

27 JULY 2022, WEDNESDAY



NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR reclassifies 4 Luzon caves for proper management, conservation

Published on: July 26, 2022

By DENR

QUEZON CITY -- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has approved the reclassification of four caves in the provinces of Abra, Quezon, and Albay for proper management and conservation.

The DENR, through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), Regional and Provincial offices, reclassified from Class I to Class II the Ganway Cave in Brgy. Malamsit, Penarrubia town and the Quitinday Cave in Brgy. Quitinday, Jovellar town, both in the province of Albay.

Sung Wan Cave in Brgy. Lawigue, Tayabas City, Quezon province was also reclassified from Class I to Class II.

Meanwhile, Palale Cave in Brgy. Ibaba Palale in Tayabas City was moved from Class II to I.

DENR refers to Class I caves as those with delicate and fragile geological formations, threatened species, and archeological and paleontological values.

Caves under this category may only be used for “mapping, photography, educational, and scientific purposes” due to their natural values and hazardous conditions. These are closed for ecotourism activities.

Meanwhile, Class II caves contain areas or portions with hazardous conditions and sensitive geological, archeological, cultural, historical, and biological values or high-quality ecosystems.

Caves under Class II can be used for guided educational tours and visits led by experienced cavers.

DENR OIC Secretary Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr. said the classification of the caves is pursuant to the DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-29 or the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9072 or the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act of 2001 to assess the value of the cave and ascertain its appropriate use.

Under the law, the DENR is tasked to plan, develop, and implement a national program for the management, protection, and conservation of caves and cave resources.

“Finding the middle ground where the critical importance of caves to the country’s biodiversity and the critical role they have to the nation’s socio-cultural heritage meet demonstrates the distinct mandate of the DENR to secure the sustainability of the country’s rich natural resources and their benefits to our people,” Adobo said.

With nature-based ecotourism as a critical sector to the country’s tourism industry, Adobo pointed out the pandemic “has highlighted the crucial role the DENR plays ” in setting the standards on the development of country’s natural resources, like water bodies and caves, according to their beneficial uses.

“These initiatives set a road to more resilient and regenerative nature-based tourism practices that illustrate their natural resilience and, as a result, enable the public to enjoy these natural assets in perpetuity,” Adobo added.

Before their reclassification, the caves have been assessed for safety and supply of oxygen, high endemism and presence of threats and hazards, safety of its areas as potential ecotourism sites, and absence of hazardous conditions.



DENR-BMB OIC-Director Natividad Y. Bernardino said that concerned DENR field offices have conducted a re-assessment prior to the reclassification through their cave assessment teams to evaluate changes in the cave and cave resources.

“Caves harbor unique fauna, some of which can be sources of raw materials for food, while others such as bats contribute to pollination that provide food for people and other animals,” Bernardino said.

She reminded the public to follow the protocols for safe caving.

“Visit tourism centers and ask for Department of Tourism-accredited cave guides who will help in navigating caves safely,” Bernardino said. “Wear proper caving attire and follow proper cave decorum to minimize the impact of ecotourism on caves, as well as ensure visitor safety.”
(DENR)



DENR, UNDP unite for benefit-sharing of CL genetic resources

Published on: July 26, 2022

By Marie Joy Carbungco



CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga (PIA) -- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) partnered with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other stakeholders to strengthen initiatives on access and benefit sharing (ABS) of genetic resources in Central Luzon.

During an inception workshop held at Hacienda Gracia in Lubao town, DENR Regional Executive Director Paquito Moreno Jr. explained that the project aims to protect biodiversity and natural resources by pooling together resources and making knowledge accessible to empower each one to play their part in environment protection.

“We encounter a multitude of threats that we protect biodiversity from such as illegal logging, poaching, and unsustainable practices. So this is an opportunity to boost conservation efforts of indigenous trees in Central Luzon, which would likewise be supplemental to the government’s existing reforestation program, as well as in the efforts to sustain the population of native trees that prevent them from potential extinction,” he said.

In Central Luzon, Moreno noted that though the project will initially focus on the Banaba tree, it will ultimately represent a multi-sectoral effort to ensure that caring and protecting the environment goes hand-in-hand with benefitting from the flora and fauna.

“This will improve the value chain of Banaba and soon, all species, ensuring that we are ever more conscious of our dependence on nature for our survival through the challenges of climate change and economic stress,” he said.

With its medicinal properties, the market potential of Banaba offers high profitability and accessibility as the tree is found all over Central Luzon where it is typically planted along roadsides.



Research shows that a tea made from boiling its leaves is used to maintain kidney health and lower blood sugar. Its bark is said to be good for diarrhea, while its root extracts act as a pain reliever.

For her part, Biodiversity Management Bureau Deputy Director and ABS National Project Chair Natividad Bernardino said the multi-sectoral initiative funded by the Global Environment Facility is an opportunity to advance the inclusion of endemic and abundant genetic resources in the value chain, consequently increasing their market value. (CLJD/MJSC-PIA 3)



Environment stakeholders in Central Luzon gather for an inception workshop to strengthen initiatives on access and benefit sharing of genetic resources in the region. This is spearheaded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the United Nations Development Programme. (Marie Joy S. Carbungco/PIA 3)



DENR plants 230 bamboo seedlings along Bamban river

Published on: July 26, 2022 Updated as of July 26, 2022 1:09 pm

By Gabriela Liana Barela

TARLAC CITY (PIA) -- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) planted about 230 bamboo seedlings along Bamban river.

This aims to boost reforestation and Manila Bay rehabilitation efforts in the province of Tarlac.

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office Head Celia Esteban said a total 3,600-square meter portion of Bamban River was covered in the tree-planting undertaking.

“DENR has regularly conducted clean-up activities, in collaboration with partner agencies and the 40 estero rangers deployed in the area who collected an average of about 14,500 kilos of waste daily,” Esteban said.

For his part, DENR Regional Executive Director Paquito Moreno Jr. said this is essential in the improvement of rivers.

“Planting bamboos is a crucial component of rehabilitating denuded forest areas, facilitating rapid recovery of river easements and stabilizing river banks, particularly in Manila Bay areas in Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, and Tarlac,” Moreno said.

Since the start of Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program in 2019, about 141,000 kilometer-stretch of river systems have been planted with 38,390 bamboo.

This year, 15,000 clean-up activities were conducted in the region yielding 140,000 tons of wastes. (CLJD/GLSB-PIA 3)



About 230 Bamboo seedlings were planted along Bamban river in Tarlac as part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. (DENR Central Luzon)



Ilocos Norte to recognize best practices in mining

By Leilanie Adriano July 25, 2022, 9:35 pm



Provincial Government of Ilocos Norte logo

LAOAG CITY – Ilocos Norte is set to recognize the public and the private sector’s initiatives and exemplary achievements in promoting responsible mining.

Provincial administrator Yvette Convento-Leynes confirmed this on Monday as she reported that the awarding of outstanding partners is set on July 27 in time for a provincial mining summit at the JLP Resort in Barangay Suba, Paoay, Ilocos Norte.

“One of the highlights of the summit is to recognize and give special wards to our outstanding quarry permittees who adhere to our rules and regulations as well as those who help us in apprehending violators,” she said, stressing the importance of the quarry industry as a major source of local revenue in the province.

“This is the only way to thank them for the contributions they are giving to the province,” she said.

The provincial government, however, has yet to announce the awardees.

To date, the Provincial Quarry Office reported that there are about 60 permit holders of commercial sand and gravel and 22 permittees of industrial sand and gravel.

Hosted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environment and Management Bureau and in cooperation with the Ilocos Norte government, the mining summit aims to discuss pressing issues and concerns for the minerals industry in the region.

Existing quarry permittees, including new permit applicants, are expected to attend to help them become updated of the best practices and new mining policies.

Earlier, the Commission on Audit commended the Provincial Quarry Office under the provincial government for increasing its quarry collections to PHP43.8 million in 2021 as compared to the PHP26.8 million in the previous year. **(PNA)**



Marcos' SONA: Green groups say no to nuclear, yes to renewable energy

By Catalina Ricci S. Madarang - July 26, 2022 - 5:35 PM



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. speaks as Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri and House Speaker Martin Romualdez applaud during his first State of the Nation Address, in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, July 25, 2022. (Aaron Favila/Pool via Reuters)

Two environmental organizations bat for renewable energy over nuclear power, both of President **Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** bore his plans for the energy sector during his first **State of the Nation Address** on July 25.

Marcos tackled the need to build more power plants and look for other sources to address the growing energy demand.

He then recommended revisiting nuclear power plants as an alternative source of energy under his term.

"I believe also it is time to re-examine our strategy towards building nuclear power plants in the Philippines," Marcos said.

"We will comply of course with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regulations for nuclear power plants as they have been strengthened after Fukushima. In the area of nuclear power, there have been new technologies developed that allow smaller scale modular nuclear plants and other derivations thereof," he added.

How green groups reacted

Greenpeace Philippines and **Youth Advocates for Climate Action (YACAP)**, however, voiced their opposition to the government's consideration of using nuclear power as an energy source in the Philippines.

