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# NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



# DENR's Sampulna turns over Alabang lot to RITM

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA APRIL 21, 2022



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna (sixth from left) and Department of Health-Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (DOH-RITM) Director Celia Carlos, MD (fifth from left) show the deed of conveyance signed by the two parties for a parcel of land in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, to be turned over by DENR to DOH-RITM. The property will help expand RITM's facilities to further advance its research and improve its services. Present in the ceremonial signing were Land Management Bureau Director Atty. Emelyne V. Talabis, DENR National Capital Region Executive Director Jacqueline A. Caanacan (fourth and seventh from left) and other officials of the two agencies.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to turn over a 9,077-square-meter (sq m) land to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) to research work to combat the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic and other diseases that may arise in the future.

DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna signed on Friday, April 8, 2022, a deed of conveyance on making the lot donation official. RITM is the research arm of the Department of Health.

"This deed of conveyance is the DENR's simple gift and contribution for RITM to further advance their research work, and prepare to address the current pandemic and health concerns that may arise in the future," Sampulna said in a news statement.

The ceremonial signing of the deed of conveyance came after President Duterte handed down Proclamation 1276 dated January 6, 2022, which states that a parcel of patrimonial land within the Alabang Stock Farm, Muntinlupa City, will be allotted for RITM.

The 9,077-sq-m lot is adjacent to the current site of the health research facility in Alabang. RITM Director Celia C. Carlos, MD, expressed her gratitude to the DENR for facilitating the preparation of the deed of conveyance, and for allocating the land in their favor, noting that one of the facility's problems was lack of space.

"I wish to acknowledge the big help provided by Land Management Bureau Director Atty. Emelyne V. Talabis and her staff who guided and supported us in all stages of this journey towards RITM acquisition of additional lots," said Carlos.

RITM has been responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases for the last 20 years, including the first severe acute respiratory syndrome-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV) outbreak in 2003.



It was also at the forefront of controlling the AH1N1 pandemic in 2009, measles outbreak in 2013, Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) outbreak in 2014 to 2015, polio outbreak in 2018, and SARS-CoV outbreak in 2019.

Carlos also pointed out that the additional parcel of land would help expand the facility's health-care services and technologies.

RITM currently houses 18 National Reference Laboratories in infectious diseases, which allow health-care workers and professionals to perform confirmatory tests and implement quality assurance.

Image credits: [Contributed photo](#)



## DENR Alabang Property for DOH-RITM

Thursday, April 21, 2022 Journal Online



Department of Environment and Natural Resources ([DENR](#)) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna (6th from left) and Department of Health-Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (DOH-RITM) Director Celia Carlos, MD (5th from left) show the deed of conveyance signed by the two parties for a parcel of land in Alabang, Muntinlupa City to be turned over by DENR to DOH-RITM. The property will help expand RITM's facilities to further advance its research and improve its services. Present in the ceremonial signing were Land Management Bureau Director Atty. Emelyne V. Talabis, [DENR](#) National Capital Region Executive Director Jacqueline A. Caancan (4th and 7th from left) and other officials of the two agencies.



# DENR donates land to RITM for expansion on medical research

Published April 21, 2022, 1:14 PM

by [Aaron Recuenco](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has donated more than 9,000 square meter land to the Department of Health (DOH) to help improve the agency's operational capability for medical research and development.

DENR Sec. Jim O. Sampulna said the parcel of land is located in Alabang in Muntinlupa City and is actually located beside the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) which is the main beneficiary of the donation.

The RITM is the main research arm of the DOH and over the years, it has been complaining of lack of space to accommodate more facilities for its growing research assignments.

Currently, the RITM houses 18 National Reference Laboratories in infectious diseases, which allow health care workers and professionals to perform confirmatory tests, and implement quality assurance

Sampulna said the ceremonial signing of the deed of conveyance was under President Duterte's Proclamation No. 1276 dated Jan. 6, 2022, which states that a parcel of patrimonial land within the Alabang Stock Farm, Muntinlupa City, will be for RITM building site purposes.

RITM Director Celia C. Carlos, MD expressed her gratitude to the DENR for facilitating the preparation of the deed of conveyance, and for allocating the land in their favor, noting that one of the facility's problems was the lack of space.

RITM has been responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases for the last 20 years, including the first severe acute respiratory syndrome-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV) outbreak in 2003.

It was also at the forefront controlling the AH1N1 pandemic in 2009, measles outbreak in 2013, Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) outbreak in 2014 to 2015, polio outbreak in 2018, and SARS-CoV outbreak in 2019.

Carlos said the additional parcel of land would help expand the facility's healthcare services and technologies.



# MPIC builds a biodiversity-friendly city

Forges partnership with DENR and QC LGU for Gabay Kalikasan Park

**BYBMPLUS** APRIL 22, 2022



From left: DENR-BMB Director Natividad Y. Bernardino, DENR-NCR Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan, QC-LGU City Administrator Mr. Michael Victor Alimurung, and MPIC Chief Finance, Risk and Sustainability Officer Chaye A. Cabal-Revilla hold copies of the landmark Memorandum of Agreement for the Urban Biodiversity conservation program.

Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC), the country's leading infrastructure investment company, partnered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – National Capital Region (DENR-NCR), and the local government unit of Quezon City to implement the project "Building a Biodiversity-Friendly Environment in Metro Manila."

The parties signed a Memorandum of Agreement to signify their three-year commitment to implement the urban biodiversity program in Quezon City. To jumpstart this partnership, MPIC will adopt the Madison Park along Aurora Boulevard and develop it into an urban green park model, which will be formally known as the Gabay Kalikasan Park.

*"We at MPIC have embedded environmental stewardship into our key business and investment strategies, which emphasizes our commitment to building a biodiversity-friendly environment for all," MPIC Chairman, President and CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan said. "This partnership is another step that helps us move towards uplifting the lives of Filipinos by ensuring that environmental sustainability is a top priority," he added.*

## **Towards a Greener QC**

The primary goal of the project is to contribute to the development of a biodiversity-friendly city to increase access of urban dwellers to green spaces and maintain functional urban green spaces to regain ecosystem services, develop resiliency, increase aesthetics and quality of urban environment, and bring people close to nature to improve human well-being.

*In his recorded keynote speech, DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said, "While our focus is largely directed at managing natural ecosystems through the establishment of protected areas, we also need to address the importance of enhancing our urban ecosystems to be able to provide a quality and livable environment for urban dwellers."*

Through this partnership, the project aims to pilot the Adopt-a-City approach in the implementation of the Urban Biodiversity program, encouraging business sector support in creating green urban communities at the city and barangay/village level.



In a recorded message, Quezon City Mayor Hon. Joy G. Belmonte expressed her gratitude to the partners for starting the project in their city. *“Expanding our green spaces has always been one of the priorities of the City Government, and the development and sustainable management of Madison Park in Brgy. Mariana, which they have proposed to be named as Gabay Kalikasan Park, is an initial step to hopefully gain more support from the national government and the private sector in advancing the City’s urban biodiversity goals.”*

It is also a means to increase awareness, understanding, and appreciation of local communities and other stakeholders on the importance of urban biodiversity and green spaces to encourage individual actions on urban greening.

MPIC, guided by its thrust to design, build, and operate its key businesses with minimal environmental and social disruption, will invest the needed financial support to ensure the project’s sustainability and success. Aligned with MVP’s Gabay Advocacies for a Sustainable Philippines, the partnership also cements the conglomerate’s significant role in both infrastructural progress and environmental stewardship.

*“We recognize that the essential nature of our businesses has a pervasive impact both in our country’s progress and sustainable development,”* said MPIC Chief Finance, Risk, and Sustainability Officer Chaye A. Cabal-Revilla. *“We are a firm believer that public-private sector partnership is important to create greater environmental responsibility. By investing in green public spaces and transforming the way we build and manage our urban spaces, we hope to be a catalyst for inclusive, safer, resilient, livable, and sustainable cities and communities,”* she added.

### **Building a Biodiversity-Friendly Metro**

DENR-National Capital Region (NCR) Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan expressed her support for the project through provision of necessary technical support and management systems. She hopes that the DENR-NCR can *“help increase the available green spaces for Metro Manilans. “The program is timely, especially now that we are battling a pandemic,”* she said.

This project will apply the neighborhood and greenbelt urban form approach to create ecological corridors that connect natural and built environments.

Aside from the establishment of the green linear park, the parties will also jointly implement important project activities such as development of Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) plans and capacity-building trainings and workshops for the partner communities, among others.

*BMB Director Natividad Y. Bernardino said that through the DENR’s Urban Biodiversity Program, Filipinos “can visualize the city landscape with living rivers, streams, lakes, coastal areas, swamps, urban forest parks, and green highways for wildlife.”*

This partnership for Gabay Kalikasan Park is aligned with MPIC’s efforts to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities.



# Search and rescue operations in two Baybay City villages stopped due to geological and health hazards

Published April 20, 2022, 6:20 PM

by [Marie Tonette Marticio](#)

**BAYBAY CITY** – The Office of the Civil Defense Region 8 has ordered the search, rescue and retrieval operation stopped in two barangays here on Tuesday due to geological and health hazards.

OCD-8 Regional Director Lord Byron Torrecarion said the search and rescue operations in Barangays Bunga and Mailhi will no longer continue, with chances of finding any survivors and remains in the rubble of landslides already slim.

However, the SRR operations will continue in Brgy. Kantagnos, also in this city.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said that landslides are still possible in those areas in Bunga and Mailhi, as well as Brgy. Pilar in Abuyog, Leyte.

A total of 60 individuals from Kantagnos, one each from Pangasugan and Bunga, and 4 from Brgy. Mailhi are still missing.

Meanwhile, the city government of Baybay has enforced forced evacuation of six families in Sitio Pamotosan, Barangay Makinhas based on the recommendation of the MGB.

According to MGB, there is an impending threat of landslides in the said area owing to the cracks seen in the mountains.

A total of 551 families or 1,849 individuals remain in 12 evacuation centers coming from eight villages where multiple landslides occurred.





## Año warns Aklan LGUs to strictly enforce tourist capacity in Boracay

Published April 21, 2022, 9:44 AM

by [Chito Chavez](#)

Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año warned the Provincial Government of Aklan to stick to the implementation of the tourist capacity limit in Boracay following reports of overcrowding during the Holy Week.

“Hindi tayo magdadalawang-isip na mag-issue ng SCO sa mga opisyal ng LGU (local government unit) na magsasawalang-bahala sa mga umiiral na kautusan (capacity limit) sa isla ng Boracay (We will not have second thoughts of issuing SCO to negligent LGU that defy the laws in Boracay Island). We cannot go back to square one especially now that we are still in the middle of a pandemic. Our efforts to rehabilitate and reverse the ecological degradation of the island will all be futile if we become negligent in complying with the guidelines set by national government,” Año said on Thursday, April 21.

Año also urged the Provincial Government of Aklan and the municipality of Malay town, two LGUs which have direct authority over the world-famous tourist destination, to intensify efforts and strictly observe the island’s daily threshold of 19,215 for tourists.

The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), composed of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as chair, with DILG and Department of Tourism (DOT) as co-chairs, set 19,215 as the carrying capacity of the island for tourists to ensure the ecological sustainability of Boracay.

He added: “Failure to comply with the recommended daily threshold may cause environmental risks and may reverse the accomplishments of government in rehabilitating Boracay Island.”

In a letter to Año, DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said Boracay Island tourist arrivals for Maundy Thursday (April 14) reached 21,252 and 22,519 on Good Friday (April 15), which are way above the island’s limit.

On April 16, 2022, Puyat appealed to Año and DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna to instigate appropriate actions regarding the violations and urged for strict implementation of preventive measures against Covid-19 that is also a “valuable step in driving a sustainable growth of tourism in the island.”

The DILG chief, through a DILG memorandum disseminated to Aklan LGUs, said that subsequent violations on the recommended limitation of tourists in Boracay Island may merit the issuance of a SCO from the Department, regardless if the violation is deliberate or not.

He also disagreed with the statement of Malay Acting Mayor Frolibar Baustista calling the tourist arrivals as “normal”.

“Hindi ito normal, ito ay paglabag sa umiiral na polisiya. Noong 2018 pa lamang at wala pang pandemya, itinakda na natin kung ano ang kapasidad ng Boracay, kung gaano karami lamang ang puwedeng tanggapin na turista ng isla (This is not normal, it is a violation of the current policy. In 2018 when there was no pandemic yet we already imposed the capacity limit in Boracay, where the number of tourists allowed were set),” he noted.

In the said memorandum, Año also directed its DILG Regional Offices to closely monitor the compliance of LGUs and to report any violations of tourism-related implementations and COVID-19 policies and protocols.



Meanwhile, DILG Undersecretary Jonathan E. Malaya reminded the residents and tourists of Boracay and Aklan province that the area is under the Alert Level 1 status, which still entails observance of minimum public health standards (MPHS).

