By [Danilo Garcia](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - March 25, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Aabot na sa 508,332 ang kabuuang indibidwal ang nabigyan ng unang dose ng COVID-19 vaccines sa 17 rehiyon sa bansa.

Sa datos ng Department of Health (DOH), nitong Marso 23 ay umaabot na sa 1,759 ang vaccination sites ng pamahalaan. Nasa 98.21% ng unang available na mga doses na ang naipamahagi o katumbas ng 1,105,500 sa 1,125,600.

Aabot naman sa 62.14% ng unang suplay ng bakuna ang naiturok na karamihan ay sa mga healthcare workers na una sa prayoridad ng pamahalaan sa ipinatutupad na vaccination program.

May average ang pamahalaan na 32,756 na indibidwal na nabibigyan ng unang dose ng bakuna kada araw.

Pinakamataas ang naibigay na sa National Capital Region (NCR) na may 279,870 doses, kasunod ang Region 7 na may 110,760, Region 4A na may 94,560, Region 3 na may 88,740 at ikalima ang Region 11 na may 53,600 doses.

“Current deployment is limited to Priority Group-A1 or frontline healthcare workers, who were given the option between CoronaVac or AstraZeneca vaccines,” ayon sa DOH.



## Verbal row over reef militia sizzles; Duterte, Huang meet

By SAMUEL MEDENILLA and [RECTO MERCENE](#)  
MARCH 26, 2021



This 2019 file photo shows a protester holding a sign during a rally outside the Chinese Consulate in the financial district of Makati to mark Independence Day. (AP Photo / Aaron Favila)

THE presence of a fleet of Chinese ships in the Julian Felipe Reef were among the issues discussed by President Duterte during his recent meeting with Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian, Malacanang said on Thursday, as harsh exchanges on the subject, from various parties, continued to rule social media.

In an online press briefing, Presidential spokesman Harry Roque confirmed the discussion happened last week around the time he tested positive for Covid-19.

During the meeting, he said the President expressed concern over the incident in Julian Felipe Reef.

“The President said...that we, like any other country, are concerned with such large number of ships. The Chinese ambassador said [the crew of the said ships] are fishermen, who sought shelter [in the reef],” Roque said.

The claim that Chinese fishermen sought refuge in the reef from turbulent waters in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) was earlier floated by the Chinese embassy, but critics pounced on this, citing Beijing’s record of decades-long misrepresentations about their activities in disputed waters, now deemed a flashpoint in the region.

In the course of their discussion, Roque said, Duterte reiterated the position he made during his speech before the United Nations in September, that he will protect the country’s territories in the WPS, including the Julian Felipe Reef.

Last Sunday, the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS) reported the entry of 200 ships in the Julian Felipe Reef (Whitsun Reef) on March 7, 2021.

The Julian Felipe Reef is a boomerang-shaped shallow coral reef, which is part of the country’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf (CS) since it is located approximately 175 nautical miles west of Bataraza, Palawan.

Roque clarified the meeting between Duterte and Xilian was scheduled long before the controversy over the reef presence of the ships, which experts said look more like militia ships than those of fishermen.

“It was a social call because it is the birthday of the President,” Roque said.

The President will celebrate his 76th birthday on Sunday.

For the special occasion, Roque said, Duterte wishes for an end of the pandemic and a restoration of a sense of normalcy in the country.





## Sharp rebuke

On Thursday, the Chinese Embassy issued a sharp rebuke on Twitter in the wake of the increasing exchanges of notes in social media, saying: “If the so-called ‘facts’ are false from the beginning, you couldn’t be more wrong to repeat the mistakes. Understand and respect the fact before you make any comment.”

The embassy did not make clear to whom the message is directed, but the belligerent tone followed the expression of support aired by several embassies in Manila, calling both the Philippines and China to settle the issue in a peaceful manner.