In a social media post, YACAP pointed out that the high costs of constructing nuclear power plants outweigh the benefits of it for Filipinos.

"Although relying on nuclear power plants may lower the cost of electricity for Filipinos, building one would take billions, not to mention the possible health and environmental hazards and contamination power plants may impose on the public," said the youth organization.

YACAP urged Marcos to instead look into democratizing and harnessing renewable energy sources for a fossil fuel-free Philippines in the future.



“With the country’s favorable geographical location, as he said in his speech, it would be much better to harness solar, wind and hydro energies to genuinely solve energy insecurity and the inflation of the energy rate in the Philippines,” it said.



Greenpeace, meanwhile, posted a popular meme that referenced Mr. Incredible, a character from Disney’s “The Incredibles” to express its reaction to Marcos’ key points on energy and climate change.

“Hirap ng mixed signals,” the post reads.

The org then asked its followers: “What are your thoughts about the President’s 1st SONA, particularly his points on climate change and energy development?”

The meme was [based](#) on the official art of Mr. Incredibles for “The Incredibles 2”, a sequel to the animated superhero franchise that was released in 2018.

For this one, the green group used the meme format to juxtapose Marcos’ points on renewable energy (solar, hydropower) with his push on non-renewable energy (nuclear, natural gas).

Renewable energy, at ‘top’ of agenda

While environmental groups frowned upon Marcos’ pitch to explore nuclear power options, the president stressed that renewable energy would be the priority in his climate policy.

“The use of renewable energy is at the top of our climate agenda. We will increase our use of renewable energy sources such as hydropower, geothermal power, solar, and wind,” he said.

The call to drop the nuclear power stance was on the “green wish list” that environmental groups released for Marcos before his inauguration.

Others on social media, meanwhile, expressed support for the president’s recommendation of using nuclear power plants.



“It is about time. The nuclear power plant will provide a long-term steady supply of power (inexpensive). Nuclear power plant projects are based on science and technology — that would provide a long-term steady supply of power (electricity),” one Facebook user [said](#).

“Bababa ang presyo ng kuryente, madaming investment pa ang papasok sa bansa,” another Facebook user [commented](#).

For Marcos’ ally in the Senate, Sherwin Gatchalian, nuclear energy must be studied “very carefully.”

Gatchalian pointed out, as Marcos did, that there are more modern options on this track that can be explored.



PBBM, 'NAKATUON' SA PAGGAMIT NG RENEWABLE ENERGY LABAN SA EPEKTO NG CLIMATE CHANGE

by **Rashid Locsin** July 26, 2022



Inihayag ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. ang paggamit ng renewable energy upang maibsan ang epekto ng climate change sa bansa.

Sa unang State of the Nation Address (SONA), sinabi ni Pangulong Marcos Jr. na bagama’t maliit lamang ang kontribusyon ng bansa sa climate change ay tayo ang isa sa mga pinakanaapektuhan ng mga kalamidad na dulot nito.

Ayon sa pangulo, mas gagamit tayo ngayon ng renewable energy sources at mag-iinvest din ang bansa ng mga teknolohiya.



PBBM presents 19 priority measures to Congress

Published on: July 26, 2022 Updated as of July 26, 2022 11:37 am

By Andrea Bancud and Eunice dela Cruz

QUEZON CITY, (PIA) -- President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. called on the Congress to pass nineteen (19) priority bills of the administration in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 25, 2022.

“As I am here today addressing the legislature, allow me now to propose legislation that we would like you to pass in support of these programs,” Marcos Jr. said before the lawmakers at the plenary hall of the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City.



National Government Rightsizing Program (NGRP)

Marcos proposed to lawmakers the National Government Rightsizing Program (NGRP) that seeks to enhance the government’s institutional capacity to perform its mandate and provide better services, while ensuring optimal and efficient use of resources.

“The rightsizing efforts will involve conducting a comprehensive strategic review of functions, programs, and projects that will cut across various agencies,” he said.

He added that the NGRP will entail a comprehensive strategic review of the functions, operations, organization, systems and processes of the different agencies, and massive and transformational initiatives in agencies concerned, such as mergers, consolidation, splitting, transfer, and even the abolition of some offices.

Budget Modernization Bill

According to Marcos, the Budget Modernization Bill seeks to institutionalize the Cash-based Budgeting System of former President Rodrigo Duterte’s Executive Order No. 91.

The proposed bill aims to “strengthen fiscal discipline in the allocation and use of budget resources by ensuring that every peso budgeted by the government would lead to the actual delivery of programs and projects.”

“The full implementation of the CBS is timely and vital as the government executes response and recovery plans post- pandemic,” he said.

Valuation Reform Bill and Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation Act (PIFITA)

The President also urged lawmakers to pass two packages under the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program — Tax Package 3 which is the Valuation Reform Bill, and the Tax Package 4 on Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation Act (PIFITA), respectively.



The Valuation Reform Bill provides for the establishment of real property values and valuation standards across the country and develops a Real Property Information System that provides for the database of all real property transactions and declarations in the country.

Meanwhile, the proposed PIFITA reforms the taxation of capital income and financial services by redesigning the financial sector taxation into simpler, fairer, more efficient and a revenue neutral tax system. It also adopts a regionally competitive tax system.

E-Government Act and E-Commerce Law

Marcos also seeks the enactment of the proposed E-Government Act, which establishes an E-Government Master Plan that covers all e-government services and processes.

He also wants Congress to pass the Internet Transaction Act or E-Commerce Law which establishes an effective regulation of commercial activities through the internet or electronic means to ensure that consumer rights and data privacy are protected, innovation is encouraged, fair advertising practices and competition are promoted, online transactions are secured, intellectual property rights are protected, and product standards and safety are observed.

Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery (GUIDE)

President Marcos said that this measure aims to provide financial assistance to distressed enterprises critical to economic recovery through programs and initiatives to be implemented by the Land Bank of the Philippines, the Development Bank of the Philippines and the Philippine Guarantee Corporation.

This addresses the liquidity or solvency problems of MSMEs and strategically important industries, to encourage their continued operations and maintain employment.

Establishment of a Medical Reserve Corps, National Disease Prevention Management Authority, Virology Institute of the Philippines (VIP), and the Department of Water Resources

Marcos also asked lawmakers to approve the establishment of a Medical Reserve Corps, National Disease Prevention Management Authority, creation of Virology Institute of the Philippines, and the Department of Water Resources.

Unified System of Separation, Retirement and Pension

This measure seeks to grant a monthly disability pension to military and uniformed personnel who retired by reasons of disability. This is in lieu of disability benefits being provided under existing laws.

E-Governance Act

The E-Governance Act promotes the use of Internet, Intranet and other ICT which is expected to provide opportunities for every Filipino.

National Land Use Act

President Marcos seeks to enact the National Land Use Act to provide a “rational and holistic management and development of the country’s land and water resources.”

National Defense Act

Seeking to amend the National Defense Act of 1935 and provide a change in the military structure of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Marcos pushes for National Defense Act.



Mandatory Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and National Service Training Program (NSTP)

The President pursues the reinstatement of the ROTC as mandatory component of the senior high school programs in all public and private tertiary-level educational institutions to “motivate, train, organize, and mobilize the students for national defense preparedness, disaster preparedness and capacity building for risk-related situations.”

Enactment of an Enabling Law for the National Gas Industry

This enactment is expected to foster the development of the Midstream Natural Gas Industry in the country.

Amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act or EPIRA (Republic Act No. 9136)

The President said these amendments aim to “improve the implementation of the law’s provisions and enhance its effectiveness to address high cost of electricity, alleged market collusion and insufficient power supply.”

The bill is also aiming to restructure the Energy Regulation Commission (ERC) to cultivate accountability and to improve the commission’s government system.

Amendments to the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law

According to the President, this will improve the implementation of the Public Private Partnership or PPP. The purposes of these amendments are as follows: (1) address the ambiguities in the existing law; (2) address the bottlenecks and challenges affecting the implementation of the PPP Program; and (3) foster a more competitive and enabling environment for PPPs.

President Marcos said it is not his intention to diminish the risks and challenges that the country is facing but he said he is also seeing “sunlight filtering through these dark clouds.”

The President is confident that the country will endure.

Ending his first SONA, the President said, “I know this in my mind, I know it in my heart. I know it in my very soul...the state of the nation is sound.” (EDelaCruz and ABancud - PIA CPSD)



EDITORIAL - Renewables

The Philippine Star July 27, 2022 | 12:00am



Since 2005, among the tourist draws in Ilocos Norte have been the modern windmills in Bangui town. Private firm Northwind Power Development Corp. set up the wind farm using turbine generator units provided by a Danish firm. Ayala Corp. firm AC Energy has taken over the operation, which has inspired the construction of more wind farms in other parts of the country.

In his first State of the Nation Address, President Marcos cited the wind farm in his home province as he promised incentives for investments in developing cleaner sources of energy, including wind, solar, geothermal, hydropower and natural gas.