“Muli po naming ipinapaalala sa ating mga kababayan sa Aklan na panatilihin ang pagsunod sa health protocols na itinakda natin. Magsuot pa rin ng face mask at mag-disinfect lagi. Huwag po tayong maging pabaya (We are reminding our countrymen again in Aklan to maintain the adherence to the health protocols we set. Wear face masks and always disinfect. Let us not be complacent),” Malaya said.

Further, Malaya maintained that the government does not want to have another Covid-19 surge stressing the public to remain disciplined even with the relaxed restrictions since the pandemic is not yet over. (Chito A. Chavez)



# DILG to Aklan LGUs: Enforce Boracay tourist limit or face show cause order for negligence

(Philstar.com) - April 21, 2022 - 10:20am



This September 2020 photo shows the sunset in Boracay island, Malay, Aklan.  
Malay Municipal Tourism Office / Facebook

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of the Interior and Local Government warned the Provincial Government of Aklan and the Municipality of Malay Aklan to ensure compliance to the daily visitor threshold amid a recent spate in tourists "or be ready to receive Show Cause Orders due to negligence."

This comes after Interior Secretary Eduardo Año noted what he said were documented violations of Boracay Island's carrying capacity for tourists last Holy Week.

"We will not hesitate to issue SCO to LGU officials who will disregard existing laws on the island of Boracay. We cannot go back to square one especially now that we are still in the middle of a pandemic," Año said.

"Our efforts to rehabilitate and reverse the ecological degradation of the island will all be futile if we become negligent in complying with the guidelines set by National Government."

He urged both the Provincial Government of Aklan and the Municipality of Malay, Aklan, two LGUs which have direct authority over the world-famous tourist destination, to intensify efforts and strictly observe the island's daily threshold of 19,215 for tourists.

To recall, the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force, composed of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as chair, with DILG and Department of Tourism as co-chairs, set the carrying capacity of the island for tourists at 19,215 to ensure the ecological sustainability of Boracay.

The DILG Secretary said that "failure to comply with the recommended daily threshold may cause environmental risks and may reverse the accomplishments of government in rehabilitating Boracay Island."

In a letter sent by DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat to Año, she said Boracay Island tourist arrivals for Maundy Thursday on April 14 reached 21,252 and 22,519 on Good Friday on April 15 above the island's limit.

On April 16, Puyat likewise appealed to DILG Secretary Año and DENR Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna to instigate appropriate actions regarding the violations and urged for strict implementation of preventive measures against COVID-19 that is also a "valuable step in driving a sustainable growth of tourism in the island."



In response, Año said in a DILG memorandum disseminated to Aklan LGUs that subsequent violations on the recommended limitation of tourists in Boracay Island may merit the issuance of an SCO from the Department, regardless if the violation is deliberate or not.

"We must draw the line to ensure that our policies are being complied with on the ground. If it is necessary to issue an SCO for violations, that is what our Department will do," Año said.

He also disagreed with the statement of Malay Acting Mayor Frolibar Baustista calling the tourist arrivals "normal".

"This is not normal, it is a violation of existing policy. Just in 2018 and without a pandemic, we have already determined what Boracay's capacity is, just how many tourists the island can accept," he added.

In the memorandum, Año also directed DILG Regional Offices to closely monitor the compliance of LGUs and to report any violations of tourism-related implementations and COVID-19 policies and protocols.

DILG Undersecretary and Spokesperson Jonathan Malaya reminded residents and tourists of Aklan province that the area is under the Alert Level 1 status, which still entails observance of Minimum Public Health Standards.

"Once again, we remind our compatriots in Aklan to maintain compliance with the health protocols that we have set. Still wear a face mask and disinfect regularly. Let's not be careless," Malaya said.

"We don't want a surge in our [COVID-19] cases so I encourage everyone that even if we have more freedom now and go to different places in the country, let's still maintain discipline because we haven't the pandemic is over," he added. — **Franco Luna**



## DILG nagbabala sa Aklan, Malay LGUs vs pag-apaw ng mga turista sa Boracay



April 21, 2022 @ 7:12 PM 12 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines- Ipatatawag na ang mga lokal na pamahalaan ng Aklan at Malay kapag muling hindi nasunod ang arawang maximum capacity sa Boracay, ayon kay Interior Secretary Eduardo Año nitong Huwebes.

Pumalo sa mahigit 20,000 noong Huwebes at Biyernes Santo ang bumisita sa isla, na mas malaki kumpara sa itinakdang limit na 19,215 bago pa magka-pandemya noong 2018 upang mapanatili ang ecological balance.

“We cannot go back to square one especially now that we are still in the middle of a pandemic,” sabi ni Año.

“Our efforts to rehabilitate and reverse the ecological degradation of the island will all be futile if we become negligent in complying with the guidelines set by the National Government,” dagdag niya.

Umalma si Año kay acting Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista sa pagturing sa pagdagsa ng turista bilang normal.

“Hindi ito normal. Ito ay paglabag sa umiiral na polisiya,” giit ni Año.

“Noong 2018 pa lamang at wala pang pandemya, itinakda na natin kung ano ang kapasidad ng Boracay, kung gaano karami lamang ang pwedeng tanggapin na turista ng isla,” patuloy pa niya.

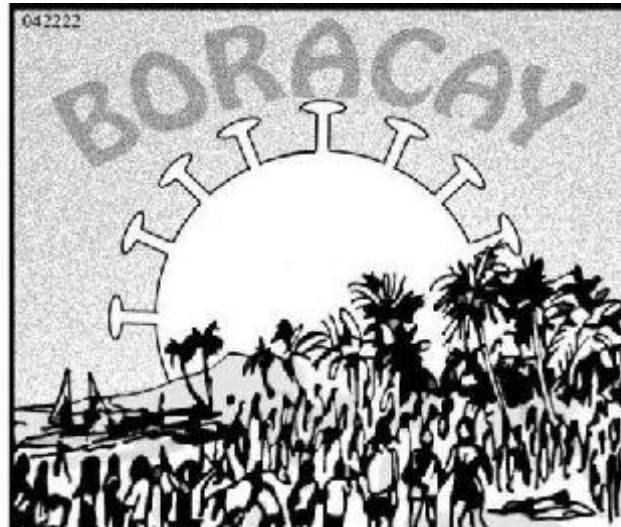
“We must draw the line to ensure that our policies are being complied with on the ground. Kung kailangang mag-issue ng SCO para sa mga paglabag ay iyan po ang gagawin ng aming Kagawaran,” aniya. **RNT/SA**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/dilg-nagbabala-sa-aklan-malay-lgus-vs-pag-apaw-ng-mga-turista-sa-boracay/>



# EDITORIAL - Masisira na naman ang Boracay

(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - April 22, 2022 - 12:00am



Dumagsa ang mga turista sa Boracay noong Mahal na Araw. Imagine, ang dapat na kapasidad lamang ng Boracay ay 19,000. Pero lampas-lampas ang dami ng mga nagtungo roon. Sa report ng Malay Tourism Office sa Department of Tourism, umabot sa 21,252 ang bumisita sa Boracay noong Huwebes Santo at noong Biyernes Santo, umabot sa 22,519. Dahil dito binalaan ni Tourism Sec. Berna Romulo Puyat ang local government ng Malay, Aklan. Ayon kay Romulo Puyat, ang DILG ang mag-iisyu ng warning laban sa local government ng Malay.

Isa sa pinangangambahan ngayon ay ang muling pagdami ng COVID-19 cases dahil sa pagdagsa ng mga turista. Bagama't pawang mga bakunado ang pinapasok sa Boracay, naghahatid ng pangamba ang sobrang tao sa resort. Nagbabala ang World Health Organization (WHO) kamakailan na posibleng sa katapusan ng Mayo ay magkakaroon ng surge dahil sa pagdagsa ng mga tao sa probinsiya noong Mahal na Araw at idagdag pa ang kampanya ng mga kandidato para sa May 9 elections. Paalala ng WHO, ipatupad ang health protocols.

Bukod sa posibleng pagkalat ng virus, ang pagkasira rin naman ng Boracay ay isa rin sa pinangangambahan. Kung hindi mapipigil ang dagsa ng tao roon, muling babalik ang maruming Boracay na minsang tinawag ni President Duterte na "cesspool". Ang kahulugan ng "cesspool" ay poso-negro. Ipinasara ng presidente ang Boracay noong 2018 sa loob ng anim na buwan.

Maraming establimento sa Boracay ang lumabag sa environmental laws. Sa 562 establimento na ininspeksyon ng DENR, 161 ang lumalabag. Ang mga ito ay walang water waste treatment facility kaya ang dumi ng tao ay direktang iniluluwa sa dagat. Lahat nang klase ng dumi mula sa resort ay itinatapon sa dagat. Pati ang mga basura sa paligid ng resort ay nagkalat din kaya sinampahan na ang mga establimento nang paglabag sa Clean Water Act at Clean Air Act.

Ngayon dahil sa hindi na namang mapigilan na pagdagsa ng tao, asahan na tatawagin na namang "cesspool" ang Boracay. Pagpaliwanagin ang LGU ng Malay kung bakit hindi nila ipinasusunod ang tamang kapasidad ng resort. Kailangan bang ipasara uli ito para lamang matuto?

Hindi lamang pagdami ng COVID ang pinangangambahan ngayon sa pagdagsa ng mga turista kundi ang dumi na kanilang iiwan sa Boracay. Huwag hayaang masira muli ang Boracay.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2022/04/22/2175909/editorial-masisira-na-naman-ang-boracay/amp/>



# Zamboanga City's newest mall joins Earth Day celebration

April 22, 2022

SM CITY Mindpro is joining the nation in celebrating Earth Day on Friday, April 22, 2022, through its Trash-to-Cash Recycling Market and e-Waste Collection program.

The Trash-to-Cash (TTC) is a recycling market held every first Friday and Saturday of the month to encourage waste segregation and recycling among customers, tenant partners, and the community, then earn in the process, the SM City Mindpro said in a statement Thursday, April 21.

It said that the e-Waste Collection Program, on the other hand, is the latest initiative under SM Supermalls' solid waste management program which encourages tenant partners, customers, and the community's participation in the responsible disposal of electronic waste which is considered hazardous.

This effort also encourages decluttering in households and brings to light conscious consumerism.

"As a responsible mall developer and operator, SM's mission includes supporting communities as well as safeguarding the environment for future generations. This April 22 to 23, as we celebrate Earth Day, SM City Mindpro will open its recycling market and e-Waste collection campaign," Assistant Mall Manager Aileen Ann Villa-Enriquez said.

"We encourage our communities, tenants, and customers to participate in our mall environmental activities as a commitment to invest in our planet," Enriquez said.

The TTC and e-Waste Collection Program will simultaneously be held in all SM Supermalls nationwide.

In SM City Mindpro, Enriquez said that the drop-off area is located at the ground level carpark building and the recycling market is open from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m.

Accepted wastes for the TTC program include plastic and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottles, tin and aluminum cans, newspapers, scratch papers, and cardboards.

For e-wastes, SM accepts old, broken and used mobile phones, phone chargers, power cords, computer wiring, commercial batteries, printer ink and toner cartridges, small gadgets such as keyboards, calculators, power banks, earphones and earbuds.

The two programs are in line with this year's celebration of the Earth Day theme "Invest in our Planet." (**SunStar Zamboanga**)



## SBMA to celebrate Earth Day the 'new normal' way

April 21, 2022

THE Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) is set to conduct various activities during the Earth Day 2022 celebration on April 22 as part of the agency's thrust to promote environmental protection while still practicing minimum public health protocols.

According to SBMA Chairman and Administrator Rolan C. Paulino, who is in the US for an official trip, the agency aims to conduct activities at each department's convenient time.

"This year, with the lowering of the alert level in the area, the SBMA will be taking part in the Earth Day Celebration with strict compliance of the minimum health and safety standards to prevent the spread of the virus. Earth Day activities will be done in several small groups, and not as one big group," he added.

This year's theme "Invest in Our Planet" is, according to Paulino, fitting for the Subic Bay Freeport Zone, citing that one of his mandates as Head of the Agency is to invest in the environment in order to attract more business activities in this premier Freeport.

"One of the many thrusts of my office is the beautification of the area, providing lush greeneries and colorful blossoms around the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. The SBMA has already started planting bougainvillea on many center islands and pathways of the Freeport," he said.

Among the activities lined up for the occasion, is a cleanup activity within the vicinities of SBMA office buildings, including the administration building 229, Building N, Naval Supply Depot, and other agency infrastructure.

Each department/office will also conduct lectures for their personnel regarding waste management or environmental protection in relation to their Environmental Management System (EMS).

The official also urged each employee to practice the five Rs of waste management all the time, namely, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle.

During his first month, Paulino has ordered most of the companies located near the coastal areas of Subic Bay such as the Boardwalk Area and the San Bernardino Road to keep their fronts clean, with all complying to ensure a cleaner and greener Freeport.

The Earth Day Celebration was adopted in the Philippines in 1990 by President Corazon C. Aquino by virtue of PD 553 s. 1990 and was supplemented by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo through PD 1481 s. 2008, declaring every 22nd of April as the "Philippine Earth Day".