Earlier, the United States, UK, Canada and Japan issued similar calls, supporting Manila’s call for the Chinese militia’s withdrawal, and at the same time, asking both parties to settle their differences peacefully.

Earlier, the Chinese embassy said the Philippines and China can “properly handle relevant issues” on the South China Sea.

This was a response to the US Embassy’s statement saying, “Chinese maritime militia intimidate, provoke and threaten other nations.” The US said it stands with the Philippines, their oldest treaty ally in Asia.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. tweeted, also on Thursday, “We have enough to trigger the Mutual Defense Treaty if just one of our frigates or Philippine Coast Guard vessels are attacked in defense of our national territory. OR NOT. It depends on the US.”

He said the “deterrence theory gives powerful assurance the USA will support the Philippines, adding, “The cowards in CINCPAC [Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Fleet] have retired.”

The Harvard-trained lawyer said: “Whether you like Americans or not, US is the only hegemon that pays in blood & treasure to protect your country’s sovereignty—what you do with it is your problem.

“And it asks nothing in return. It is dead set on beating back Oriental despotism however materially successful it is.”

In another tweet, the former lawmaker and journalist repeated the changes in the country’s foreign policy, thus: “Friend to friends, enemy to enemies. A worse enemy to a false friend. Peace is overrated. It cannot be at any price especially of loss of honor.”

On the Chinese embassy’s telling him one of his tweets seems misleading, Locsin said Chinese social media had interpreted his expression “fire at will”—as an order to fire guns at Chinese boats, when he meant, “unmistakably our diplomatic protest.”

Locsin said, “I am not responsible for totalitarian distortions of plain English. Correct it yourself.”

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/03/26/verbal-row-over-reef-militia-sizzles-duterte-huang-meet/>



# China, Palace play down ships on reef

In the spirit of friendship, we expect them to leave.

Published 6 hours ago on March 26, 2021 12:20 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#) @tribunephil [MJB](#)



The Philippines need not worry over the reported presence of Chinese vessels in Julian Felipe Reef (Union Reefs), presidential spokesperson Harry Roque quoted on Thursday Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian as telling President Rodrigo Duterte during a “social call.”

“The President and the Chinese ambassador understood each other,” Roque said.

During his meeting with Huang, Duterte raised concern over the reported sighting of Chinese ships, Roque said.

Roque added Mr. Duterte had made it clear to Huang he would protect the country’s sovereign rights in its maritime domain and uphold the country’s historic win over the contested West Philippine Sea (WPS).



“The president’s message was clear — like what he told the United Nations before — we will protect our territory and we consider Julian Felipe Reef as part of our territory,” Roque told reporters in a press briefing.

“We stand by our arbitral victory, and we believe that the WPS row should be resolved through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,” he added.

The official did not disclose the exact date of the meeting, but said it was a “scheduled social call” between the two as Mr. Duterte’s birthday approaches on Sunday.

## Amity to prevail

Malacañang expected the Chinese vessels deployed in the reef to eventually leave the area in the “spirit of friendship” between the two countries, Roque said.

“In the spirit of friendship, we expect them to leave,” he added.



The Philippines lodged a diplomatic protest against China and demanded the latter to withdraw its vessels and maritime assets in the reef, which is within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief-of-staff Gen. Cirilito Sobejana has ordered the deployment of more Navy ships to the WPS to beef up the country's sovereignty patrols in the area.

"By increased naval presence in the area, we seek to reassure our people of (our) strong, unwavering commitment to protect and defend them from harassment, ensure they enjoy their rights over the country's rich fishing grounds which is their source of livelihood," the military said.

The Chinese ships appeared to show no signs of "actual fishing activities" and had been spotted on 7 March with lights turned on at night despite the clear weather, according to the National Task Force for the WPS which cited reports from the Philippine Coast Guard.

The Chinese embassy said the boats were fishing vessels taking shelter near Julian Felipe Reef due to "rough sea conditions" and "bad weather."