The main issue raised against renewables is the higher cost compared to coal and, under normal circumstances, petroleum products. The initial investment required for shifting to renewable energy, such as the use of durable solar panels in office buildings, can also be steep. The government will have to find ways to make renewable energy more affordable.

A more contentious issue is the President's call for a review of the policy on nuclear energy. He indicated that the controversial Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, built during his late father's regime and mothballed after the people power revolt, may no longer be revived. Instead, "smaller scale modular nuclear plants and other derivations" will be explored through public-private partnerships.

The Duterte administration began exploring this option in its final months, with energy officials visiting projects in the United States. Opponents of nuclear energy, however, point out that the Philippines is located within the Pacific Ring of Fire, with frequent powerful earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that may cause a catastrophic accident in a nuclear plant.

Environmental advocates also point out that to date, there has been no technology that adequately addresses the problem of nuclear waste disposal. Efforts to recycle the waste have gone nowhere. This should be a significant concern for anyone who sees the importance of shifting to renewable energy.

If even modular nuclear power plants are planned, the government and its private sector partner will also likely have to hurdle NIMBY: a not-in-my-backyard stance from affected communities.

Until safer technology is developed for harnessing nuclear power for peaceful uses, the push for renewables for the country's energy needs should do for now. As the President himself has pointed out, the country has wind, sun, geothermal, water and natural gas resources in abundant supply. All that's needed is their proper harnessing.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2022/07/27/2198240/editorial-renewables>



Revoke LNG plant in San Carlos City – bishop

By [Eugene Y. Adiong](#)

July 27, 2022

BACOLOD CITY: Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of the Diocese of San Carlos together with different environmental groups in Negros Occidental asked the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) of Negros Occidental to revoke their resolution of non-objection (RONO) to the proposed 300-megawatt liquified natural gas (LNG) combined cycle power plant in San Carlos City.

Alminaza, in a statement, said they maintain that the RONO from the SP "is premature, invalid, and is not representative of the multiple stakeholders from San Carlos who openly objected against the LNG project during the public scoping."

Alminaza said the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the project is "still under preparation" by the proponent, and that Department of the Interior and Local Government memorandum circular 22-018 states that local government units cannot issue a letter of no objection without an EIA, therefore deeming the non-objection invalid.

"We appeal to board members of the SP to adhere to their duty in protecting the interests of our people and the health of our environment," Alminaza said.

"This is being echoed by our fisherfolk communities in San Carlos, who stood up against the project during the public scoping," he added.

Environment groups called on leaders, both from the city and the province, "to stand in solidarity with the residents of San Carlos and all stakeholders in protecting Tañon Strait, promoting healthy and sustainable fishing communities, and maintaining San Carlos fossil-free."

Alminaza added that the power plant, which was proposed by San Miguel Corp.-owned Reliance Energy Development Inc., pulled out its coal plants in San Carlos but simply replaced it with another fossil fuel that is "no less dangerous."

"We already know that while it is true gas would produce less carbon dioxide than coal, it will instead release large amounts of methane in the atmosphere which can trap heat at a much greater capacity for a period of time. It makes no sense for Negros Occidental to turn to fossil gas when we have overflowing renewables that are more than enough to meet our power needs," Alminaza added.



P500,000 illegally cut narra intercepted in Kalinga

Published July 26, 2022, 8:24 PM

by [Comanda Rizaldy C.](#)

PINUKPUK, Kalinga – Over P500,000 worth of illegally cut narra lumber was intercepted by the Kalinga Provincial Police Office and Regional Intelligence Division of the Police Regional Office-Cordillera in Barangay Catabugan here Tuesday, July 26.

Police said they received information from a concerned citizen that a black Isuzu 10-wheel dump truck with conduction sticker 034802 was loaded with illegally cut lumber.

The truck was intercepted at 9:30 a.m. and police found narra lumber in different dimensions without the proper documents.

Rodelio Licman dela Cruz, 42, of Magsaysay St., San Miguel, Bulacan, truck driver, was arrested.

Dela Cruz and the contraband were brought to Camp Juan M. Duyan, Bulanao Centro, Tabuk City.

Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer Imelda Casiwan conducted inventory and scaling of the confiscated lumber. She said 220 narra fitches in different dimensions with a total volume of 4, 807.67 board feet and valued at P575,920.22 were seized.



Hot logs sa Isabela nakulimbat



July 26, 2022 @ 3:03 PM 16 hours ago

ILAGAN CITY, ISABELA-Nasabat ng mga otoridad ang iligal na pinutol na kahoy o 'hot logs' na pinapaanod sa Abuan River sa babagi ng Cabisera 10 dito sa nasabing lungsod.

Sa ipinarating na ulat kay PCol. Julio R.Go, Provincial Director ng Isabela Police Provincial Office o IPPO, isang konsernadong mamamayan ang nagpaabot ng impormasyon sa mga otoridad kaugnay sa nangyayaring water logging activities.

Dahil dito agad nagsagawa ng anti-illegal logging operation ang mga kasapi ng 201st Maneuver Company Regional Mobile Force Battalion at Community Environment and Natural Resources Office o CENRO Naguilian.

Narekober ang 18 piraso ng common hardwood round logs partikular na ang Red Lauan at Tanguile habang wala namang nakita na may-ari sa mga ito.

Pansamantala nasa pangangalaga na ng CENRO Naguilian ang mga narekober na hot logs na patuloy na iniimbestigahan kung sino ang nasa likod sa naturang illegal logging activities. **Rey Velasco**



Heed call of science in response to pandemic, climate crisis—Legarda

Published July 26, 2022, 4:14 PM

by [Mario Casayuran](#)

Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda on Tuesday, July 26 called for unity toward resilience as the country's priority strategy in its response to the pandemic and the climate crisis.

In her first privilege speech delivered in the 19th Congress, Legarda, an environmentalist, said 'We need to heed the call of science and our experts to pursue and realize economy-wide and community-based measures that aim at reaching our goals sooner rather than later.'

Legarda said President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. himself said in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday that government's response to the climate crisis should be just as urgent.

"Let's invest in where it truly matters so our development gains won't be wasted come another typhoon or disaster. Let's strive for a better normal by enabling genuine and lasting resilience for all," she explained.

"Together, let us lead the way towards a resilient and sustainable pandemic recovery for all Filipinos, for all species in the world, and for our future generations," she added.

Legarda impressed upon her colleagues that "We are obviously living in challenging times of climatic changes that are unparalleled over thousands to millions of years."

"The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) has warned us that today's temperatures are at the highest in 125,000 years. We are now at the point of no return in our battle against climate change," she warned.

Legarda said the report also tells Filipinos with absolute certainty that the human factor on climate change is "unequivocal".

"If we fail to heed the science and address the causes of climate change, there would be dire consequences on our society and ecosystems," she added.



DTI eyes ore processing as value-added to mining

Wena Cos, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jul 26 2022 06:46 PM



Aerial photo of the Taganito Mining site in Claver, Surigao del Norte during President Duterte's aerial inspection on February 23, 2021. *Toto Lozano, Presidential Photo*

MANILA - The Philippines needs to develop an ore-processing industry to add value to its mining industry, the Department of Trade and Industry said on Tuesday.

Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo Pascual said the country is a source of metals such as nickel, cobalt and copper.

"Unfortunately we have been selling these metals as ores. We are exporting them as ores and we are not able to maximize value addition," Pascual said.

"We need to move towards further processing so we are able to generate more value addition locally before we export," Pascual explained at the post-SONA economic briefing attended by members of Marcos' cabinet.

Pursuing this venture will create higher quality and high-paying jobs, Pascual said, noting that these metals are critical to new and emerging industries such as the manufacturing of electric-vehicle batteries, and hyperscaler devices.

During his presidential campaign, Marcos said he hopes to generate additional value in the mining industry by further processing metals before they are exported.

"Ang laki ng ating mga natural resources dito sa Pilipinas. Dapat siguro lalo na in these difficult times, we should take advantage of that," Marcos previously said in an interview with celebrity talk show host Boy Abunda.

The president, however, expressed he is "wary" about open-pit mining due to the pollution it creates and the dangers it poses to nearby communities.

Pascual meanwhile said while there are "roadblocks" to industrialization such as energy sources and logistics, he is confident that the Marcos administration will address these challenges.

Included in Marcos' first State of the Nation Address was a push to create and take advantage of renewable energy resources.

Among his 19 priority measures is the enactment of an Enabling Law for the Natural Gas Industry.



"This seeks to foster the development of the Midstream Natural Gas Industry in a bid to strengthen Philippine energy security by diversifying the country's primary sources of energy and promoting the role of natural gas as a complementary fuel to variable renewable energy," Marcos said on Monday during his address.

Pascual also supported Marcos' call to reopen the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant to create an additional source of energy for the country, despite concerns from environmental and health groups.

Logistical challenges will also be solved through new infrastructure, Pascual said. The "fragmented" logistics sector will be improved, lowering logistical costs, he said.