During the past two years, the SBMA was unable to celebrate Earth Day due to the health and safety protocols brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earth Day is an annual event held on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by EarthDay.org (formerly Earth Day Network) including one billion people in more than 193 countries. **(Ric Sapnu)**

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1926967/pampanga/local-news/sbma-to-celebrate-earth-day-the-new-normal-way>





# Earth Day pledge: Start shopping sustainably at SM

BYBMPPLUS APRIL 21, 2022



SM Mall of Asia main facade

In commemoration of Earth Day this 2022, the SM Store calls on its customers to join them in making a conscious and deliberate shift toward green living.

“Our goal is to make sustainability as accessible as possible for all Filipinos nationwide. The idea that living green is not something that can be integrated in our day-to-day life should be a thing of the past. As we’ve learned, even the simplest of changes in the way we spend can lessen our carbon footprint,” shares the SM Retail Inc President Ponciano Manalo.

As a leader in the retail space, the SM Store has always aimed to make life better for its customers. With top-of-the-line product innovations, marketing, and a diversified portfolio of brands and business partners, it is to no surprise that they have become the beloved household brand Filipinos have come to know. Today, they are taking that mission to the next level by addressing a fundamental barrier to shifting to green living— accessibility.

Associating affordability to living an eco-friendly lifestyle could possibly be the biggest hurdle in allowing the concept to be widely accepted to the mass market. Green products were either hard to find or too expensive. The SM Store, however, has already begun the push for more affordable, sustainable options to meet the demand. Joined by a vast number of retail affiliates, the fruits of this pursuit can already be found inside their stores.

”To date, we are working across our multiple channels—tapping SM’s partners and communities in integrating a greener approach. From ensuring the processes are completely sustainable to achieving the eco-friendly design, we hope that with our joined efforts, our customers and stakeholders can reach a point where they will see how easy it is to embrace green living. More than being a commitment to our people, it’s an investment for our planet,” added Manalo.

Since the start of the pandemic, awareness and acceptance of adopting an eco-friendly lifestyle has gradually increased. In a report published by Kantar in 2021, 75% of Filipinos are actively seeking out brands that offer products or services that can lessen their environmental impact. As concern toward the environment and the impending climate crisis become more widespread, the need to implement more sustainable practices is becoming a shared call to action across the globe.

## **Making green shopping easier**

As the leading retail brand in the country, the SM Store is doing its part in influencing customers to make purchasing decisions that will help the environment and the planet.



# Earth Day pledge: Start shopping sustainably at SM

BYBMPLUS APRIL 21, 2022



SM Mall of Asia main facade

The urgency to make sustainable living a practice is shared by customers and businesses alike. In 2021, a study conducted by Euromonitor showed that 67 percent of customers across the globe have tried their hand in creating positive impact by being more conscious of their own purchases. As customers develop a more sustainable shopping behavior, demand for brands that offer eco-friendly products and services has increased.

At the SM Store, brands with sustainable business practices are easily accessible to customers seeking to build green habits. Making a conscious decision in living green is as easy as heading over to the nearest SM Store. For more information about SM's sustainability initiatives, visit [www.smgreenmovement.com](http://www.smgreenmovement.com).



## EDITORIAL - Invest in our planet

The Philippine Star April 22, 2022 | 12:00am



When the threat posed by COVID-19 is significantly diminished, the world will still have to contend with another threat that has been around long before the pandemic: climate change.

In recent years, the Philippines has suffered from extreme weather disturbances that have claimed the lives of thousands and destroyed billions worth of crops, public infrastructure and private property. Bay areas long believed to be secluded from the fury of tropical cyclones, including Manila Bay, have been hit by destructive storm surges that spawned torrential flash floods.

Global warming is threatening not only coastal communities but also food security as traditional areas for fishing, agriculture and agro-forestry are adversely affected by rising temperatures. Food supply chains are disrupted as natural habitats are destroyed.

This April 22, into the third year of the worst global health crisis in a century, environment advocates are renewing calls for international cooperation in confronting climate change. For Earth Day 2022, the focus is on investing in the planet, on developing a green economy and boosting private sector innovation and investment in sustainable business practices.

Governments are encouraged to provide incentives for green business practices and to encourage citizens and institutions to promote a resilient future. The message is that green business practices are not only ethical but also lucrative for the long term. Studies have shown a direct correlation between sustainable practices, share prices and overall business performance.

For private enterprise, national economies and the planet, sustainability is the path to prosperity. This must be internalized especially in the Philippines, which scientists say is among the countries most vulnerable to the destructive impact of climate change. The message today, Earth Day, is that a healthy planet is not an option – it is a necessity.



# Investing in the Philippines' marine environment

[AUSSIE DIPLOMACY MATTERS](#) - [Steven J. Robinson](#) - The Philippine Star April 21, 2022 | 12:00am

As I have traveled around the Philippines, from Palawan to Bohol to Surigao, I have seen the magnificent beauty of Philippine seas firsthand. The Philippines boasts one of the most diverse marine environments in the world, with beautiful colorful corals and magnificent fish, turtles and sting rays. Marine scientists refer to the Philippines as the “center of the center” of aquatic biodiversity; it has more marine species per unit area than anywhere on earth.

But, like many of the world's oceans, the Philippine seas are under threat; from climate change, pollution and over exploitation.

The theme of this year's Earth Day is “invest in our planet.” Given the challenges faced by Philippine seas, Australia is investing in protecting the Philippines' unique and stunning marine environment.

Australia and the Philippines have a long-standing partnership in protecting the marine environment. We continue to support the Philippines to develop marine resources sustainably and increase civil-maritime capabilities.

In 1983, Australia funded its first research project in the Philippines on the production of giant clams in Bolinao, Pangasinan. This project helped establish giant clam nursery hatcheries for the restocking of reefs. Three decades later, this joint research by Australian and Filipino marine scientists has seen over 70,000 giant clams restored on coral reefs in the Philippines.

Since 2015, Australia has financed a large-scale coral reef restoration project in Pangasinan using innovative techniques. Australian and Filipino scientists have worked together to restore coral reefs the size of Olympic swimming pools, which have led to increased fish stocks. These outcomes have attracted global interest and inspired related research on Australia's Great Barrier Reef. Australia also funds a coral reef restoration and coral reef management training project in a marine protected area near Iba in Zambales.

To complement our coral reef restoration investments, Australia supports a community engagement project designed to identify gaps in coral reef management and develop new strategies to protect reef sustainability. This project is being implemented in Pangasinan, Cebu, Palawan and the Verde Island Passage.

Australia is engaging with the Philippines on establishing an authoritative geography of the Philippines' marine environment and coral reef monitoring, data collection and analysis.

Australia is also investing in people here in the Philippines. This is the key to ensuring the sustainability of marine ecosystems into the future.

Our 'Australia Awards' scholarships program support Filipinos to undertake a master's level course at an Australian university. One focus area for the scholarships is maritime, including courses in maritime policy, maritime law, marine environment and marine science. I encourage interested applicants to apply for these marvellous and life changing opportunities!

We also provide the Philippines with law of the sea training. Ensuring the law of the sea is respected is key to protecting Philippine seas. Moreover, we invest in fellowships which have further strengthened the professional capacity and knowledge of researchers in the agriculture sector, including in fisheries and marine sciences.



Over the years we have seen how the new skills acquired by our Filipino alumni, and their collaboration with Australian counterparts, have resulted in so many positive marine environment projects. For example, Australia Awards alumni Dr. Rene Abesamis told me about his studies in marine sciences at Australia's James Cook University, and how he used his new knowledge to combat declining fish stocks and advise on the design and location of marine protected areas in the Philippines.

On the topic of fish stocks, Australia is supporting the Philippines to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF), which causes extensive damage to the Philippines' marine environment and fish numbers, which many Filipinos rely on for their livelihood. Australia will support the Philippines to combat IUUF by providing training, regional fisheries officer exchanges and targeted capacity building.

We are also investing in training and vessel sustainment for Philippine civil-maritime agencies to support them in enforcing the Philippines' maritime laws.

Australia, like the Philippines, is a maritime nation. Both countries have some of the largest and most magnificent coastlines in the world. On this World Earth Day, and with the challenges the marine environment is facing, there has never been a more important time for Australia to invest in working with our Philippine partners to protect our precious aquatic ecosystems.

\* \* \*

Steven J. Robinson AO is the Australian Ambassador to the Philippines. Follow him on Twitter @AusAmbPH.



## To stem tide of trash, PEMSEA calls for ‘truly biodegradable’ packaging

April 21, 2022 | 4:58 pm



Wire trash basket. — Gregg Yan/PEMSEA

An environmental organization reiterated the call for a national ban on the use of unnecessary plastics and a shift to biodegradable packaging to manage plastic waste entering Manila Bay, a pollution hotspot, from Cavite’s Imus River, which it called “a conveyor belt” of trash.

“One solution is for manufacturers to shift to truly biodegradable packaging, such as processed seaweed and cassava,” said Gregg H. Yan, a consultant for Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), in an e-mail. Incentivizing consumers by giving them discounts for bringing their own resealable plastic containers can also work, he added.

On April 19, PEMSEA released five studies on the Imus River watershed, which measures 186.15 kilometers and has a population of 1,351,057 as of 2015.

“We wanted to understand not just what types of waste enter the Imus River, but how the people who live near the river itself perceived plastic pollution as well as local efforts to combat it,” said Edwin F. Lineses, a social scientist at De La Salle University-Dasmaringas (DLSU-D), which led the studies along with Cavite State University.

Locals were aware of the negative effects of plastic pollution in the Imus River, [the studies found](#). They also had positive attitudes about conservation efforts, although most respondents [still preferred sachets and single-use plastics](#) because of their convenience, affordability, and perceived value-for-money.

Single-use sachets and packets are among the most pervasive types of litter in and along the river.

“Oxo-degradable plastics are not good for the environment because they’re only designed to break down into smaller and smaller pieces,” said Mr. Yan. “These tiny microplastics remain in the environment for a long time before being fully broken down by natural processes.”

Aside from banning plastics, PEMSEA recommended educating Imus residents of solutions beyond regular trash collection and cleanup drives, such as proper segregation and recycling.



Small businesses should likewise be given incentives to provide product refills, use alternative packaging, and comply with waste management policies, the environmental organization said.

“This Earth Day [April 22], *buhayin natin ang ating mga ilog* (let’s revive our rivers),” said PEMSEA executive director Aimee T. Gonzales.

The studies were launched under PEMSEA’s Project ASEANO, an initiative to stem the flow of plastic pollution in two pilot locations: the Philippines’ Imus River and Indonesia’s Citarum River.

They can be downloaded at <https://pemsea.org/publications/reports>. — **Patricia B. Mirasol**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/sparkup/2022/04/21/443722/to-stem-tide-of-trash-pemsea-calls-for-truly-biodegradable-packaging/?fbclid=IwAR1xEJ6brWXxFF3Kv1RUBN4OvjrwjnVf7jOBjV85wZOK7bod6-EaM68Kzo>

# Coca-Cola's 'Tapon to Ipon, Basta Klaro Panalo' goes to Manila

BYBMPLUS APRIL 20, 2022



Photo by Bernard Testa/BM

*Tapon to Ipon, Basta Klaro Panalo!* is Coca-Cola Beverages PH's community collection program for clear-used PET plastic bottles.



Photo by Bernard Testa/BM

Piloted in Batangas City back in 2021, *Tapon to Ipon* has now reached in the city of Manila. For phase 1, we have activated 6 sari-sari store collection hubs where customers can exchange used clear PET plastic bottles — regardless of brand (even competition) as long as it's CLEAR— for new coke products.

Last March 26, Coca-Cola's *Tapon to Ipon* team set up a one-day barangay activity to kick off the collection program in Manila. Working with the LGU of Manila and local communities—Coca-Cola was able to collect close to 300kgs of used clear plastic bottles. These bottles were brought to PETValue Philippines for recycling.



Photo by Bernard Testa/BM





PETValue is the country's first food-grade bottle-to-bottle recycling facility and is set to be operational very soon. CCBPI is grateful to Manila's Department of Public Services (DPS) and local barangay officials for supporting its World Without Waste goal! Consumers can continue exchanging plastic bottles (any brand, as long as the bottle is clear!) at Coca-Cola's partner sari-sari store collection hubs across the city of Manila.



# Gov't assures nonstop efforts to address land reform issues

By Azer Parrocha April 21, 2022, 6:11 pm



Acting presidential spokesperson and Communications Secretary Martin Andanar (File photo)

**MANILA** – The Duterte administration is continuously addressing the long-standing pleas of farmers and indigenous peoples (IPs) for genuine land reform, Malacañang said Thursday.

This, after labor leader and presidential candidate Leodegario “Ka Leody” de Guzman called on the government to address land grabbing which has led to mass exodus of IPs from their ancestral lands.

“President Rodrigo Roa Duterte remains committed to delivering genuine agrarian reform in the country,” acting presidential spokesperson Martin Andanar said in a press statement.

Citing government data, Andanar said the administration distributed 229,289 hectares of agricultural lands from July 2016 to May 2021, benefitting 166,217 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries.