### **Don't inflate issue**

Roque believed that the incident should not be deemed controversial.

"I think there is no controversy because they are not saying that they would stay there," he said.

Roque is also confident that the issue would be resolved between the Philippines and China since the two nations are "friends."

"We believe that this will be resolved between friends," he said.

"China said its fishermen are there because they were seeking refuge from the bad weather. So we hope for the end of the bad weather and in the spirit of friendship, we expect the vessels to leave the place," Roque noted.

On 12 July 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, Netherlands rejected China's supposedly historic rights over almost the entire disputed waters.

China, however, has repeatedly refused to acknowledge the arbitral ruling.

The United States, Japan, Australia and Canada have voiced deep concern over the presence of the militia vessels, describing the move as a threat to regional and global stability.

Julian Felipe Reef is a large boomerang-shaped and shallow coral reef at the northeast of Pagkakaia Banks and Reefs located about one-fifth nautical miles west of Bataraza, Palawan.

China and the Philippines, along with Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, have been locked in territorial rivalries in the South China Sea in tense decades-long standoffs.

*mje*

Source: [https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/03/26/china-palace-play-down-ships-on-reef/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=china-palace-play-down-ships-on-reef](https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/03/26/china-palace-play-down-ships-on-reef/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=china-palace-play-down-ships-on-reef)





## EU urges investment in fight vs climate change

By Xinhua

March 26, 2021

BRUSSELS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday (Thursday in Manila) called for the mobilization of “as much private investment as possible” to complement the public funds spent on what she described as Europe’s “last chance to stop climate change.”

Addressing a high-level conference entitled “Investing in climate action: The make-or-break decade” and jointly organized by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB), von der Leyen said Europe was already taking the leading role by earmarking 280 billion euros (\$331 billion) from its coronavirus pandemic recovery plan for climate action.

“We are supporting the European Green Deal goals with an unprecedented wave of public investment,” she said, but this requires the backing of private investment as well as cooperation with other countries in the world that also need to tackle climate change with the same impetus.

“Europe will be the first climate-neutral continent, but we do not want it to be the only one . . . . It is our last chance to stop climate change. And it is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to become global leaders in the economy of the future,” she said.

Addressing the same conference, EIB President Werner Hoyer said he was confident that Europe will achieve its goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, because its Green Deal tackles the crisis “head-on” by being ambitious, comprehensive and strongly focused on growth.

“With the Next Generation EU recovery package, reinforcements to the EU budget and the EIB by its side, Europe’s Green Deal is also backed by an unprecedented public financial firepower.

After the financial crisis, after the euro crisis [and] after Brexit, Europe is leading the way on the climate front,” Hoyer said.

Hoyer echoed von der Leyen in stating that tackling climate change is not something Europe could do alone because the continent only accounts for 10 percent of global emissions.

He welcomed as “positive developments” China’s commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 and US President Joe Biden’s decision to bring his country back into the Paris Agreement. Xinhua

“Europe needs to become a champion for a global Green Deal. And for that, our foreign policy and climate policy must become two sides of the same coin,” Hoyer said.



# Bracing for climate change, pandemic

Published 3 hours ago

on March 26, 2021 03:00 AM By [Elmer Navarro Manuel](#) @tribunephil\_Imer



The good news is that the world may not be as steaming hot as the last two years, considered the warmest in recorded history, but a British Broadcasting Corp. report indicated that 2021 is still expected to rank among the six warmest since 2016.

As the country enters another scorching year, the tendency to overload power lines due to prolonged use of appliances like air-conditioners, electric fans, computers and water pumps increases the probability of fires.

As more people move closer to their places of work or study, especially during the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) community quarantines, preparations for risks brought about by climate change and the pandemic becomes more important.

Insurance offers protection from the risk of fire occurrences through the fire insurance policy.

However, it is a necessity for entities and individuals to have protection from the various risks in the new normal that the effects of the pandemic and climate change brings.