A massive infrastructure plan was also laid out by the Department of Public Works and Highways at the post-SONA economic briefing, which included 11 mega bridges connecting different high economic activity areas in the country and several islands to mainlands, as well as an expressway shortening travel time from the Ilocos region to Bicol region from 20 hours to 9 hours.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/07/26/22/dti-eyes-ore-processing-as-value-added-to-mining?fbclid=IwAR3rkS0_xJOS71Qkff1Ez3JpaZePCva8MoXH9uIfxxPwInqDcX6kKD1HNNU



Volunteer groups vow to sustain mangrove planting in NegOr

By Mary Judaline Partlow July 26, 2022, 7:45 pm



MANGROVE REFORESTATION. Volunteers plant 20,000 mangrove seedlings in mudflats at the boardwalk vicinity in Tanjay City, Negros Oriental on July 23, 2022. The Allied Mangrove Planting Organizations in Negros Oriental aims to reach its goal of planting 600,000 mangrove trees by October. *(Photo courtesy of Sidney Lee)*

DUMAGUETE CITY – An alliance of volunteer groups in Negros Oriental has committed to planting thousands of mangrove trees yearly and relentlessly to protect the province's shorelines and support global efforts against climate change.

Sidney Lee, the planting coordinator of the Allied Mangrove Planting Organizations (AMPO), said in an interview on Tuesday that they target to plant 600,000 mangrove trees by October.

"We have already planted 520,000 mangrove trees since October 2015, and last July 23, we were able to plant an additional 20,000 mangrove seedlings at the boardwalk area in Tanjay City," Lee said.

"The remaining 60,000 mangrove trees for our target this year can be easily accomplished by then, as there are plenty of volunteers willing to undertake the activity each month."

He explained the need to raise awareness of the importance of mangroves, saying that not all people understand the role of these coastal trees or shrubs that provide not only shoreline protection but also food and shelter to animals.

"Mangroves are also a natural habitat for certain marine creatures and help in carbon sequestration that can result in reduced carbon footprint, no matter how small," Lee said. "They play a very important role in carbon sequestration, which do twice as much than terrestrial trees."

He said while mangroves are common in the Philippines, with 33 species growing throughout the archipelago, they are under threat because humans use these coastal trees for firewood.

The sea forest restoration effort in the province began in 2015 with the Negros Oriental ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) Association of Corps Commanders (NORACC), of which Lee is a member, taking the lead to plant one million mangrove trees in 10 years.

The local government unit of Tanjay City in Negros Oriental back then agreed to allow the NORACC to rehabilitate and restore 52 hectares of mudflats around its boardwalk to be planted with mangrove trees.

"This is our primary site for the massive mangrove forest restoration, with the 540,000 trees and seedlings already planted," Lee said.



The NORACC later spearheaded the informal coalition of AMPO, comprising 12 non-government organizations that have volunteered to join the advocacy to revive the declining mangrove forests in the Tanjay boardwalk, now a famous tourist destination.

He said in their early years, they planted 100,000 mangrove trees a year but the pandemic slowed down their efforts for about two years.

The boardwalk was locked down so the group had to find an alternative area in Banilad in this capital city, where they planted mangroves when the quarantine restrictions had already eased, Lee said.

“But our goal is to actually be able to plant one million mangrove trees at the boardwalk in 10 years, and we are optimistic that we can achieve that, many thanks to the volunteers from the government and non-government sectors, including the youth,” he added.

In the coming years, the alliance will go beyond the boardwalk mudflats to continue its advocacy for rejuvenating and planting more mangroves across the province.

Lee said as the world celebrates International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem on July 26, the alliance is hopeful that more organizations and individual volunteers would be educated on the importance of the mangrove ecosystem and become actively involved in their protection and conservation. **(PNA)**



Rizal LGU leads bamboo planting program in Baras, Rizal

Published July 26, 2022, 10:51 PM

by [Nel Andrade](#)

Continuing her mother's pro-environment program, the Ynares to Eco System (YES) to Green Program, Rizal Governor Nina Ricci Ynares-Chiongbian led the residents in planting of bamboo trees in Baras, Rizal as part of the activities for the National Disaster Resilience Month.

Some 300 bamboo saplings were planted in the upland area of Barangay San Juan in Baras by provincial government officials and employees, Barangay San Juan village leaders and residents, members of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology; Bureau of Fire Protection; Philippine National Police, Philippine Army; Parole and Probation Administration, Barangay Health Workers, and the YES team from the villages of the municipality.

Governor Ynares thanked the 14 localities in the province for their continued support to the YES Program that aims to propagate the pro-environment activities all over the province as a way of helping address flooding and other disaster related incidents.

Thousands of bamboos have been planted all over the province during the term of then Governor Rebecca Ynares.

Studies show that bamboos consume more carbon dioxide and give off 35 percent more oxygen, thus absorbing greenhouse gases in the environment, providing balance of carbon dioxide and oxygen in the air.

Online journals also point to bamboo as the plant that helps prevent soil erosion.



Binangonan residents, volunteers join Laguna Lake clean-up

Published July 26, 2022, 8:24 AM

by [Nel Andrade](#)

Residents and volunteers heeded the call of the municipal government of Binangonan, Rizal to continue preserving and protecting the Laguna Lake by joining the recent clean-up activity in the country's largest fresh water lake.

Mayor Cesar Ynares led local officials and employees and representatives of various sectors in the municipality in the simultaneous cleaning activity along the lakeshore of the Binangonan portion of the Laguna Lake recently as part of the observance of the National Disaster Resilience Month 2022.

The office of Mayor Ynares said the clean-up drive was participated in by municipal employees, Sanggunian Barangay of Libis, Binangonan, Office of Civil Defense, provincial government, Bureau of Fire Protection, police, Department of Public Works and Highways, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine Coast Guard, beneficiaries of the 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program), and other civilian volunteers and residents including members of the Barkadahan ng Kababaihan (BKB).

Laguna Lake is home to some fresh water species of milk fish, bighead, tilapia and kanduli, among others that are being supplied to wet markets in the province and in Metro Manila.

The lake is also a source of water for Manila Water that supplies potable water to its customers in the province.

The municipal government has been leading regular cleaning activities in the lake in response to the provincial government's pro-environment initiatives.



Binangonan residents join Laguna Lake clean-up

JUL 26, 2022, 2:56 PM

Kaithe Santos Writer

Laguna Lake clean-up with the help of residents and volunteers

Residents and volunteers responded to the appeal of the Binangonan local government to continue maintaining and protecting the Laguna Lake as they joined the most recent clean up of the largest freshwater lake in the country.

As part of the observance of National Disaster Resilience Month 2022, Mayor Cesar Ynares recently led local officials, employees, and representatives of several sectors in the municipality in a simultaneous of the lakeshore in Binangonan area of the Laguna Lake.

The office of Mayor Ynares said the clean-up was participated in by municipal employees, Sanggunian Barangay of Libis, Binangonan, Office of Civil Defense, provincial government, Bureau of Fire Protection, police, Department of Public Works and Highways, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine Coast Guard, beneficiaries of the 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program), and other civilian volunteers and residents including members of the Barkadahan ng Kababaihan (BKB). -Manila Bulletin

Bangus, bighead, tilapia, and kanduli are among other fresh water species found in Laguna Lake and are supplied to wet markets in the province and in Metro Manila.

The lake also serves as a water source for Manila Water, which provides potable water to its clients in the east zone of Metro Manila.

Source: <https://opinyon.net/national/binangonan-residents-join-laguna-lake-clean-up?fbclid=IwAR2S6YDZnMld9ypLjscAG3uL-5gX3Q11Vlt0WsCxx0jsPrcwLMFM8-eiDko>



Glaciers vanishing at record rate in Alps following heatwaves

July 26, 2022 | 5:02 pm



A WOMAN walks on the ice to a measuring point on the Pers Glacier near the Alpine resort of Pontresina, Switzerland, July 21. — REUTERS

MORTERATSCH GLACIER, Switzerland — From the way 45-year-old Swiss glaciologist Andreas Linsbauer bounds over icy crevasses, you would never guess he was carrying 10 kg of steel equipment needed to chart the decline of Switzerland's glaciers.

Normally, he heads down this path on the massive Morteratsch Glacier in late September, the end of the summer melt season in the Alps. But exceptionally high ice loss this year has brought him to this 15-square-kilometer amphitheater of ice two months early for emergency maintenance work.

The measuring poles he uses to track changes in the depth of the pack are at risk of dislodging entirely as the ice melts away and he needs to drill new holes.

The Alps' glaciers are on track for their highest mass losses in at least 60 years of record keeping, data shared exclusively with Reuters shows. By looking at the difference in how much snow fell in winter, and how much ice melts in the summer, scientists can measure how much a glacier has shrunk in any given year.

Since last winter, which brought relatively little snowfall, the Alps have sweltered through two big early summer heatwaves — including one in July marked by temperatures near 30 Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) in the Swiss mountain village of Zermatt.

During this heatwave, the elevation at which water froze was measured at a record high of 5,184 meters — at an altitude higher than Mont Blanc's — compared with the normal summer level of between 3,000-3,500 meters.