He said the government also issued 57 Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs), covering 993,345.17 hectares of ancestral domains, which benefited 257,047 indigenous peoples from 2016 to June 2021.

“We therefore assure our people, including Ka Leody de Guzman, that our efforts to provide lands to landless farmers will continue until the end of the President’s term,” he added.

On Tuesday, De Guzman's party, the Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM), said the meeting with the leaders of the Manobo-Pulangiyon tribe in Barangay Butong was marred by gunshots.

At least five people were injured, four of them members of the Manobo-Pulangihon indigenous tribe.

The shooting came as the tribe protested the alleged land-grabbing incident of their ancestral land.

The tribe claims that their families were forcibly relocated from their settlement along the Pulangi River to the disputed area.



De Guzman's camp said they were within a property of more than 900 hectares reportedly being administered by Quezon town Mayor Pablo Lorenzo III in Sitio Kiantig, Barangay San Jose when a group of 50 men fired shots at them.

The land in Sitio Kiantig is disputed by the Manobo-Pulangihon and Kiantig Development Corporation which controls the Kiantig Pineapple Company.

De Guzman said the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) has recognized the Manobos' ancestral domain. However, the tribe's formal title to the land is taking a long time to be issued.

He called on Duterte to order an investigation on land-grabbing before his term ends.

Malacañang condemned the incident and called for a thorough investigation.

"Violence has no place in any civilized society and we condemn the incident in Bukidnon where gunshots were allegedly fired against the camp of Ka Leody de Guzman," Andanar said. **(PNA)**



# Solar project planned in northern Australia to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Published April 21, 2022, 5:59 PM

by [Xinhua](#)

CANBERRA, Australia — A massive solar farm proposed for northern Australia would reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 480 million tons, an environmental assessment has found.

The renewable energy company Sun Cable recently lodged its environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Australia-Asia PowerLink with authorities in the Northern Territory (NT).

The proposed 30 billion Australian dollar (22.3 billion U.S. dollar) project would transmit solar energy harvested in the NT to Singapore via undersea cables.

According to the EIS, it would reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 480 million tons, equivalent to the average electricity used by over 2.5 million Australian homes each year over the project lifespan.

Plans for the project include a 12,000-hectare solar farm southeast of Darwin in the NT's Barkly region.

The Powell Creek Solar Precinct would have an energy generation capacity of 17-20 gigawatts (GW) and 36-42 gigawatt hours (GWh) of battery storage.

Energy would be transmitted to Darwin and the remaining power would be transferred to a converter station in Singapore along a 4,200-km Subsea Cable System.

The statement said large areas of land will be cleared. However the footprint represents only a small percentage of the total area of available habitat.

It said construction and operation of the Subsea Cable System could have a minor impact on marine life species through temporary loss of habitat or disruption to behavior because of cable laying activities and possible collision with marine vessels.



**MEMORANDUM**

FOR : **ALL DENR OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES**

FROM : The Director  
Climate Change Service

SUBJECT : **CALL FOR DONATION FOR LANDSLIDE AND FLOOD VICTIMS  
IN LEYTE**

DATE : 18 April 2022

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Your kind assistance is humbly sought for Leyte which was recently hit by typhoon "Agaton," causing severe flooding in many areas of the province and devastating landslides in Baybay City and Abuyog.

The relief aid will specifically benefit the residents of barangays Kantagnos, Bunga, Mailli, Can-ipa in Baybay City and barangay Pilar in Abuyog (if road is already passable) and nearby flooded communities who are in dire need of the following:

- Drinking water
- Rice, canned goods, noodles
- Cooking utensils
- Blankets, Clothes
- Reusable sanitary pads
- Hygiene kits, soap
- Biscuits, cereals
- Milk, coffee, sugar, salt
- Toys (for children)

You may extend your much-needed help to the affected residents of Leyte through Mr. Rolando O Abad, Jr. of the Climate Change Service at 0961.7430.884. Mr. Abad is from Southern Leyte and together with his brother, friends and volunteers, they have organized a relief operation based in Baybay City.

He will be in Leyte from April 27-29 to personally deliver your donations and relief aid to the residents of said barangays. Geash donations may also be sent thru Mr. Abad at 0961.7430.884.

Your kind consideration will be highly appreciated.

  
ELENIDA DR. BASUG

22 APRIL 2022, FRIDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



## DENR's Sampulna turns over Alabang lot to RITM



DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna (sixth from left) and Department of Health-Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (DOH-RITM) Director Celia Carlos, MD (fifth from left) show the deed of conveyance signed by the two parties for a parcel of land in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, to be turned over by DENR to DOH-RITM. The property will help expand RITM's facilities to further advance its research and improve its services. Present in the ceremonial signing were Land Management Bureau Director Atty. Emelyne V. Talabis, DENR National Capital Region Executive Director Jacqueline A. Caancan (fourth and seventh from left) and other officials of the two agencies. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jonmayuga](#)

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to turn over a 9,077-square-meter (sq m) land to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) to research work to combat the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic and other diseases that may arise in the future.

DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna signed on Friday, April 8, 2022, a deed of conveyance on making the lot donation official. RITM is the research arm of the Department of Health.

"This deed of conveyance is the DENR's simple gift and contribution for RITM to further advance their research work, and prepare to address the current pandemic and health concerns that may arise in the future," Sampulna said in a news statement.

The ceremonial signing of the deed of conveyance came after President Duterte handed down Proclamation 1276 dated January 6, 2022, which states that a parcel of patrimonial land within the Alabang Stock Farm, Muntinlupa City, will be allotted for RITM.

The 9,077-sq-m lot is adjacent to the current site of the health research facility in Alabang. RITM Director

Celia C. Carlos, MD, expressed her gratitude to the DENR for facilitating the preparation of the deed of conveyance, and for allocating the land in their favor, noting that one of the facility's problems was lack of space.

"I wish to acknowledge the big help provided by Land Management Bureau Director Atty. Emelyne V. Talabis and her staff who guided and supported us in all stages of this journey towards RITM acquisition of additional lots," said Carlos.

RITM has been responding to outbreaks of infectious diseases for the last 20 years, including the first severe acute respiratory syndrome-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV) outbreak in 2003.

It was also at the forefront of controlling the AH1N1 pandemic in 2009, measles outbreak in 2013, Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) outbreak in 2014 to 2015, polio outbreak in 2018, and SARS-CoV outbreak in 2019.



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THE LEADER OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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## DENR donates land for expansion of medical research

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has donated a 9,000-square-meter land to the Department of Health (DOH) to help improve the agency's operational capability for medical research and development.

DENR Sec. Jim O. Sampilna said the parcel of land is located in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, beside the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) which is the main beneficiary of the donation.

The RITM is the main research arm of the DOH and over the years, it has been complaining of lack of space to accommodate more facilities for its growing research assignments. (Aaron B. Recuenco)





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**BIODIVERSITY-FRIENDLY CITY.** Metro Pacific Investments Corp. teams up with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources–Biodiversity Management Bureau, DENR– National Capital Region, and the local government unit of Quezon City to implement the project 'Building a Biodiversity-Friendly Environment in Metro Manila. Signing the memorandum of agreement to signify their three-year commitment to implement the urban biodiversity program in Quezon City are (from left) DENR-BMB director Natvidad Bernardino, DENR-NCR regional executive director Jacqueline Caangan, QC-LGU city administrator Michael Victor Alimurung and MPIC chief finance, risk and sustainability officer Chaye Cabal-Revilla.1



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Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp. (RTN), Coral Bay Nickel Corp. (CBNC), and Graymont (Philippines), Inc., (GPI) partnered with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in subsidizing the procurement of a P6.4M Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station (CAAQMS) to be established in the mining community of Bataraza in Southern Palawan. Shown are the signatories (L to R): Remmy Collado-Camo, NAC AVP for Safety and Envi; Jose Bayani Baylon, NAC VP for Corp. Comm.; DENR-EMB MIMAROPA Director, Joe Amil M. Salino; Masahiro Kamiya, CBNC President; Rommel A. Ibuna, GPI President; Pablito Estorque, Chief, Environmental and Enforcement Division – EMB MIMAROPA.



## New administration, new agriculture

**L**earning from the agriculture industry's past performances will help improve the next administration's governance.

On April 18, this was commendably done by the Department of Agriculture (DA) when it presented its updated National Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization and Industrial Plan (NAFMIP) for 2021-2030.

Supported by the DA's top management, Assistant Secretary Agnes Miranda spearheaded this initiative. For the very first time, the DA used outside experts to provide objectivity and an independent perspective. They were from the Asian Development Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The NAFMIP identified "three guiding stars."

The first is "raising profitability and total incomes." In the past, too much emphasis is given to production, and too little to market. NAFMIP, therefore, recommended a much larger budget for the DA. Currently, it is at 2 percent of the total government budget, compared to Thailand's 4 percent and Vietnam's 6 percent.

In addition, the monocrop

### COMMENTARY

ERNESTO M. ORDOÑEZ

practice in our major agriculture areas of rice, coconut and corn should be replaced by a multiple commodity system. This should mean increasing significantly the budget share for high value crops from today's level of less than 5 percent.

Also, the lack of necessary government support services have deprived our farmers and fisherfolk the capability of being globally competitive. Instead of providing these services, our government decreases tariffs significantly and then suddenly increases imports without supporting our producers.

This happened in the implementation of the rice tariffication law. Our government did not provide the internationally accepted safeguard measure of temporarily increasing the effective tariff rate. Consequently, our rice farmers have suffered a 23-percent drop in income and increased rural poverty, which is already more than double that of our neigh-

boring countries.

The second guiding star is "promoting health and nutrition." Using the commodity system approach, guiding commodity selection will help accomplish this. In addition, our border controls must be implemented effectively to prevent diseases coming in with the imports.

A massive education effort should also be provided so that elementary level students will be guided with their food choices. This will help boost local production (by substituting less healthy imports with our own) and increase our farmers' incomes.

The third guiding star is "environmental sustainability and resilience." More collaboration with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) should be done, with emphasis on reforestation and mangrove development. Bamboo should be promoted. It is low cost, low maintenance, prevents soil erosion and provides livelihood opportunities.

Mangroves are equally important. They protect the coastlines, prevent flash floods and increase fish supply. They also provide livelihood opportuni-

ties like crab cultivation.

During the April 18 meeting, the DA also welcomed suggested improvements to the NAFMIP, such as those provided by Alyansa Agrikultura:

An international trade section, given our fast changing global environment;

An effective export and an equally important import strategy;

Safeguard and international trade options, including anti-smuggling initiatives (especially in the context of Albay Rep. Joey Salceda's April 19 statement: "I think the DA is the mother of all smuggling");

Private sector's meaningful participation in monitoring and evaluation (especially in the DA's budget use after the Commission on Audit reported P22 billion in unliquidated 2020 expenses).

Though needing further adjustments, the improved NAFMIP should guide the new administration in birthing a new agriculture. *mq*

The author is Agrivatch chair, former secretary of presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary of the DA and the Department of Trade and Industry. Contact is [agrivatch\\_phil@yahoo.com](mailto:agrivatch_phil@yahoo.com).



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HIGHER CAPACITY SOUGHT FOR RESORT ISLAND

# BUSINESS OWNERS TO GOV'T: ALLOW MORE TOURISTS IN BORACAY



**BRIEF SILENCE** A spot on the main beach on Boracay Island's Station 1 is silent on Wednesday as tourists seek shelter from the intense heat. Visitors continue to flock to the resort island in Malay, Aklan, but arrivals have slightly dipped after the Holy Week. —JACK JARILLA

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.  
@nestorburgosINQ

ILOILO CITY—Business operators on Boracay Island have asked the Department of Tourism (DOT) to reconsider the current limit for tourists arrivals, saying the government-mandated carrying capacity was pegged before major rehabilitation measures were implemented.

In a letter to Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat dated April 19, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)-Boracay said the current situation on the resort island in Malay, Aklan, was "greatly different" from conditions before 2018.

"The carrying capacity studies were performed in 2018 at the very start of the first closure. Since this time, some massive improvements and epic upgrades have been accomplished," PCCI-Boracay said.

Puyat has called out officials of Aklan province over the surge in tourists during the Holy Week which, she said, breached the carrying capacity on April 14 (Maundy Thursday) quality, putting up of individual sewage treatment plants of hotels and other establishments, and compliance with building regulations.

Boracay business operators, who have been reeling from an economic slump for two years due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and quarantine measures, have welcomed the recent increase in tourist arrivals.

Martin Jose Despi, gener-

al manager of the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG), said results of a new study on the island's carrying capacity would be released on June 15.

The total carrying capacity of the island, including tourists and residents, was pegged at 55,757, according to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, or 54,949 based on Presidential Proclamation No. 1064 which classified parts of Boracay as alienable and disposable forest lands and protected areas.

Before it was closed in 2018, the island's population, including tourists, was 70,781 per day.

"Most probably, because of the rehabilitation interventions, the carrying capacity will increase," Despi told the Inquirer.

Despi said the BIARMG had recommended the putting up of an integrated real-time information technology system that would monitor the number of tourists on the island to guide government agencies as well as tourists planning to visit.