Aside from fire insurance, Malayan Insurance raises the bar in protection by offering Renter's Protect, a packaged protection product focused on the tenant and their belongings, when the unexpected occur.

Under Renter's Protect, apartment dwellers and lessees of shared space like dormitories or dormitels, as well as condominium unit renters, are provided insurance coverage of up to P1 million for their belongings and themselves as the package includes personal accident coverage, fire cash assistance of up to P100,000, comprehensive personal liability for damages done in common areas or to third parties, as well as burglary and housebreaking assistance, to policyholders.

The Renter's Protect product is also made available in either a period of three months under the short-term premium plan, six months for mid-term, and 12 months or one year under the annual-term premium plan to accommodate the varying needs of customers.



## 450M kids have no access to clean water – Unicef

By [Global Times](#)

March 25, 2021

**LAGOS:** Nearly one-third of Nigerian children lack access to enough water, the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (Unicef) said, calling for urgent measures to address the problem.

In a statement marking World Water Day, Unicef said more than 1.42 billion people — including 450 million children — are living in areas of high or extremely high water vulnerability in the world.

“This means that one in five children worldwide do not have enough water to meet their everyday needs,” it said.

“The figures in Nigeria are particularly worrying, with 26.5 million Nigerian children experiencing high or extremely high water vulnerability — or 29 percent of Nigerian children,” the UN body said.

About 100,000 Nigerian children are said to die annually of water-related diseases.

“The world’s water crisis is not coming — it is here, and children are its biggest victims,” said Peter Hawkins, Unicef’s representative in Nigeria.

“When wells dry up, children are the ones missing school to fetch water. When droughts diminish food supplies, children suffer from malnutrition and stunting.

When floods hit, children fall ill from water-borne illnesses. And when water is not available in Nigerian communities, children cannot wash their hands to fight off diseases,” Hawkins added.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/03/25/news/world/450m-kids-have-no-access-to-clean-water-unicef/855063/>





# Forests, soil may not keep pace with CO2 emissions, experts warn

Marlowe Hood, Agence France-Presse

Posted at Mar 25 2021 01:12 PM



Smoke billows during a fire in an area of the Amazon rainforest near Porto Velho, Rondonia State, Brazil, September 10, 2019. *Bruno Kelly, Reuters/file*

PARIS - The world is counting too heavily on soil and plants to soak up planet-ravaging carbon pollution, researchers cautioned Wednesday.

Climate projections mistakenly assume that land and what grows on it are able to absorb the CO2 humanity loads into the atmosphere, they reported in the journal *Nature*.

In reality, there's a trade off.

"Either soil or plants, but not both, will absorb more CO2 as carbon levels rise," lead author Cesar Terrer, a researcher at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, told AFP.

It is tempting, he said, to hang hopes on supercharged plant growth and massive tree-planting campaigns to reduce CO2 produced by burning fossil fuels, agriculture and destroying forests.

But researchers said that when elevated carbon dioxide levels boost forest and grassland growth, the accumulation of CO2 in soil slows down.

"Soils store more carbon worldwide than is contained in all plant biomass," said senior author Rob Jackson, a professor at Stanford's School of Earth, Energy and Environmental Sciences.

So far, Earth's terrestrial ecosystems have kept pace with rapidly increasing CO2 emissions, consistently absorbing some 30 percent even as those emissions have more than doubled over the last 50 years.

Oceans have also syphoned off a steady 20-odd percent of CO2 pollution during the same period.

Without these natural sponges, the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere today might be double preindustrial levels, enough to heat up the planet's surface by four to six degrees Celsius, according to a new generation of climate models.

With only 1.1C of warming so far, the planet has seen a crescendo of deadly heatwaves, flooding and other extreme weather.

The new study adds to growing evidence that the terrestrial carbon sink is weaker than once thought.

Terrer and colleagues analyzed data from more than 100 published experiments on soil carbon levels, plant growth and CO2 concentrations, which have risen by half since pre-industrial times.