"It's really obvious that this is an extreme season," Mr. Linsbauer said, shouting over the roar of rushing meltwater as he checked the height of a pole jutting out of the ice.

Most of the world's mountain glaciers — remnants of the last ice age — are retreating due to climate change. But those in the European Alps are especially vulnerable because they are smaller with relatively little ice cover. Meanwhile, temperatures in the Alps are warming at around 0.3C per decade — around twice as fast as the global average.



If greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, the Alps glaciers are expected to lose more than 80% of their current mass by 2100. Many will disappear regardless of whatever emissions action is taken now, thanks to global warming baked in by past emissions, according to a 2019 report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Already, Morteratsch is much changed from the glacier depicted on the region's tourist maps. The long tongue that once reached deep into the valley below has shrunk back by nearly 3 kilometers (2 miles), while the depth of the snow and ice pack has thinned by up to 200 meters (656 feet). A parallel glacier Pers flowed into it until 2017 but has now receded so much that an expanding strip of grit lies between them.

The dire situation this year raises concern that the Alps' glaciers might vanish sooner than expected. With more years like 2022, that could happen, said Matthias Huss, who leads Glacier Monitoring Switzerland (GLAMOS).

"We are seeing model results expected a few decades in the future are happening now," Mr. Huss said. "I did not expect to see such an extreme year so early in the century."

NO SNOW, HIGH HEAT
Reuters spoke with glaciologists in Austria, France, and Italy who confirmed that glaciers there were on track for record losses. In Austria, "the glaciers are snow-free up to the summits," said Andrea Fischer, a glaciologist at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Seasonal snowfall, apart from replenishing ice lost during summer, protects glaciers from further melt by providing a white cover that reflects sunlight back out to the atmosphere better than darker ice — sullied by dust or pollution — can do.

But at the Grand Etret glacier in northwest Italy, only 1.3 meters of snow had accumulated during this past winter — 2 meters less than the annual average for the 20 years up to 2020.

This year's Alpine ice losses, registered even before the biggest melt month of August, surprised scientists to some extent, as many of the glaciers had already lost their lower-lying snouts. Because they had retreated up the mountain, where temperatures are cooler, scientists thought they should have been better protected.

"You can easily imagine the final results after summer will be ... extensive loss of glacier coverage in the Italian Alps," said Marco Giardino, vice president of the Italian Glaciological Committee.

Data shared exclusively with Reuters shows that Morteratsch is now shedding about 5 centimeters (2 inches) a day and is already in a worse state than it would normally be at the end of an average summer, according to data from GLAMOS and the Universite libre de Bruxelles.

The nearby Silvretta Glacier has lost about 1 meter (3.3 feet) more than at the same point in 1947 — the worst year in its database stretching back to 1915.

HIMALAYAN THAW
Himalayan glaciers are also on track for a record ice loss year, scientists told Reuters. When the summer monsoon season arrived in the Kashmir region, for example, many glaciers had already been shrunk drastically, with their snowlines starting high up the mountain, after a March-May heatwave marked by temperatures above 48C (118F) in northern India.



An early June expedition in India's Himachal Pradesh found that the Chhota Shigri Glacier had lost much of its snow cover. "The highest temperature in over a century in March through May clearly had its impacts," said glaciologist Mohd Farooq Azam at the Indian Institute of Technology Indore.

Vanishing glaciers are already endangering lives and livelihoods. Earlier this month, a glacier collapse on the Marmolada in Italy killed 11 people.

Days later, a collapsing glacier in the Tian Shan mountains of eastern Kyrgyzstan triggered a massive avalanche, sending ice and rocks hurdling toward passing tourists.

Above the Swiss village of Saas Fee, a path leading to a mountain hut once passed through a summer snowfield on top of the Chessjen Glacier.

"It's too dangerous now," due to the risk of falling rocks, once held together by hard-frozen ice, said hutkeeper Dario Andenmatten while gazing out over a barren landscape dotted with glacial lakes. Nearby, the rumble of stones tumbling from the mountain could be heard.

Swiss residents worry that the glacier losses will hurt their economy. Some area ski resorts of the Alps, which rely on these glaciers, now cover them with white sheets to reflect sunlight and reduce melting.

Swiss glaciers feature in many of the country's fairy tales, and the Aletsch Glacier is considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Losing the glaciers "means losing our national heritage, our identity," said hiker Bernardin Chavaillaz. "It's sad." — **Reuters**

Confronting the growing drought risk

Droughts are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change and land degradation. Building national and regional risk management systems that can endure what is coming will require political will and more international cooperation.



Drought in an Indian rice plantation. Image: [vicnt2815, CC BY-SA 2.0](#) via Deposit Photos

By [Ibrahim Thiaw](#)

July 26, 2022

Droughts may be an ancient scourge, but the problem is getting worse. No region or country today is immune to the effects brought on by droughts. Southern Europe is in the grip of a [severe drought](#) — the [worst in 70 years for Italy](#). In the western United States, the past two decades have been the [driest in 1,200 years](#). Chile is in its [13th consecutive year](#) of drought, and Monterrey, Mexico's third-largest city, is now being forced to [ration water](#).

In the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are recording their fourth consecutive year [without rainfall](#), and the situation has grown increasingly dire for people, livestock and the ecosystems that support them. Owing to a lack of adequate nutrition, children are dying from diseases they would ordinarily survive. Even camels — which typically survive longer than people or other animal species — are dropping dead in large numbers across this region.

This suffering evokes traumatic memories of my own first encounter with drought in Mauritania. I was barely 12 years old when every household in our community lost everything — food, livestock, and their livelihoods. Unable to provide for their families, many adults took their own lives. The experience has stayed with me, motivating my efforts to ensure that no more children have to live through what I did. Sadly, many still are being traumatised by droughts, and many more soon will be: Scientists project that climate change will increase the frequency, duration and geographic spread of droughts, with [three out of four people](#) affected by 2050.

Areas across all regions are becoming drier, and while there is not yet a consensus on where exactly the most acute drought conditions will emerge, scientists agree that land degradation exacerbates the problem. Worse, the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's](#) sixth assessment report warns that we are not making sufficient progress to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avert even more severe conditions in the decades ahead.

Together, recent traumatic experiences and the latest scientific projections should convey a sense of urgency, compelling everyone to build resilience against future drought risks. Drought is a natural phenomenon, but it need not become a natural disaster. Land degradation can be mediated at least partly with better land and water use decisions and land restoration initiatives.



In a recent [report](#), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) identified successful examples of systems that have reduced drought risk among vulnerable populations. In Brazil, Ethiopia, India and Tunisia, a combination of water harvesting and sustainable land management practices are being used to reduce the impact of droughts. While it may take time, all countries can adopt similar strategies to help move their people from water scarcity towards [water security](#).

A major shortcoming of the current approach, however, is that it is based on national systems, even though droughts do not observe political boundaries. Proactive planning across sectors within countries is essential; but without international collaboration, the effects of drought eventually will reach other countries. Common knock-on effects include conflicts over diminished water resources, soaring food prices or shortages, wildfires, mass wildlife and livestock loss, sand and dust storms, human displacement and forced migration, and civil unrest.

Collaborative arrangements to anticipate and respond to droughts quickly can avert or reduce the scale of these outcomes. [Australia](#) and the [US](#), for example, have long had policies and planning protocols in place to ensure that affected communities can endure droughts with dignity.

Building such resilience globally will take time and political will. Fortunately, even in the world's most vulnerable regions, policymakers already have foundations that they can build on. For example, Africa's Sahel has a regional [drought risk system](#), set up 50 years ago to bring together a broad range of stakeholders, from producer associations to political decision-makers, and benefits from the pooling of scientific and technological capabilities at the regional level.

India has adopted an even more [comprehensive approach](#) that includes drought management as part of its national disaster management plan. An intricate strategy is in place to include all the relevant government ministries and closely coordinate national, state and local responses. After a process that started 15 years ago, India now has an integrated water management system that also serves as a drought warning system.

In June, the US [announced](#) that drought will henceforth be considered a strategic domestic and foreign policy priority. As home to one of the most sophisticated and advanced drought monitoring and response [mechanisms](#) in the world, the US could help to fast-track the development of better risk management systems globally.

Around the world, there is a strong appetite among governments to act quickly before the effects of increasingly frequent and severe droughts become unmanageable. And following the [creation](#) of an intergovernmental working group on drought at the UNCCD's summit in May, we now have a platform for mobilising collective action according to what the science says is necessary.

We can rein in drought impacts together. But all leaders, down to the community level, will need to commit to doing what it takes to build effective resilience — starting immediately.

Ibrahim Thiaw is Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

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www.project-syndicate.org

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/confronting-the-growing-drought-risk/>



Earth Day is the worst time to be planting trees

July 27, 2022 | 12:17 am

(and other practical advice for companies trying to get to net zero)

By Jose Andres A. Canivel, *Executive Director, Forest Foundation Philippines*



MANY PEOPLE want to plant trees on Earth Day, April 22, which is in the middle of our summer. We don't encourage planting on that day. We tell our partners, unless you're planting in your own backyard, do not have any illusions about planting on Earth Day. The best time to plant is during the rainy season. There's plenty of water for the plants and the soil is just cool enough for their growth. The core considerations for tree planting are planting the right species, at the right time, in the right area, for the right reasons. These are the "four rights."