#### DILG warning

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) reiterated its warning to Aklan officials to ensure compliance with the daily visitor threshold in Boracay "or be ready to receive show cause orders (SCOs) due to negligence."

"We will not hesitate to issue SCOs against officials of the LGUs (local government units) who would not implement the national government policies in

Boracay. We cannot go back to square one, especially now that we are still in the middle of the pandemic," Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said in a statement on Thursday.

"Our efforts to rehabilitate and reverse the ecological degradation of the island will all be futile if we become negligent in complying with the guidelines set by the national government," he added.

DILG spokesperson Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya reminded tourists and residents of Boracay and Aklan province that these areas are still under the alert level 1 status, the least restrictive among the five COVID-19 alert levels, but still entails the observance of minimum public health standards, including wearing of face masks.

"We do not want to experience another surge in COVID-19 cases. We have the right to travel and enjoy the different tourist destinations in the country, but we must remain disciplined because the pandemic is not yet over," Malaya said. —WITH A REPORT

FROM DEXTER CABALZA (INQ)



# Año warns Aklan LGUs to strictly enforce tourist capacity in Boracay

By CHITO A. CHAVEZ

Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año warned the provincial government of Aklan to stick to the implementation of the tourist capacity limit in Boracay following reports of overcrowding during the Holy Week.

"Hindi tayo magdadalawang-isip na mag-issue ng SCO (show cause order) sa mga opisyal ng LGU (local government unit) na magsasawalang-bahala sa mga umiiral na kautusan (capacity limit) sa isla ng Boracay (We will not have second thoughts of issuing SCO to negligent LGU that defy the laws in Boracay Island). We cannot go back to square one especially now that we are still in the middle of a pandemic. Our efforts to rehabilitate and reverse the ecological degradation of the island will all be futile if we become negligent in complying with the guidelines set

by national government," Año said on Thursday, April 21.

Año also urged the provincial government of Aklan and the municipality of Malay town, two LGUs which have direct authority over the world-famous tourist destination, to intensify efforts and strictly observe the island's daily threshold of 19,215 for tourists.

The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) had set 19,215 as the carrying capacity of the island for tourists to ensure the ecological sustainability of Boracay. BIATF is composed of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as chair, with DILG and Department of Tourism (DOT) as co-chairs.

He added: "Failure to comply with the recommended daily threshold may cause environmental risks and may reverse the accomplishments of government in rehabilitating Boracay Island."

In a letter to Año, DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said Bora-

cay Island tourist arrivals for Maundy Thursday (April 14) reached 21,252, and 22,519 on Good Friday (April 15), which are way above the island's limit.

On April 16, 2022, Puyat appealed to Año and DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna to instigate appropriate actions regarding the violations and urged for strict implementation of preventive measures against Covid-19 that is also a "valuable step in driving a sustainable growth of tourism in the island."

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He also disagreed with the statement of Malay Acting Mayor Frolibar Baustista calling the tourist arrivals as "normal".



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## Regional Updates

### DILG warns local governments over failure to control Boracay tourist volume

THE DEPARTMENT of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Thursday warned local governments with authority over Boracay to ensure the enforcement of the capacity limit set for the popular tourist destination.

In a statement on Thursday, DILG said local officials could be issued show cause orders due to negligence following documented violations of the island's visitor threshold during the Holy Week break.

"We will not think twice to issue a show cause order to the officials of the local government units who disregard the policies of the island of Boracay," Interior Secretary Eduardo M. Año said in Filipino.

"We cannot go back to square one especially now that we are still in the middle of a pandemic," he said.

Boracay island is under the jurisdiction of the municipal govern-

ment of Malay, which is within Aklan province.

Based on the Malay tourism office's current guidelines, visitors to Boracay must pre-register online through the [touristboracay.com](http://touristboracay.com) site, which is controlled by the Aklan provincial government.

The pre-registration serves as a health declaration form for contact tracing as well as for Malay's tourism statistical reporting.

A daily visitor limit of 19,215 has been set for the island.

The Malay tourism office reported 95,646 tourist arrivals from April 1 to 16, which means a daily average of almost 6,000.

However, tourist arrivals for April 14-15 — or Maundy Thursday and Good Friday which are declared national holidays — reached 21,252 and 22,519, respectively, according to Tourism

Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat in a letter to Mr. Año.

The DILG chief said failing to comply with the daily threshold not only poses public health risks but also cause environmental threats that compromise the government's progress in rehabilitating the island.

Boracay was totally closed to tourists in 2018, following an order from President Rodrigo R. Duterte, for an overhaul of waste management systems and land use on the island. An inter-agency team was established for the rehabilitation program.

The provincial government of Aklan as well as its governor could not be immediately reached for comment.

"We must draw the line to ensure that our policies are being complied with on the ground," Mr. Año said. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**



REUTERS

PEOPLE dine at a restaurant in Boracay island in this photo taken on Nov. 30, 2021.



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## Año warns Aklan LGUs on Boracay overcrowding

By JUN I.  
LEGASPI

FOLLOWING documented violations of Boracay Island's carrying capacity for tourists last Holy Week, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo M. Año Thursday issued a stern warning to the provincial government of Aklan and the municipality of Malay, Aklan to ensure compliance to the daily visitor threshold "or be ready to receive Show Cause Orders (SCO) due to negligence."

"Hindi tayo magdadalang-isip na mag-issue ng SCO sa mga opisyal ng LGU (local government unit) na magsasawalang-bahala sa mga umiiral na kautusan sa isla ng Boracay. We cannot go back to square one especially now that we are still in the middle of a pandemic. Our efforts to rehabilitate and reverse the ecological degradation of the island will all be futile if we become negligent in complying with the guidelines set by National Government," Año said.

He urged both the Aklan provincial government and the Malay municipality – the two LGUs which have direct authority over the world-famous tourist destination, to intensify efforts and strictly observe the island's daily threshold of 19,215 tourists.

It can be recalled that the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), composed of

the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as chair, with DILG and the Department of Tourism (DOT) as co-chairs, set 19,215 as the carrying capacity of the island for tourists to ensure the ecological sustainability of Boracay.

The DILG Secretary said, "failure to comply with the recommended daily threshold may cause environmental risks and may reverse the accomplishments of government in rehabilitating Boracay

Island."

In a letter sent by DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat to Año, she said Boracay Island tourist arrivals for Moundy Thursday (April 14) reached 21,252 and 22,519 on Good Friday (April 15), which are way above the island's limit.

On April 16, 2022, Puyat likewise appealed to DILG Secretary Año and DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampalua to instigate appropriate actions regarding the violations and urged for strict

implementation of preventive measures against COVID-19 that is also a "valuable step in driving a sustainable growth of tourism in the island."

Issuing a clear warning to Aklan LGUs, the DILG Chief, through a DILG memorandum disseminated to Aklan LGUs, said that subsequent violations of the recommended limit of tourists in Boracay Island may merit the issuance of an SCO from the Department, regardless of the violation is deliberate or not.





**Editorial**

**Masisira na naman ang Boracay**

**D**UMAGSA ang mga turista sa Boracay noong Mahal na Araw. Imagine, ang dapat na kapasidad lamang ng Boracay ay 19,000. Pero lampas-lampas ang dami ng mga nagtungo roon. Sa report ng Malay Tourism Office sa Department of Tourism, umabot sa 21,252 ang bumisita sa Boracay noong Huwebes Santo at noong Biyernes Santo, umabot sa 22,519. Dahil dito binalaan ni Tourism Sec. Berna Romulo Puyat ang local government ng Malay, Aklan. Ayon kay Romulo Puyat, ang DILG ang mag-iisyu ng warning laban sa local government ng Malay.

Isa sa pinangangambahan ngayon ay ang muling pagdami ng COVID-19 cases dahil sa pagdagsa ng mga turista. Bagama't pawang mga bakunado ang pinapasok sa Boracay, naghahatid ng pangamba ang sobrang tao sa resort. Nagbabala ang World Health Organization (WHO) kamakailan na posibleng sa katapusan ng Mayo ay magkakaroon ng surge dahil sa pagdagsa ng mga tao sa probinsiya noong Mahal na Araw at idagdag pa ang kampanya ng mga kandidato para sa May 9 elections. Paalala ng WHO, ipatupad ang health protocols.

Bukod sa posibleng pagkalat ng virus, ang pagkasira rin naman ng Boracay ay isa rin sa pinangangambahan. Kung hindi mapipigil ang dagsa ng tao roon, muling babalik ang maruming Boracay na minsang tinawag ni President Duterte na "cesspool". Ang kahulugan ng "cesspool" ay poso-negro. Ipinasara ng presidente ang Boracay noong 2018 sa loob ng anim na buwan.

Maraming establimento sa Boracay ang lumbag sa environmental laws. Sa 562 establimento na ininspeksyon ng DENR, 161 ang lumalabag. Ang mga ito ay walang water waste treatment facility kaya ang dumi ng tao ay direktang iniluluwa sa dagat. Lahat nang klase ng dumi mula sa resort ay itinatapon sa dagat. Pati ang mga basura sa paligid ng resort ay nagkalat din kaya sinampahan na ang mga establimento nang paglabag sa Clean Water Act at Clean Air Act.

Ngayon dahil sa hindi na namang mapigilan na pagdagsa ng tao, asehan na tatawagin na namang "cesspool" ang Boracay. Pagpaliwanagin ang LGU ng Malay kung bakit hindi nila ipinasusunod ang tamang kapasidad ng resort. Kailangan beng ipasara uli ito para lamang matuto?

Hindi lamang pagdami ng COVID ang pinangangambahan ngayon sa pagdagsa ng mga turista kundi ang dumi na kanilang iiwan sa Boracay. Huwag hayaang masira muli ang Boracay.



# Follow Boracay tourist cap or face show cause orders - DILG to Aklan LGU

By Jun Legaspi

**FOLLOWING** documented violations of Boracay Island's carrying capacity for tourists last Holy Week, Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año yesterday warned the provincial government of Aklan and the municipality of Malay to ensure compliance to the daily visitor threshold or be ready to receive show cause orders (SCO) due to negligence.

"Hindi tayo magdadalang-isip na mag-issue ng SCO sa mga opisyal ng LGU na magsasawalang-bahala sa mga umiiral na kautusan sa isla ng Boracay. We cannot go back to square one, especially now that we are still in the middle of a pandemic. Our efforts to rehabilitate and reverse the ecological degradation of the island will all be futile if we become

negligent in complying with the guidelines set by National Government," Año said.

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The DILG chief, through

a DILG memorandum disseminated to Aklan LGUs, warned that subsequent violations on the recommended limitation of tourists in Boracay Island may merit the issuance of a SCO from the Department, regardless if the violation is deliberate or not.

"We must draw the line to ensure that our policies are being complied with on the ground. Kung kailangang mag-issue ng SCO para sa mga paglabag ay iyan po ang gagawin ng aming Kagawaran," Año said.

He also disagreed with the statement of Malay Acting Mayor Prolibar Bautista, calling the tourist arrivals as "normal".

"Hindi ito normal, ito ay paglabag sa umiiral na polisiya. Noong 2018 pa lamang at wala pang pandemya, itinakda na natin kung ano ang kapasidad ng Boracay, kung gaano

karami lamang ang puwedeng langgapin na turista ng isla," Año said.

Año directed its regional offices to closely monitor the compliance of LGUs and to report any violations of tourism-related implementations and COVID-19 policies and protocols.

DILG Undersecretary and spokesperson Jonathan Malaya reminded residents and tourists of Boracay and Aklan province that the area is under Alert Level 1, which entails observance of minimum public health standards.

"Muli po naming ipinapaalala sa ating mga kababayan sa Aklan na panatilihin ang pagsunod sa health protocols na itinakda natin. Magsuot pa rin ng face mask at mag-disinfect lagi. Huwag po tayong maging pabaya," Malaya said.



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## Make each day an Earth Day

**T**oday is Earth Day and our country is in step with the world in calling attention to the planet's plight on multiple fronts. If the earth is a hospital patient, the prognosis is deadly. No less than António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) made the assessment in his "State of the Planet" address in December 2020, when he said, "To put it simply, the state of the planet is broken."

"Humanity is waging war on nature. This is suicidal. Nature always strikes back – and it is already doing so with growing force and fury. Biodiversity is collapsing. One million species are at risk of extinction. Ecosystems are disappearing before our eyes. Deserts are spreading. Wetlands are being lost. Every year, we lose 10 million hectares of forests," Guterres said. And this is only just the beginning.

He added that "oceans are overfished – and choking with plastic waste. The carbon dioxide they absorb is acidifying the seas. Coral reefs are bleached and dying. Air and water pollution are killing nine million people annually. And with people and livestock encroaching further into animal habitats and disrupting wild spaces, we could see more viruses and other disease-causing agents jump from animals to humans."

What was alarming in Guterres' statement is that two new authoritative reports from the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme spell out how close we are to climate catastrophe.

Amid this seemingly endless list of bad prognoses is a "cure" – "Let's be clear: human activities are at the root of our descent towards chaos. But that means human action can help solve it. Making peace with nature is the defining task of

the 21st century. It must be the top priority for everyone, everywhere."