## PUT THE BAR HIGHER

They were surprised by the results.

"It proved much harder than expected to increase both plant growth and carbon soil," said Jackson.

Researchers found that soils only accumulated more carbon in experiments where plant growth remained fairly steady, despite high levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the air.

The findings highlight a key difference between two types of ecosystem, and suggest that grasslands may turn out to be more important than long assumed when it comes to stocking away carbon.

"In forests, additional CO<sub>2</sub> mainly increases above-ground carbon storage," Terrer explained.

"But the acquisition of additional nutrients needed to fuel plant growth increases soil carbon losses," cancelling out the benefit.

In grasslands, by contrast, elevated CO<sub>2</sub> causes a relatively modest bump in biomass, while loss of carbon from the soil remains low.

"This new paper puts the bar higher for those models to capture the additional complexities of above-ground versus below-ground carbon storage," said Pep Canadell, executive director of the Global Carbon Project.

"Carbon stored in the soils is probably better long term protected than carbon in plants, which are susceptible to fire and other disturbances," he told AFP.

In 2019, the same researchers estimated that a doubling of CO<sub>2</sub> compared to mid-19th century levels -- as expected by the end of this century -- will increase plant biomass by only 12 percent, far less than previously predicted.

Other research has warned that forests are losing their effectiveness in mopping up CO<sub>2</sub>.

In part, that's because a football pitch of old-growth, primary forest is destroyed every six seconds, releasing CO<sub>2</sub> and reducing the areas left for absorbing it.

And beyond a certain temperature threshold the capacity of plants to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> also declines, according to a study earlier this year.

© Agence France-Presse



# Extinction: Elephants driven to the brink by poaching

By Victoria Gill Science correspondent, BBC News

Published 7 hours ago



IMAGE COPYRIGHTFRANK AF PETERSENS

image captionThere are now just over 400,000 elephants across the African continent

**The ivory trade, loss of vital habitat and a deeper understanding of elephant biology have all combined to reveal a previously underestimated threat to Africa's elephants.**

African forest elephants are now critically endangered, an update from the [International Union for the Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#) reveals.

Savanna elephants are also endangered.

And "declines over decades" have driven the species into the two highest categories of extinction threat.

African elephants were previously assessed as one species on the IUCN's Red List.

**Genetic evidence** showed them to be two distinct species more than a decade ago.

But accurate assessments - of populations, trends in their numbers and the threats they face - take many years.

The IUCN estimates 415,000 elephants remain in Africa.



IMAGE COPYRIGHTFRANK AF PETERSENS

image captionThe number of forest elephants fell by more than 86% in the past three decades

But the number of forest elephants fell by more than 86% during the past three decades. In addition, the number of savanna elephants fell by at least 60% over the past 50 years.





The situation differs from country to country. In Botswana, for example, it has been argued that there are **so many elephants that the ecosystem cannot naturally support them**. But, on a continent-wide scale, the giant mammals are in decline.

Dr Ben Okita, who co-chairs the IUCN elephant specialist group, called the latest assessment an "alarm bell".

Despite peaking in 2011, poaching for ivory remained a "significant driver" of the decline, he told BBC News.

"It is one of the major causes," he said.



IMAGE COPYRIGHT LYDIA TILLER

image caption Elephants "do not know international borders", so protecting them will require international cooperation

"But there's another silent killer that requires a very high level of attention - that's land degradation and fragmentation.

"It is a big challenge for species that require very large areas and that move long distances. "Wild animals do not know international borders.