Typically, companies prefer to plant in sites that are accessible by road. Which is fine, we can bring them to sites like these. But the effort might not amount to much, especially if our sites are not suitable for our planting objectives. If you're planting to protect trees, plant in protection zones. If you're planting for food, plant in agricultural land. If you want to harvest non-timber forest products for livelihood, plant in multiple-use zones.

Aside from tree planting, there are many ways to contribute to the protection and conservation of our forests. Forest Foundation Philippines implements a four-pronged approach to conservation. We grow forests, livelihoods, partnerships and advocates in the most critical forest landscapes of the country: the Sierra Madre range, Palawan, Samar and Leyte, and Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental.

GROWING

FORESTS

We have meaningful partnerships with communities in the forests. Since these are in remote areas, it's difficult to market these planting sites. However, these sites can absorb carbon, improve forest biodiversity, and positively impact the lives of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities. That's the kind of tree planting project that we offer. Tree planting that will be sustained beyond project timelines because we work with tenured communities, not just organizations that come and go. Last year, we partnered with Origins to reforest a hectare of land in Palawan. Together with our community partners, we planted 1,000 mangrove seedlings that are now being nurtured and maintained by forest guards, who are deputized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to protect the site. Beyond planting trees, we also need to protect mature trees. Early this year, we worked with Co Ban Kiat Hardware to facilitate their donation of tools and equipment to the forest guards in Mt. Balabag, which serves as the boundary line of Ipo Watershed, a critical part of the Umiray-Angat-Ipo Watershed that supplies 98% of Metro Manila's water.



GROWING LIVELIHOODS

It is also important to support livelihoods that are consistent with managing and protecting forests. We're doing this because we want to incentivize communities who protect the forests, so they will veer away from illegal activities. Of our livelihood projects that are connected to forest conservation, our exemplar is coffee. We have a partner, the Philippine Coffee Alliance, that works with indigenous peoples and forest-based coffee farmers in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental. By providing livelihood support to the forest-dependent communities and forest guards, they are able to plant better coffee using upgraded technology, while earning a livelihood. During the pandemic, we were also able to sustain the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities in Samar and Palawan by providing diversified income streams to the community, so they can sustain their forest conservation and protection activities. They were able to successfully pivot from ecotourism to food security projects despite challenging times.

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

Growing partnerships allows us to work with the private sector. In 2012 and 2013, we worked with Condura through their Condura Skyway Marathon program to plant 20 hectares of mangrove forests in Zamboanga Sibugay. More recently, we worked with Cebu Pacific so they can offset their carbon emissions to meet the requirements set by the Civil Aeronautics Board. Together, we are planting 5,200 native seedlings on forest land in Rizal. The area serves as a window to the Sierra Madre, which we consider to be the backbone of Luzon because it protects the country from the onslaught of typhoons. These native trees will recover and expand forest habitats for wildlife, protect watershed and freshwater resources, improve the local natural landscapes, connect forest fragments and secure the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities.

GROWING ADVOCATES

To ensure that the trees that we plant will be nurtured and protected by the people, we must rally them into becoming forest advocates. You cannot grow forests in three years' time, which is why some of our grants fund advocacy projects, like documentaries and visual projects. We are working with Diinsider Philippines to produce a film documentary called Bantay Bukid, which highlights the important role of forest guards in protecting the forests. It will be released later this year. We are also working with Ms. Cynthia Bauzon-Arre to mainstream the important role of native trees in tree planting. Our experience shows that rather than planting a great number of fast-growing exotic trees, native trees are better options because they have higher chances of growth and have the ability to nurture local wildlife.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FORESTS

Guided by our experience, we have developed measures that have allowed us to leverage private sector investment towards sustainable development.

Measuring results. We have metrics for what it costs to restore and protect the forests. We also have environmental and social safeguards to ensure that our projects do not have any negative impacts on the environment and the communities. With this, we are confident that we can protect the investments made by the private sector.

Accelerating impact. Rather than starting from scratch, by working with us, the private sector can contribute to various ongoing initiatives that protect, restore, sustainably manage and conserve forests. We can also build private sector capacity by providing technical assistance in nursery management and tree planting, among others. We hope these initiatives can encourage more stakeholders in the private sector to support our work.



Promoting inclusive development. We can leverage the support of the private sector by forging partnerships between communities and businesses to implement nature-based solutions that will grow forests, while addressing other issues, such as water security, food security, and disaster risk management. We do not just plant trees. We also look after the communities that we plant in and the people that we plant with.

Having said all of that, of course, you can always join us and plant trees. Just not on earth day.

Jose Andres A. Canivel is a lawyer and environmental policy expert. He previously served as development assistance specialist at the Office of Energy and Environment of USAID Philippines and executive director of the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC).

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/special-reports/2022/07/27/463296/earth-day-is-the-worst-time-to-be-planting-trees/>

27 JULY 2022, WEDNESDAY



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR, S. Korea eye COMSAT monitoring of environment

By CORY MARTINEZ

THE Philippines' capability of monitoring and protecting the environment will be further strengthened with communications satellites or COMSAT.

Director Dr. Al Orolfo of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-Foreign Assisted and Special Services (FASPS) said that DENR and the Korean National Assembly (KNA) will be exploring collaboration on the use of COMSAT.

Orolfo disclosed that KNA Member Congress-

woman Jo Myung-bee recently visited the DENR for a pivotal meeting to introduce state-the-art technologies for collecting data to monitor the environmental conditions on the ground.

Orolfo underscored the significant role of satellite technologies and high-resolution images in managing and protecting natural resources and the environment.

Other senior officials present at the courtesy visit were Atty. Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr., DENR Undersecretary for Administration and Information Systems, and Maria Elena A. Morillos-Manila, director of the Knowledge and Informa-

tion Systems Service (KISS).

Present also at the meeting was Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Philippines Office Assistant Country Director Kim Younlee.

Jo explained that they already use two systems in Korea for real-time monitoring of environmental and weather conditions through satellite imagery and meteorological stations.

Atty. Adobo expressed DENR's gratitude for the support and assistance extended by the Korean government in the environmental sector of the country.

There are two ongoing

KOICA-funded projects with the DENR. One is the establishment of an Integrated Water Resources Management and Information System for the Pam-panga River Basin Phase 2 (IWRMIS II) implemented with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

The other is the Enhancement of Marine Litter Management in Manila Bay (EMLM), to be spear-headed by the Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO).

Jo is looking forward to collaborating with other Philippine government agencies, such as the Philippine Space Agency (Phil-SA) and PAGASA.



Marcos hopes to pass Land Use Act

BY KRISTINA MARALIT

PRESIDENT Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. is hoping he can do what his predecessor fell short of doing — convince Congress to pass the long-stalled Land Use Act.

The Chief Executive listed the proposed law among his 19 priority legislative measures when he appeared before the joint session of the Senate and House of

Representatives for his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday.

“[It] provides for a rational and holistic management and devel-

opment of [the] country’s land and water resources; holds owners accountable for making these lands productive and sustainable; and strengthens the IGLI to manage ecological balance within its jurisdiction,” Marcos said.

“It also provides for Land Use and Physical Planning/Framework as a mechanism in determining policies and principles to implement this legislative measure,” he added.

In 2017, former president Rodrigo Duterte called on lawmakers to pass

the National Land Use Act (NLUA) that aims to address the land reform problems in the country.

The previous administration had repeatedly argued that “when it comes to food production, food availability, food price stability and helping small farmers, land is important.”

This was echoed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), reiterating that the NLUA would “ensure the rational and the sustainable use of the country’s land and physical resources, as

well as harmonize sector-specific land use policies and institutionalize land use planning.”

The previous administration also warned that unregulated and unrestricted land conversion poses a risk to food security.

However, the bill was not passed.

The passage and enactment of the proposed Land Use Act is more likely to be achieved with President Marcos also the concurrent head of the Department of Agriculture.

The country’s food security is one of the President’s immediate priorities.

Having a law on land use could resolve a big part of the problem on food security. This is because the law will prevent the conversion of agricultural lands into industrial or commercial use, or residential real estate development.

The LUA could also be intertwined with Marcos’ initiative of making the Philippines a champion of addressing climate change as it would prevent the country’s remaining forest lands from being stripped bare for mining, leading to floods.