The people of this world have destroyed this planet, so it would also take all of us collectively to heal the planet and make sure that it is still habitable for the future generations.

This is the impetus behind Earth Day 2022, when the global organizer Earthday.Org announced its theme "Invest in Our Planet." Earth Day 2022 is "focused on accelerating solutions to combat our greatest threat, climate change, and to activate everyone – governments, citizens, and businesses – to do their part. Everyone accounted for, and everyone accountable."

Today, the organizers hope to make the citizens of the world recognize that in order to help this planet, countries have to accelerate the transition to an equitable, green economy, and leave behind the dirty fossil fuel economy.

Earthday.Org also reminds all of us that we have a voice in the fight for our planet: "As Individual citizens – voters, as watchdogs, and as consumers – we have the simple yet effective power to make our voices heard. What each of us does, and how we do it, has a huge ripple effect on our ecosystems, and on the pace of corporate and government action. We are responsible for holding business, governments, and others accountable and to support their efforts when they get it right."

The first Earth Day was held in April of 1970. Fifty two years later, we are still in this fight and it seems that in each passing time, the planet slides to a worse state than before. Unless governments, institutions, businesses, and individuals act now, climate change will continue to deeply damage the planet and make the future bleaker than ever before.



## Invest in our planet

When the threat posed by COVID-19 is significantly diminished, the world will still have to contend with another threat that has been around long before the pandemic: climate change.

In recent years, the Philippines has suffered from extreme weather disturbances that have claimed the lives of thousands and destroyed billions worth of crops, public infrastructure and private property. Bay areas long believed to be secluded from the fury of tropical cyclones, including Manila Bay, have been hit by destructive storm surges that spawned torrential flash floods.

Global warming is threatening not only coastal communities but also food security as traditional areas for fishing, agriculture and agro-forestry are adversely affected by rising temperatures. Food supply chains are disrupted as natural habitats are destroyed.

This April 22, into the third year of the worst global health crisis in a century, environment advocates are renewing calls for

### EDITORIAL

international cooperation in confronting climate change.

For Earth Day 2022, the focus is on investing in the planet, on developing a green economy and boosting private sector innovation and investment in sustainable business practices.

Governments are encouraged to provide incentives for green business practices and to encourage citizens and institutions to promote a resilient future. The message is that green business practices are not only ethical but also lucrative for the long term. Studies have shown a direct correlation between sustainable practices, share prices and overall business performance.

For private enterprise, national economics and the planet, sustainability is the path to prosperity. This must be internalized especially in the Philippines, which scientists say is among the countries most vulnerable to the destructive impact of climate change. The message today, Earth Day, is that a healthy planet is not an option – it is a necessity.



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**Tribune**  
WITHOUT FEAR • WITHOUT FAVOR

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# SEN. LOREN LEGARDA'S GREEN TENACITY FOR MOTHER EARTH





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Sen. Loren Legarda's Commitment for  
Mother Earth

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The depth of her advocacy goes back to her days as a journalist in the 80s, when she was a multi-awarded reporter and TV host of a major network

BY FRANCINE MARQUEZ

*"The Earth will not just heat on its own without any effort on our part to stop marine pollution. Let us push for the use of alternatives to plastics like our baskets, bayong, eco-bags, paper bags, cloth bags or katsa."*

— Sen. Loren Legarda

Sometime in the 90s, a series of billboards went up the highway South of Manila with lines from Joyce Kilmer's "Tree." It seemed like a humble act back then from Senator Loren Legarda, though reading through the poem did provide some effect for those passing through the tree-lined road. But fast-forward to the present: Sen. Legarda's decades-long advocacy for the environment has led to a lot of breakthroughs in mitigating climate change.

In observation of Earth Hour last March, Legarda encouraged the public to continue acting locally to save the planet: "Environmental protection is everyone's business. *Hindi po pwedeng ilan lang ang kikilos* (We can't have just a few taking action on this). We only have one Earth and we should be responsible for making sure that the future generations still have a livable planet. Even through our small acts, like turning our lights off when not in use, we make a big difference. *Napakalaki po ng impact ng pagkilos ng bawat isa sa atin sa pagprotekta ng kalikasan* (Our individual efforts make a huge impact on protecting the environment)."

In order to make the advocacy whole and sustainable, the senator — who was conferred the Dangal ng Haraya Award: Patron of Arts and Culture by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in 2016 — also places people at the core of her fight for the planet.

No longer just an intangible concept, climate change is as real as it is in the present with warmer temperatures in our midst, more devastating storms, increased droughts and endangered tribal communities who live close to these natural environments.

With the preservation of the environment at the core of her platforms through the years, the three-term senator has won praise and accolades for her efforts. To walk the talk, Legarda has authored and sponsored the passage of some environmental landmark laws such as the Clean Air Act, Solid Waste Management Act, Climate Change Act and Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act.

The depth of her advocacy goes back to her days as a journalist in the 80s, when she was a multi-awarded reporter and TV host of a major network. Legarda hasn't left that side of using her storytelling expertise to these days. With the documentary genre as a vehicle for spreading awareness, she has produced short videos like *Ulan sa Tag-Araw: Isang Dokyu-drama Ukol sa Pagbabago ng Klima* (Rains in the Summer: A Documentary Drama on Climate Change), children's animation movie *Ligtas Likas, Buhos* (Downpour), *Philippine Marine Biodiversity* and *Antique: Coral Restoration Program*.

*Now is the Time*, another noteworthy film,



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is a collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. Here, Legarda urges leaders and decision-makers to strive for disaster-resilient development.

But in order to make the advocacy whole and sustainable, the senator – who was conferred the Dangal ng Haraya Award: Patron of Arts and Culture by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts in 2016 – also places people at the core of her fight for the planet.

Striking a regal demeanor in outfits made from tribal weaves when she attends events and special occasions, Legarda's passionate pride is infectious as the urban tribe of fashionistas donning indigenous textiles in social events continues to grow.

Now, thanks to the good senator, visitors of the National Museum can gaze at and study beautiful indigenous weaves at the Hible ng Lahing Filipino, the country's first permanent textile gallery.

To spread more awareness, she has also worked on the *Baybayin: Ancient and Traditional Scripts of the Philippines* gallery, and the *Rice, Biodiversity and Climate Change* exhibit at the museum. She has also supported the creation of the Gawad sa Manlilikha ng Bayan Gallery and the exhibit on Bangsamoro heritage titled Faith, Tradition and Place.

In August 2021, she honored the indigenous communities and called for stronger support and protection for its people.

The preservation and conservation of the environment is indeed a life mission for the senator. Her efforts, past and present, may just be too many to mention. But consider this: Imagine 500 hectares with two million sturdy trees across the country. Trees that are breathing life back into eroded forests; trees that will be protected and protect us back.

These trees were planted through the greening program *Luntiang Pilipinas* (Green Philippines) that Sen. Legarda founded. Today, she continues to encourage stakeholders in pursuing this environmental advocacy.

Sustainability remains key to saving the earth especially in the midst of a pandemic. Sustainable actions require tenacious leaders with the dogged determination to mitigate the climate crisis.

Sen. Legarda had said in her Earth Day statement last year: "I will continue championing climate justice, in all the regional and global climate talks and negotiations, including the upcoming Conference of the Parties this November.

"All these and more, I pledge for a better Earth.

"An Earth where we don't sacrifice our environment to pursue 'development.' An Earth where we embrace sustainability, mindful consumption and planetary health as core principles in growing our economy. An Earth that we and future generations can truly call home," she promised.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF IG@MLORENLEGARDA

SEN. Lorean Legarda pledges to 'continue championing climate justice, in all the regional and global climate talks and negotiations.'



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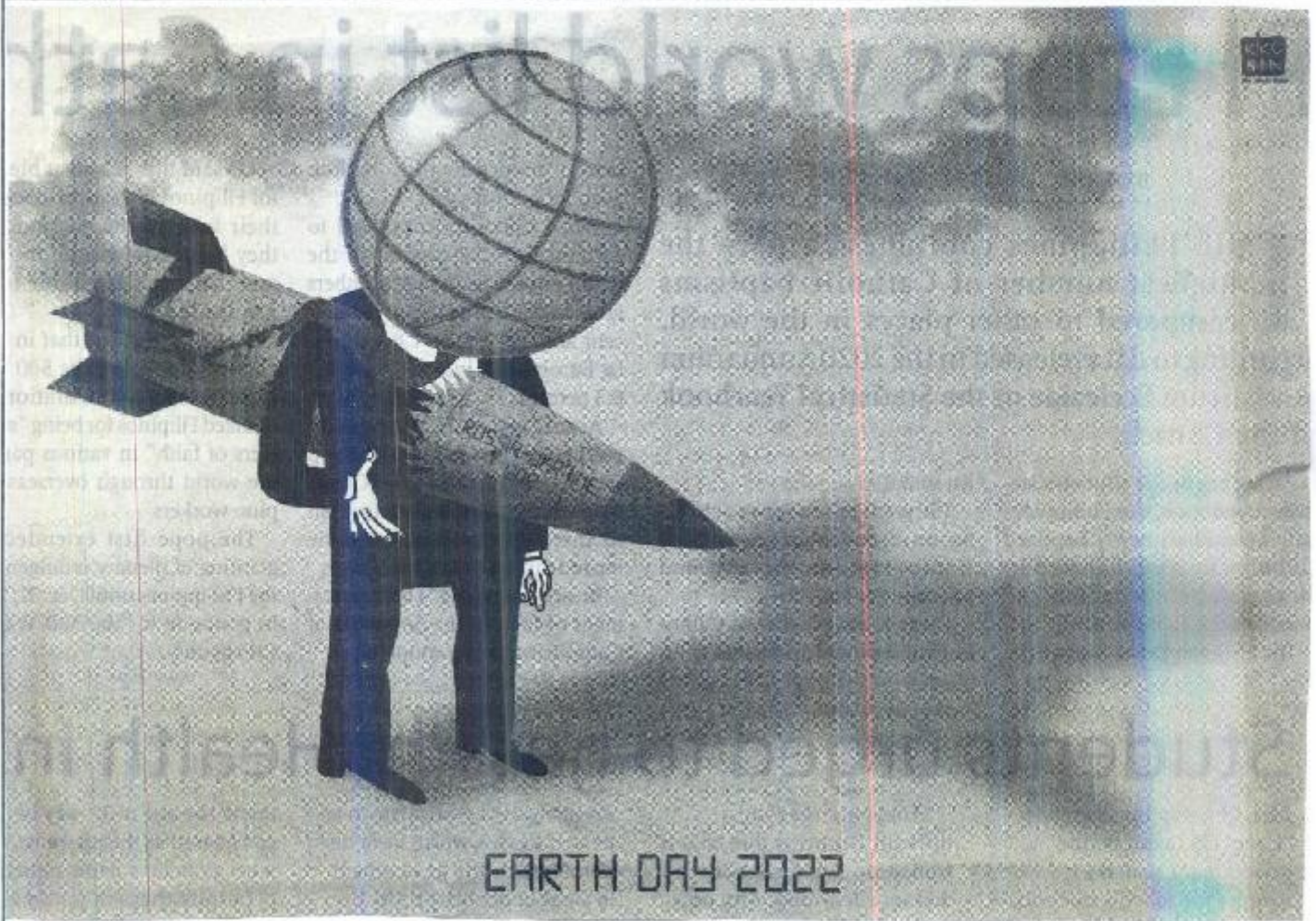
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## ELEVENTH HOUR

THE CLIMATE REALITY  
PROJECT PHILIPPINES

# A zero-waste sari-sari store? Yes, it's possible and sustainable

**W**hen the idea of a zero-waste sari-sari store first popped up in one of our team's planning sessions in 2017, it felt novel and exciting.

Some of us thought it was crazy, looking at how almost everything sold in a sari-sari store was packed in single-use packaging. We knew that sachets made hundreds of products accessible and affordable to households on tight budgets. And with sari-sari stores found in almost every corner of Filipino communities—about 800,000 of them throughout the country—we knew that it would be an uphill climb to transition these microbusinesses to being plastic-free.

There was the term "sachet economy" referring to our profitable dependence on packaged goods and the economic realities of low-income communities enabling it. It is daunting to even think of disrupting a business model that is serving millions of people.

At that time, the issue of marine plastic pollution has finally started to be highlighted on the covers of magazines and headlines for prime-time newscasts.

In my case, the viral YouTube video of a plastic straw being pulled out of a sea turtle's nose caught my attention. Groups around the world have already been picking up waste from our shores for decades since 1986 when the International Coastal Cleanup Day was founded, but it was only in the last seven to eight years that we saw plastic pollution take the spotlight on the agenda of governments everywhere.



Scan the QR Code to read the complete article online.



In the Philippines, audits and research on the kinds of waste being collected from our coastal ecosystems pointed to one obvious finding: A lot of the trash being collected were sachets. These linked back to the ubiquitous sari-sari stores. And around eight tons of these single-use plastics flow from mismanaged waste on land, down to our waterways and the sea.