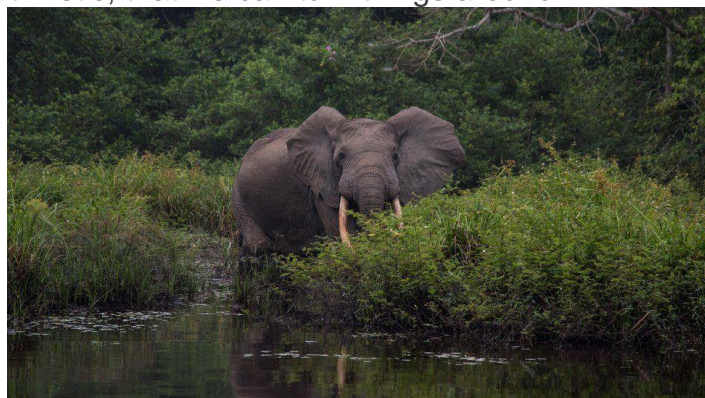
"So to turn things around, we have to have co-operation across those borders and to plan for better land use.

Where animals share that land, Dr Okita explained, it is important to use it in a way that is compatible for them.

"I know the will is there with African governments and with the communities that live alongside these animals," Dr Okita explained.

"So we just need to make it happen.

"I am optimistic, very optimistic, that we can turn things around."



FRANK AF PETERSENS

image caption This is the first time the IUCN has assessed forest elephants as a distinct species



Isla Duporge from Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at the University of Oxford, said: "While on the surface this looks bleak, the fact it's being flagged is actually positive.

"The separation of the species is also a positive, because we can do something about it on a more concentrated level - depending on which species we're looking at and in what location. "More information is always better."

#### 'Drastic declines'

Amy Fraenkel, executive secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, said: "I hope that it will lead to greater conservation actions for both species.

"In particular, the forest elephant has suffered drastic declines over the past few decades."

Ms Duporge said conservationists doing work "on the ground in Africa" to protect habitats would be the most crucial players in the effort to protect the animals.

"Those are the organisations to donate your money to," she said.

Follow Victoria [on Twitter](#).



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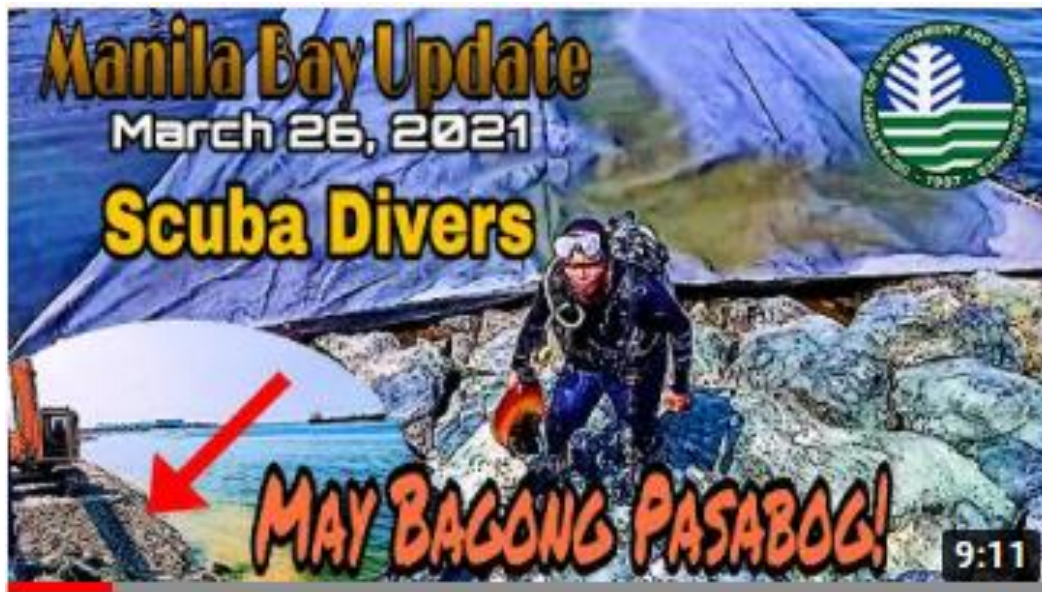
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