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POST-SONA
ECONOMIC
BRIEFING
2022

Editorial: Moving the country forward

FOLLOW-THROUGH

A day after President Marcos' first State of the Nation Address, members of his Cabinet tackle the finer details of his marching orders, particularly on job creation, food security and inflation. At the briefing held at the Philippine International Convention Center on Tuesday, Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte (front row) shares a light moment with the other top-tier officials. From bottom row: Bienvenido Laguesma (labor), Arsenio Balisacan (National Economic Development Authority), Benjamin Diokno (finance), Ivan John Uy (information and communications technology), Esperanza Christina Frasco (tourism), Erwin Tulfo (social welfare), Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga (environment), Manuel Bonoan (public works), Amenah Pangandaman (budget), Susan Ople (migrant workers), Antonio Joselito Lambino II (managing director, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas), Cesar Chavez (undersecretary, transportation), Maria Rosario Vergeire (officer in charge, health), Arnel de Mesa (assistant secretary, agriculture), event moderator Margaux Salcedo and Mario Marasigan (director, energy). Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual is in the foreground.

—RICHARD A. REYES



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EDITORIAL



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Moving the country forward

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:35 AM July 27, 2022

One significant aspect of President Marcos Jr.'s first State of the Nation Address (Sona) was that he made no mention of the misdeeds of his presidential predecessors, whether the most recent one or ones farther into the past. Without this, festering national wounds remain open.

But it is just as well that he didn't raise those issues, as presidents before him did. By not trying to "cover all bases" that represent all our pressing concerns, the Chief Executive was able to focus the attention of the nation on the single most urgent one: the economy.

ADVERTISEMENT

And in terms of covering all the bases on the economic front, the President's speech was on point.

For a policy speech where presidents lay down their plans and priorities in broad strokes, often prompting critics to question the "lack of details," criticisms for last Monday's speech were sparse, coming mostly from militant and advocacy groups who questioned the lack of details for the major programs Mr. Marcos laid down. But, for sure, there were glaring omissions, including the issues of corruption, human rights, or ill-gotten wealth.

But for the most part, listening to the Sona was like drinking from a firehose of economic data and insights detailing the solutions he wants Congress to work on.

Topping the list were measures meant to improve tax administration—that is, to collect taxes better and more efficiently—rather than outrightly imposing new and hefty ones, even as the latter cannot be fully ruled out at this point.

This will be a challenge for government as improving tax administration is like trying to keep a badly behaved child in line. Constant monitoring is key, and letting down one's guard when



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everything is looking well could mean a return to chaos in an instant.

Improving tax administration has been tried by many previous administrations as a substitute for tax increases many times before, with varying degrees of success, and hopefully, the Marcos Jr. administration pulls this off. But it has to be prepared with alternative sources of revenues in case the strategy doesn't work.

The President outlined a long and comprehensive list of priority programs he wants done—critical things that need to be done for this country to move forward—and they will cost a lot of money.

This includes doubling down on the infrastructure build-up program that his predecessor began. Some are less flashy but no less ambitious, like the moratorium on the collection of agrarian reform loan payments and calling on Congress to pass a law condoning existing ones, while making future land distribution programs free for beneficiaries.

Equally impressive are Mr. Marcos' plans for further developing the tourism, social welfare, public health, and education sectors, all of which took heavy hits due to the pandemic and will be key to getting the nation back on solid footing.

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As if all those were not overwhelming enough, the President also outlined a list of 19 bills he would like Congress to prioritize, possibly leading some lawmakers long accustomed to a more relaxed pace of work to wonder what they had gotten themselves into.

The question now is how will the Philippines pay for this long, comprehensive, and critically needed wish list?

In this regard, the President's restoration of public-private partnerships or PPPs as the preferred method for investment funding is welcome. However, this route was shunned by the Duterte administration, which preferred spending on infrastructure projects using funds borrowed from abroad at supposedly concessional rates.



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The problem was it bloated the government's debts and provided avenues for corruption. Hence, PPPs are the correct way forward.

Perhaps most noticeably for Filipinos who had to endure six previous Sonas that started late and were full of cussing and swearing—an embarrassment for the world to see and hear—Manday's speech had zero deviations from the official version. It means the policies will remain unambiguous and not subject to misinterpretation, no thanks to rambling ad-libs that characterized the past administration.

True, his immediate predecessor's Sona speeches may have been a low bar to clear. But we should be pleased that he cleared it, nonetheless. The Filipino nation will be setting the bar progressively higher henceforth.

It is early days, and there will be time during the years ahead to call on the President to rectify the presidential shortcomings of the last six years or those of over three decades ago, or that of his own.

For now, it is clear that he has his priorities straight: restoring the vitality of the Philippines which is just beginning to emerge, on shaky footing, from the economic devastation caused by the pandemic.

This is job number one for Mr. Marcos, every lawmaker and government official, and for every single Filipino. Now that the plans were clearly laid down, it is time for all to buckle down to work.



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THE EXPOSURE OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1909
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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EDITORIAL



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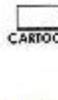
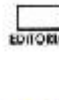
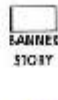
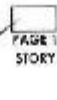


POST-SONA ECONOMIC BRIEFING 2022 – The heads of various government agencies, led by Vice President Sara Duterte (center, front row) in her capacity as Education secretary, pose after laying down their development programs to lessen poverty during the Post-State of the National Address (SONA) economic briefing 2022 at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) in Pasay City on Tuesday, July 26, 2022. The event, spearheaded by the Department of Finance (DOF), was also attended by (first row, from left) Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual, Labor Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma, Public Works and Highways Secretary Manuel M. Bonoan, Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Felipe M. Medalla, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Director General Arsenio Balisacan; (second row, from left) Information and Communication Technology Secretary Ivan John E. Uy, Tourism Secretary Esperanza Christina Garcia Frasco, Social Welfare and Development Secretary Erwin T. Tulfo, Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga, Budget and Management Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman, and Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople; and (third row, left to right) BSP managing director Antonio Joselito Lambino II, Transportation undersecretary Cesar Chavez, Department of Health (DOH) officer-in-charge undersecretary Maria Rosario Singh-Vergeire, Agriculture assistant secretary Arnel de Mesa, Budget and Management undersecretary Margaux Salcedo, and Department of Energy (DOE) director Mario Marasigan. (Ali Vicoy)



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Incentives for PH 'green' tourism projects sought

THE Department of Tourism is seeking better incentives for green tourism projects to ensure the sustainability of tourism destinations, as Secretary Christina Frasco underscored the importance of incentivizing sustainable tourism policy implementation.

This will involve the introduction of incentives for the private sector that would implement green policies "that

give value to the preservation of the environment, as well as the introduction of measures that promote environmental protection and energy efficiency," a DOT statement said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte expressed optimism that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s focus on agriculture, health, and tour-

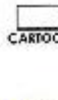
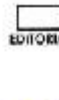
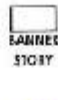
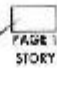
ism will result in the launching of projects that will spark economic growth.

He said revving up these sectors would stimulate high growth, create jobs, and raise incomes, especially in the countryside, "where a majority of our people remain poor and have been hit hard by the over two-year pandemic." **Othel V. Campos and Maricel V. Cruz**



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POST-SONA ECONOMIC BRIEFING: Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte leads the Post-SONA Economic Briefing 2022 at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City yesterday. In photo are (1st row, from left) Secretaries Bienvenido Aquino of labor, Manuel Bonoan of public works, Duterte, Benjamin Diokno of finance and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Benjamin Diokno; (2nd row, from left) Secretaries Alfredo Pascual of trade, Ivan John Uy of DICT, Christina Frasco of tourism, Erwin Tulfo of social welfare, Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga of environment, Amenah Pangandaman of budget, Susan Ople of migrant workers (partly hidden) and Arsenio Ballacan of socioeconomic planning; (3rd row, from left) BSP managing director Antonio Pagulayan, Department of Health OIC Maria Rosario Vergeire, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa, Budget Undersecretary Margaux Salcedo and Department of Energy director Mario Marasigan. GEREMY PINTOLO



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Gov't bares 8-point plan to cut poverty

By LOUELLA DESIDERIO

The Marcos administration will be implementing an eight-point socioeconomic agenda that will address challenges including rising prices and the scarring effects of the pandemic, to achieve the goal of reducing the country's poverty rate to a single digit and reaching upper middle income status.

"The Philippines is fully prepared to address the challenges ahead. The Marcos administration will implement a comprehensive eight-point socioeconomic agenda to decisively address risks and steer the economy back to its high growth trajectory," Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said during the post-SONA (State of the Nation Address) economic briefing yesterday.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan added that the eight-point agenda, in the near term, will address challenges such as high prices and the scars caused by the pandemic.

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"In the medium term, it is all about job creation and sustaining growth from 6.5 to 8 percent during the period," he said.

First on the eight-point agenda is to protect the purchasing power and mitigate socioeconomic scarring by ensuring food security, reducing transport and logistics costs, as well as energy costs to families.

Next is to reduce the vulnerability and mitigate scarring from the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing health through the ramp up of vaccination and uptake of boosters, strengthening social protection and addressing the learning losses through the safe reopening of classes and improving the curriculum.

Also part of the agenda is to ensure sound macroeconomic fundamentals by enhancing bureaucratic efficiency and sound fiscal management, and ensuring a resilient and innovative financial sector.

In addition, the agenda covers the creation of more jobs by promoting trade and investments, improving infrastructure through the continued implementation of Build Build Build projects and by achieving energy security.