Our country was even named as one of the top three sources of ocean plastic. All this, too, while our country is also a topnotcher when it comes to bearing the brunt of climate change



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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FILE: A Zero waste Sari Sari Store --

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and the negative impacts of global environmental problems.

So, we asked the question: Can we redesign the sari-sari store to be free of single-use plastic? How can we sell consumer goods with the same ring-tingi volumes available, with the same price points, but without the sachets?

We started prototyping zero-waste sari-sari stores in Negros Island with a multi-sectoral approach, and for five years including time during the pandemic, we of course met a lot of challenges. More than behavior change, we were face to face with the mammoth system of fast-moving consumer goods, designed from the top-down, with profit being masked as convenience. The consumers, even the conscious ones, feel powerless and too

From top: The PRRCF launched prototypes of zero-waste sari-sari stores where fast-moving consumer goods are dispensed in the same incremental volumes with the same price points as those sold in sachets. Left: Coastal cleanups by the Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PRRCFI) are community events that aim to raise multi-sensory awareness on the causes and impacts of mismanaged plastic waste. It also recognizes that cleanups do not address the root cause of plastic pollution.

small to change the sari-sari store. But we saw how it could be done. After more than 20 prototypes of zero-waste microbusiness models, encompassing sari-sari stores, and now also *carinderia* and cafes, we got the attention of producers, government, international development agencies, and the media.

Out of the many reports, recommendations, and requests for replication, there is a recurring theme outside of the business requirements and the business development aspect of our path to zero-waste sari-sari stores.

The most important lesson we learned is surprisingly cultural. And as we share this lesson, we hope that these will also help us reflect and rethink the work we do in mobilizing communities for climate actions and the global goals for sustainable development. We learned that we must translate climate actions and environmental advocacy into our local context and language, tapping into our own cultural heritage.

This is not something new, but during the social preparation phase of our projects, we realized we kept using foreign words like "zero-waste," "circular economy," and "conservation." Even if we translated what they meant in our dialects, these concepts still sounded alienating. We eventually had a breakthrough in our community consultations when we simplified our messaging into "Wala Usik" (Hiligaynon/Bisaya for "nothing wasted" and it is "walang sayang" in Tagalog).

When people hear "Wala Usik," they would often recall their grandparents watching over during meal-time then saying "Dapat wala usik, ha!" as a reminder to eat everything there is on the plate as they give a talk on how food is produced by hard work of many hands, from the farmers to whoever paid for and prepared the meal. We always had a culture of not wasting anything, probably because of a history or experience of scarcity, but also because it is ingrained in our indigenous respect for nature where all our resources come from. ▶ B-4



FILE:

A- Zero waste Sari Sari Store

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When we started using the term and mindset of "Wala Usik" in our work, we quickly rediscovered that in fact, the idea of a zero-waste sari-sari store is not totally crazy nor novel. Not too long ago, before sachets became widespread, there were reusable containers for everything. There may be some of us in this generation that remembers walking with an empty glass Tanduay bottle to the neighbor's store to buy cooking oil.

Minimal packaging, bringing a bayong when purchasing, and locally sourced products were also hallmarks of the sari-sari stores pre-plastic. These are just a few of the wonderful re-discoveries we made as we eventually assigned the name Wala Usik Sari-Sari Store to those who were inspired enough to cut off single-use plastic from their business.

There is still resistance to the transition to more sustainable and circular businesses because communities are already so used to the convenience brought about by established supply chains and distribution logistics for sachets and single-use plastics. But not too many people will resist the message of "Wala Usik."

Who wants to waste resources? Who wants to waste anything? We also found witty campaign slogans such as "Indi ko pag-usiki" (Huwag mo akong sayangin in Tagalog). We were able to link this to food security when we talk about fish stocks,

for example, that are already threatened by marine plastic pollution, and even public health, when the discussion would involve finding microplastic in what we drink and eat.

"Wala Usik" is beyond being plastic-free or zero-waste. It is a more profound philosophy linking conservation, sustainability, and circularity in our local context and language. And we are optimistic that fellow Filipinos will rediscover this message as part of their heritage.

**About the author:** *Climate Reality Leader Dave Albao is the executive director of the Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PRRCFI), the non-profit organization taking care of Danjugan island—a wildlife sanctuary in Negros Occidental. Dave and their team are also implementing projects funded by USAID, GIZ, and the EU, including initiatives that advocate for zero-waste and circular enterprises for a 'Wala Usik Economy' including micro-businesses such as sari-sari stores, carinderias, and cafes that are innovating to reduce single-use plastic waste from their operations.*





# Inevitable

**“We have been harangued by muckraking politicians, their wrecking crew, and image builders.**

It is almost certain fall. Whatever must be will be. All the grumbling, the hate, and the prevarications will no longer alter the outcome. We are closing in on the final leg of this election derby and everybody must accept the reality.



SOUTHERN OPTICS  
JUN LEDESMA

We are a nation badly fractured because of divisive politics. The earlier we come to our senses the better for us all. It is a universal truth that in every human endeavor there will always be losers and winners.

There are among us who made what they banner as “fearless forecasts.” Who knows, they may have the seventh sense to read the writings on the wall.

As I write this piece there are already winners. Those who have sold their loyalties not only for 80 pieces of silver but by the millions. Still, others shift loyalties in exchange for lucrative positions in the government. At no other time after Spain colonized us have we seen friars indulge in partisan politics and not sparing the altar and ignoring the plea of the papacy from getting enmeshed in politics.

We have been harangued by muckraking politicians, their wrecking crew, and image builders. We can handle that, in fact, we have become inured to it although a huge majority is no longer amused with it. Not even the contemptible use of a non-existent sex video, alleged to have been posted in public, elicits sympathy. That is one despicable trickery that only fomented anger for how can one sacrifice the dignity of a young woman as a means to win votes?

Unfortunately for the “Yellows,” Duterte – the one they described as uncouth, lacking in refinements and finesse, “*tagabundok* (from the mountains),” the man behind the Davao Death Squad and extra-judicial killings – turned out to be a man that delivered, that drew respect and admiration from world leaders, one who despite the crippling pandemic-built infrastructures at a dizzying pace.

His finance managers raced the credit rating of the country from nothing to investment grade and stable. And his trust and approval ratings remain to be unprecedented to the last day of office.

The question now is: Will the nation gamble on another Yellow brand of leadership, or will it opt for the

The emotional Filipinos have fallen for necrological dirge and endured the consequence of having cast their votes for the bereaved. The first symptom of public frustration and disgust over the failed governance of the two Aquino administrations was the emergence of a leader from the south who, despite starting late in the race, sped fast and passed those identified with the yellow regimes. Then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte routed Mar Roxas first then vanquished VP Jojo Binay.

**“In no other time after Spain colonized us have we seen friars indulge in partisan politics and not sparing the altar and ignoring the plea of the papacy from getting enmeshed in politics.**



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## P17.5-M US support for PH ecosystem recovery

AS part of its overall response to Typhoon Odette, the United States government, through the US Agency for International Development, is providing an additional P17.5 million (\$350,000) to support ecosystem and community recovery.

This new funding brings the total US government aid for Odette relief and recovery efforts to nearly P1.1 billion (21.54 million).

This additional assistance would support local organizations in assessing the extent of damage to ecosystems and wildlife habitats, enhancing their resilience and recovery, and providing assistance to farmers, fisherfolk, and indigenous peoples whose livelihoods were destroyed by the typhoon.

Seven civil society organizations working in Siargao Island, Dinagat Islands, Palawan, Cebu, Bohol, Southern Leyte, and mainland Caraga will receive P2.5 million each to implement projects that would avert long-

term damage and mitigate environmental risks that could threaten the lives and the livelihoods of affected communities.

The USAID would provide this funding to the Coastal Conservation and Education Foundation, Nagkakaisang Tribu ng Palawan, Palawan Biodiversity Conservation Advocates, Sentro Para sa Ikaunlad ng Katutubong Agham at Teknolohiya, South Pacific Integrated Area Development Foundation, Surigao Economic Development and Microfinance Foundation, and World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines.

Activities would focus on rehabilitating coastal and terrestrial ecosystems, supporting assessments to help local governments in their disaster risk reduction and management initiatives, rebuilding livelihoods through biodiversity-friendly enterprises, and providing incentives for local communities to participate in projects that

would help rehabilitate their natural resource base.

"We will continue to support the Philippines as it recovers from the massive damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and ecosystems from Typhoon Odette," USAID Philippines Mission Director Ryan Washburn said.

"This additional assistance will help ensure that communities devastated by the typhoon not only receive immediate relief but also long-term support that will have a significant impact on their lives and the environment on which they depend," Washburn added.

Washington would continue to partner with Manila to respond to natural disasters and support Filipinos in their recovery efforts.

Since 2010, the USAID has provided more than P17.5 billion (\$342 million) in disaster relief and recovery aid and boosted the disaster risk-reduction capacity of more than 100 cities and municipalities in the country.



STRATEGIC  
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# Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR - WITHOUT FAVOR

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CARTOON

04-22-22

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THU How 'Green' is your mind?

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*Artistic*





one they call "son of a dictator," "magnanakaw" (a thief), "sinungaling" (a liar), dropout, and tax evader? To be more emphatic about it, will the electorate go for VP Leni Robredo, and Sen. Kiko Pangilinan, Chairperson and President respectively of the Liberal Party who, in an obvious attempt to dissociate themselves from the Yellows, ran as independent with various shades and shapes of logos in their banner? Or, will they opt for Bongbong Marcos and Davao City Mayor Inday Sara Duterte who are perceived to continue with the programs and projects of President Duterte?

Soon we will see the inevitable.

# How 'green' is your mind?

Today is Earth Day.

Yet as stalwarts for environmental consciousness have said time and again, such a day should be every day.

Every single day, as we live and breathe.

The reasons are "as clear as day," the idiom goes but the truth is, they are as hazy as the metro skies.

It's interesting, though, that for this year, *earthday.org* has declared the following:

"This is the moment to change it all — the business climate, the political climate, and how we take action on climate. Now is the time for the unstoppable courage to preserve and protect our health, our families, and our livelihoods.

"For Earth Day 2022, we need to act (boldly), innovate (broadly), and implement (equitably). It's going to take all of us. All in. Businesses, governments, and citizens — everyone accounted for, and everyone accountable.

A partnership for the planet."

**"Among the most potent problems that need stronger action is the protection of environmental defenders. Danger and threat still lurk among indigenous communities that are directly affected by the encroachment of mining activities and infrastructure development."**

This is a call for unity — an urgent one that keeps resounding in the rumbling of volcanoes, the rush of floodwaters, the cracking of ice caps. The pandemic has even weighed in on the importance of this call to action, showing us within a year of lockdowns and quarantines how big a difference we can make as humans to bring back the kind of planet we used to have that would sustain us far into the future.

Remember what happened when industries paused, populations were forced to stay home and life slowed down? We got clearer skies, more breathable air, and animals in the wild coming out of hiding. A healthier environment, we saw, could be achieved, just as the Earth Day founders Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin and activist Denis Hayes on 22 April 1970 wanted people to desire enough to do their part.

How GMAW 'IS YOUR MIND?

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Millions of people in the US reportedly participated in the first Earth Day 52 years ago. The annual movement that inspired global celebration resulted in governments creating laws that would impact basic human needs like clean water, air, and energy sources, among others, to sustain life.

Through the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, a framework is available for all to do their share of "economic development and social prosperity while protecting the planet."

But frameworks are useless when they are simply relegated to words. It's just as bad as taking facts and embellishing them to suit one's ends.

This is why it's not just important, but crucial, to choose our next leaders with care.

As this year's Earth Hour movement also highlighted last 24 March, Filipino voters must look into each candidate's stance on biodiversity conservation and climate change.

All the hype about crowd volume in campaign rallies is for naught if we don't ask about the candidates' plans for or views on the environment.

If unity is the UniTeam's rallying cry, how does it plan to bring this about in the realm of the environment? While all presidential aspirants and their VPs recognize the urgency of the climate crisis, not all of them share views on so-called "green issues" including renewable energy, mining, and sharing resources in the West Philippine Sea.

What they all agree on is the need for reforestation and regulation of plastic use, but these have been reduced to general terms as it seems we have yet to see a more widespread application of solutions to these issues with long-term effects.

Among the most potent problems that need stronger action is the protection of "environmental defenders." Danger and threat still lurk among indigenous communities that are directly affected by the encroachment of mining activities and infrastructure development. Will our next leaders simply spout the right words but fail to protect our people, our land, and resources?

**“**  
*This is the moment to change it all – the business climate, the political climate, and how we take action on climate. Now is the time for the unstoppable courage to preserve and protect our health, our families, and our livelihoods.*



THE *How 'Lacson' is your man?*

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## Final stretch

**“ Although the elections are nearing, nothing is impossible in politics. This was the statement of former Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez in one of his interviews after Partido Reporma switched its support from Lacson to Robredo.**

Now, it's holding successive rallies in the different cities and provinces all over the country. These rallies took the form of variety shows and concerts to bring in more people, not necessarily supporters, from all walks of life. We can imagine the logistics and expenses made for the sound systems and equipment for all of this. The campaign battle is now on the number of estimated attendees within and surrounding the venue, and the accuracy of drone shots uploaded the following day on social media.

But all these activities were limited to two candidates only – survey frontrunner Bongbong Marcos and Vice-President Leni Robredo.

From today, only 17 days remain, or a little over two weeks, until election day on the 9th of May. We are all witnesses to how the campaign methods evolved, which quite depended on the Covid-19 pandemic. Last year, it began as a war waged over social media. We all saw how the vloggers took their sides and posted daily videos on the different platforms. From there, the campaign was brought to the streets through the use of caravans – the longer the caravan, the more media mileage it got.



QUO VADIS  
DARREN M. DE JESUS

These two leading candidates, albeit Bongbong enjoying a comfortable lead, have been enjoying most, if not all, of the attention since they have the machinery, support, and finances to spare and hold these mega-rallies. The consequence of this was the press conference held last Sunday by the presidential laggards, sans Senator Manny Pacquiao, who initially was supposed to attend but made the good call of not doing so.

The *ad hoc* press conference on Easter Sunday may be considered as a way to bring attention to those who needed it, with the hope to bring forth traction as we approach election day. However, the unplanned and unscripted press conference bit the candidates back. Clearly, nobody gained new voters from this unfortunate setting.

It was obvious that the proponent was Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, who was tricked by a sly reporter to say his proverbial soundbite that Vice President Robredo should withdraw her candidacy. It did not make sense at all, although the politics behind

may give it meaning 12 months after the proclamation of the next president, not named Robredo. The loser was unfortunately the most honest one, Senator Ping Lacson. His presence suggested that he consented to Moreno's motion for Robredo to withdraw but Lacson clarified otherwise later.

One may argue, on the other hand, that no candidate has enjoyed the lead as much as Bongbong insofar as the surveys have been saying. So we have to see if BBM can sustain this lead, or whether neutral political leaders will soon declare their support for either him or Robredo.

Although the elections are nearing, nothing is impossible in politics. This was the statement of former Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez in one of his interviews after Partido Reporma switched its support from Lacson to Robredo. A lot may happen, even in a span of 24 hours, in politics, himself being part of the recent political history's twists and turns, including the 2016 Presidential campaign of now President Rodrigo Duterte. Let's keep our eyes peeled until the final ballots are counted.

**“ The unplanned and unscripted press conference bit the candidates back. Clearly, nobody gained new voters from this unfortunate setting.**

For comments, email him at [darren.dejesus@gmail.com](mailto:darren.dejesus@gmail.com)



## Water: The world's greatest crisis

**A**N international nongovernment organization co-founded by Hollywood actor Matt Damon and water engineer Gary White has called for collective multi-stakeholder action to solve a looming global water crisis.



FINEX  
FILES

**J. ALBERT  
GAMBOA**

ing Undersecretary Roderick Planta, Housing and Settlement Director Tri Dewi Virgianti from Indonesia's Ministry of Planning and Development, RCBC President and Chief Executive Officer Eugene

In a webinar titled "The Worth of Water" last month, Water.org presented financial solutions aimed at ending the crisis. It convened the public and private sectors to engage in a dialogue on how to collaborate and address the issue of sustainable access to safe water and sanitation.

Water.org Inc., founded in 2009 after Damon and White met at an international summit on global poverty, now has representative offices in 17 countries worldwide. To date, it has reached more than 43 million people with its advocacy of empowering women to increase their access to water and sanitation at home through affordable financing while providing them greater resilience to Covid-19 and other diseases.

Crizelda "Cay" Santos, Water.org regional director for Southeast Asia, said: "Water has many values, from the household level to national and global infrastructures. The challenge of water is multifaceted, ranging from the need for capacity development to empowering communities and even the challenge of data."

Water.org has partnered with public utilities and financial institutions to bring sustainable access to sanitation and safe water. It may be noted that 771 million people lack access to safe water at home while 1.7 billion people — one-fourth of the world's population — do not have access to a toilet.

Webinar attendees came from multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank Group, International Finance Corp. and the Asian Development Bank, as well as aid organizations like the US Agency for International Development. Representing financial institutions were the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC), Rizal MicroBank and Cantilan Bank.

Keynote speakers were Socioeconomic Plan-

Acevedo, RCBC Chief Innovation and Inclusion Officer Lito Villanueva, Cantilan Bank Executive Vice President and Chief Technology Officer Tanya Hotchkiss, World Bank Indonesia water and sanitation specialist Risyana Sulkarma and Aurelie Chardon, IFC Asia Pacific regional lead for urban infrastructure and services.

Among the presenters were the ASA Philippines Foundation, KOMIDA of Indonesia and Chamroetun Microfinance of Cambodia. These financial institutions emphasized the technical assistance and capacity-building support from Water.org that allowed them to implement a facility called WaterCredit. As a result, some 16 million people in these three countries have gained access to sanitation and safe water.

PERPAMSI of Indonesia and Palawan Water from the Philippines also gave presentations during the webinar. Their partnerships with Water.org are intended to improve their operational capacities and financial readiness so that they can improve and expand water services to more households.

Each of us has a water story to tell and at one time or another experienced the challenges brought about by lack of access to this precious resource. Santos emphasized that the water crisis was not a public sector problem alone while Chardon highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships.

For millions of women and children, access to safe water can turn problems into great potential — thereby unlocking opportunities in education, health and the economy at large.

*The author is the chief finance officer of the Asian Center for Legal Excellence and chairman of the Finex Media Affairs Committee. The opinion expressed herein does not necessarily reflect the views of these institutions and The Manila Times.*



## Intensify efforts to keep water available to consumers -- Poe

**SENATOR Grace Poe asked water concessionaires and concerned government agencies to double down on their collaborative efforts to mitigate the impact of the dry season on water supply across the country.**

"We need all hands on deck to ably manage the water requirements of our consumers especially in the face of another possible virus surge. Complacency certainly has no place in these back-to-back threats," Poe said.

Water level at Angat Dam is dwindling due to lack of rainfall, threatening the supply of water in the National Capital Region and adjacent provinces, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Located in Norzagaray, Bulacan, the dam supplies about 90 percent of Metro Manila's water requirement. The reservoir is also the major source of irrigation for farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga.

"We expect our water concessionaires to deliver on their commitments under their renewed franchise and revised concession agreement, and complete the projects necessary to have safe and reliable water on the taps," the chairperson

of the Senate public services committee reminded.

In its Resolution No. 2022-02-CA, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office earlier imposed a penalty of P63,973,362 to Maynilad Water Services Inc. (Maynilad) and ordered it to give rebates to affected west zone consumers for the "unusual and prolonged water service interruptions from December 2021 to February 2022."

Maynilad announced on Wednesday that it will implement new rotational water service interruptions "to maximize limited supply and ensure all customers will have some water supply daily," citing the National Water Resources Board's move to further reduce raw water allocation from Angat Dam for the concessionaire starting June 27.

"The dry season comes year in and year out. It shouldn't be an outright excuse for unduly prolonging water service interruptions when definitely much can still be done," Poe said.

"It would be a disservice to fail our people in their most basic need at this time of struggle to recover from the pandemic," Poe added. **Marlon Purificacion**



STRATEGIC  
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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



04-22-22

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**EARTH DAY CLEANUP** — Volunteers remove plastic tangled in the young mangroves in a village along the coast of Davao City. Earth Day is being observed worldwide today, April 22, 2022. (Keith Bacongco)

22 APRIL 2022, FRIDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

# COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Philippines records 134 new COVID-19 cases, lowest in almost 2 years

ABS-CBN News Posted at Apr 21 2022 08:04 PM



Residents get their COVID-19 vaccination at the Mandaluyong City Hall on April 19, 2022. The Mandaluyong City Health Department continues with its vaccination as well as booster jabs to all its citizens. Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News/file

MANILA - The Philippines recorded 134 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, the lowest daily tally in almost 2 years, or since May 8, 2020.

The number of active cases 16,771, which is also the lowest so far in 2022, according to ABS-CBN Data Analytics Team head Edson Guido.

Of the fresh infections, 53 are from Metro Manila.

The country's total cases climbed to 3,683,865.

The Department of Health also logged 66 new deaths due to the disease, raising the total to 60,056.

**Edson C. Guido** @EdsonCGuido

**BREAKING:** DOH reports 134 new cases today. The lowest single-day tally in nearly two years or since May 8, 2020. ✓

DOH also reports 66 new deaths.

The number of active cases is the lowest so far in 2022 (and lowest since December 31, 2021) ✓

NCR with 53 new cases today.

**Nationwide Cases Data**

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Dead
3,683,865	16,771	3,607,036	60,056

**Weekly Cases by Date of Onset of Illness**

6:48 PM - Apr 21, 2022

306 likes, Reply, Retweet

Read 11 replies





The Department of Health said the country logged over 1,600 new COVID-19 infections from April 11 to 17 or around 239 average daily cases.

This is 12 percent lower compared to the previous week.

The Philippines confirmed its first COVID-19 case in January 2020 in a Chinese woman who arrived from Wuhan City, China where the disease is believed to have first emerged.

Some 67 million or 74.55 percent of the target 90 million people in the country have been fully vaccinated against the respiratory disease. Of those who received their primary series, 12.7 million have received their booster shots.

The government earlier placed more areas under Alert Level 1 until the end of April.

The Philippines will likely keep Alert Level 1 as the lowest step in COVID-19 restrictions until President Rodrigo Duterte's term ends, said Health Secretary Francisco Duque.



# Vaccine experts' decision for 2nd booster shot out soon

By Lade Jean Kabagani [April 21, 2022, 5:11 pm](#)



(File photo)

**MANILA** – The recommendation of the Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC) for the rollout of the second booster administration will be out soon, Vaccine Expert Panel chairperson Dr. Nina Gloriani said on Thursday.

At the Laging Handa public briefing, Gloriani said the National Vaccination Operations Center (NVOC) is ready to fully implement the administration of second booster shots to eligible populations as soon as the HTAC officially issues its recommendation.

Eligible for a second booster dose are those belonging to the vulnerable population such as healthcare workers, the elderly, and persons with comorbidity.

Those who wish to avail of the second booster should bring their vaccine card, indicating that they have completed the two Covid-19 primary series and first booster shot as well as their identification card, when going to the inoculation sites.

Immunocompromised individuals are required to bring their medical certificates for further health assessment.

*“Hindi kailangang pareho [ang brand ng vaccine] dun sa first dose so kung ano ang available doon sa vaccination sites, iyon ang ating ibibigay. Actually, we prefer yung heterologous sana na booster kasi alam natin na ang data ‘dun mas maganda ang proteksyon na maibibigay ng heterologous (It’s not required that you will get a similar vaccine brand from your first dose so we will give whatever is available in the vaccination sites. Actually, we prefer a heterologous booster dose because we know the data showed it could give better protection),”* Gloriani said.

Gloriani also recommends a heterologous (mixed) second booster dose for those who received single-shot Janssen vaccines.

Health authorities will issue final guidelines on second booster administration following the HTAC recommendation.

Meanwhile, Gloriani said the Vaccine Expert Panel already suggested the provision of first booster shots for pediatric 12 to 17 age group and still waiting for the approval of the HTAC as there’s still an ongoing study on the matter. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1172643>



# Expert panel prefers switching brands for second COVID-19 booster dose

Philstar.com April 21, 2022 | 5:31pm



Individuals get inoculated with AstraZeneca vaccine in a health clinic in Bocobo, Ermita, Manila on Jan. 21, 2022 as part of the government program dubbed as "Resbakuna sa Botika".

The STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The country's vaccine expert panel prefers that a heterologous or a different vaccine brand is given as a second booster, its head said Thursday.

Last week, the Food and Drug Administration authorized a second booster shot for senior citizens, immunocompromised individuals, and health workers.

"Hindi kailangan pareho doon sa dati, sa first dose. So kung ano 'yung available sa local government unit or vaccination sites, 'yun ang ating ibibigay," said Dr. Nina Gloriani, head of the expert panel.

(It doesn't have to be the same vaccine brand as before, as the first dose. We'll give whatever is available in the local government unit or vaccination sites.)

"Actually, we prefer 'yung heterologous sana 'yung booster kasi alam natin na ang data doon mas maganda. Mas maganda ang proteksyon na binibigay ng heterologous," she added.

(Actually, we prefer heterologous booster because we know it gives better protection.)

According to Gloriani, the National Vaccination Operations Center (NVOC) is ready for the rollout of second booster shots and is just waiting for the final recommendation of the Health Technology Assessment Council.

The FDA allowed the administration of a second booster to vulnerable populations at least four months after the first booster. The additional dose can be given earlier to moderately and severely immunocompromised patients subject to the attending physician's assessment.

More than 67 million people have completed vaccination against COVID-19. Of the figure, only 12.7 million have been given booster shots.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/04/21/2175793/expert-panel-prefers-switching-brands-second-covid-19-booster-dose>

22 APRIL 2022, FRIDAY



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