As part of the agenda, the government will aim to create quality jobs by increasing employability, encouraging research and development and in-

novation and enhancing the digital economy.

The agenda also involves the creation of green jobs by pursuing a green and blue economy, and establishing livable and sustainable communities.

Moreover, the government will uphold public order and safety, peace and security.

Lastly, the government will ensure a level playing field by strengthening market competition and reducing barriers to entry and limits to entrepreneurship.

"These interventions will allow us to reduce the poverty incidence to nine percent by 2028 and elevate the country to upper middle-income status," Diokno said.

Balisacan said the goal of becoming an upper middle-income country could be achieved by 2024 and when that happens, the country would have more resources for meeting public services and providing social protection.

'On point, perfect'

Even with overwhelming numbers and economic data, President Marcos' first SONA was "on point and perfect," according to Vice President and Education Secretary Sara Duterte.

During the post-SONA briefing of Cabinet members yesterday, Duterte said she "truly appreciated" the way Marcos' speech was composed.

"As a Cabinet secretary and the



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other half of UniTeam, I would say that the State of the Nation Address of President Marcos was on point and perfect," she added, referring to their tandem during the campaign.

"I think many of those who do not understand economic numbers were overwhelmed by the numbers in the first part of the speech. That was the reason, I think, it took a long time for people to start clapping because the economic part was in the beginning and many people really do not understand economic numbers," she added.

DOT accepts challenge

Hearing President Marcos' marching orders during his first SONA, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco is accepting the challenge to transform the Philippine tourism industry into a powerhouse in Asia and in the world.

"With no less than the President of the Philippines rallying for the recovery of the Philippines' tourism industry, together we will propel the Philippines to exceed its current global standing and tourist arrival numbers, and transform it into a tourism powerhouse in Asia," she declared yesterday.

Frasco outlined seven main objectives that they would pursue, namely: improvement in infrastructure, cohesive and comprehensive digitalization and connectivity, enhancement of overall tourist experience, multi-dimensional tourism, equalization

of tourism marketing and product development opportunities, encourage close local government coordination and examine all existing strategies.

For its part, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) said it supports Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Jaime Bautista in fulfilling President Marcos' directive to increase the capacity of facilities and improve the safety and security of Philippine airports in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards.

"CAAP vows to actively pursue and champion Secretary Bautista's commitment to PBBM's goals for the aviation sector by pushing for efforts that will increase the capacity of our facilities and improving the safety and security of our airports also in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards," CAAP acting director general Captain Manuel Antonio Tamayo said.

Green jobs pushed

To generate more quality employment in the country, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma said they will be working closely with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to aggressively promote green jobs.

"We'd like to aggressively promote greening of jobs in coordination with

DENR because we believe if we are able to address issues on climate change, we will be able to produce not just quantity jobs but also quality jobs," Laguesma said during the post-SONA economic briefing yesterday.

Aside from other government agencies, Laguesma said DOLE will also be working in tandem with the private sector to create more employment nationwide.

He added that DOLE will be linking with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in addressing the skills-jobs mismatch, as he identified manufacturing, services, agriculture, tourism construction, information technology and BPOs as the country's growth industries.

Meanwhile, newly appointed Bureau of Customs Commissioner Yogi Filemon Ruiz vowed to deliver on the President's marching order to push for new reforms in the bureau, a day after the SONA.

In a statement, Ruiz said that he will work on his seven priority programs, which include zero tolerance for drug smugglers, curb gun smuggling, eliminate agricultural smuggling, increase revenue generation, fully digitalized customs process, increase employments' morale and eradicate corruption. - With Janvic Mateo, Michael Punongbayan, Rudy Santos, Robertzon Ramirez, Mayen Jaymalin, Emmanuel Tupas



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Public participation in reclamation projects

As of April 1, the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) has received 180 pending reclamation projects across the country.¹

Reclamation projects can be initiated by either the PRA, the Local Government Units pursuant to the Local Government Code, the National Government, or the Government-Owned and -Controlled Corporations (GOCCs) established under existing laws to reclaim.²

On Feb. 1, 2019, Executive Order (EO) No. 74-2019 — which repealed EO No. 798-2009 and EO No. 145-2015 — took effect and effectively transferred the PRA to the control and supervision of the Office of the President. EO 74-2019 also delegated to the PRA Governing Board the power of the President to approve reclamation projects. This was done to maximize utilization and hasten the development of reclaimed lands.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE PUBLIC
Land reclamation is driven by overriding public interest. These projects offer an opportunity for the creation of a well-planned place and community when nearby urban areas are experiencing decay and overcrowding or when an area is no longer ideal for people to live, work, and do business. Likewise, the government initiates land reclamation projects as a viable and practical option rather than procure right-of-ways in congested urban areas to be used as platforms for vital government infrastructure projects.

AMICUS CURIAE DUANE MICHAELS U. PO

such as air ports, ports, roads, bridges, water, and power facilities or simply to decongest traffic in a particular area.³

Generally, local governments pursue reclamation projects to provide sustainable development in their areas to trigger economic growth.⁴

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

On March 3, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Central Visayas recalled its earlier decision giving the Municipality of Consolacion in Cebu Province permission to proceed with its 235.8-hectare reclamation project. This came after several fatalities in the area protested, claiming that they were never consulted about the project either by the municipal government or by the BFAR.⁵

On March 31, then President Rodrigo Duterte told media that he had directed acting Environment Secretary to halt the acceptance of applications for reclamation activities.⁶

Further, on May 12, The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) canceled the environmental compliance certificate of a 51-hectare reclamation project in Coron, Palawan. Based on the report of the DENR, the project lacked necessary permits such as an area clearance. The Provincial Board was fined.

Land Reclamation is a complicated issue, full of legal hurdles to overcome. The probability of success of a reclamation project depends on the strict compliance with the technical rules set in place to ensure that public interest is best served.

DILG MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2022-018

To help guide the proponents of Land Reclamation Projects, on Feb. 17, the Department of the Interior and Local Government issued Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018 (MC No. 2022-018), "Reiteration of the Roles and Responsibilities of Local Government Units relative to Projects Covered by the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System." The underlying purpose of this Memorandum Circular is to ensure that socio-economic progress does not come at the expense of the people's right to a balanced and healthful ecological system. MC No. 2022-018 clarifies the duties of all LGUs when initiating reclamation projects.⁷

Before an approved reclamation project is implemented, a proponent must secure an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), which is issued by the DENR. For projects initiated by LGUs, MC No. 2022-018 reminds them that public consultations and public hearings must be made prior to the issuance of an ECC, and the participation by the public must be secured at the earliest possible stage of the project, with post-assessment monitoring.⁸ The

LGU must also prepare a report on the results of the public consultations or hearings, including issues and critical inputs raised.⁹ It must conduct information, education, and communication (IEC) to inform and develop the public's awareness and understanding of the project.¹⁰

The LGU must also ensure that the reclamation projects are identified in their Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP), as well as in their Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).¹¹ Furthermore, the LGU must coordinate with the project proponent in informing and consulting identified stakeholders in both direct and indirect impact areas of the project proposal at the earliest stage of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as possible¹² and that all concerns and agreements by the stakeholders are properly documented and incorporated in the EIA report.¹³ Additionally, a copy of the full Environmental Impact Study must be shared with stakeholders through the LGUs' websites or local public information social media platforms.¹⁴

Lastly, public participation is required not only at the start of the reclamation project. Even when the reclamation project is already underway, public involvement is still necessary through the Multi-Party Monitoring Team (MPMT) which assists the DENR in ensuring the project proponent's compliance with the conditions under its ECC.¹⁵ The MPMT is composed of the Environmental and Natural Resources Office, the Rural Health Unit Chief, and

the concerned Barangay Captain. MC No. 2022-018 reiterates that any willful violation of this memorandum circular shall be subject to administrative, civil, or criminal liability in accordance with existing laws.¹⁶

¹Freedom of Information Website of the Philippine Government — <https://www.foi.gov.ph/requests/epghm/vb2m79y4Gca60Wb5Wb03E8252020Wb0402016W7LW6>, last accessed 07 June 2022.

²Philippine Reclamation Authority, "Who Can Undertake Reclamation Projects?", <https://www.pra.gov.ph/faq-projects/who-can-undertake-reclamation-projects/>, last accessed June 7, 2022.

³Philippine Reclamation Authority, "Why Reclaim Land?", <https://www.pra.gov.ph/faq-projects/why-reclaim-land/>, last accessed June 7, 2022.

⁴Ador Vincent Maysol, Connie Ferrance-Brojan, "Reclamation projects: boom or bust?", <https://www.ifo.gov.ph/foi/2022/04/20220414reclamation-projects-boom-or-bust/>, last accessed June 7, 2022.

⁵Ador Vincent Maysol, "BFAR withdraws 'no objection' note for Cebu reclamation project," <https://www.ifo.gov.ph/foi/2022/03/20220314bfar-withdraws-no-objection-note-for-cebu-reclamation-projects/>, last accessed June 7, 2022.

⁶Ruth Abbey-Gila-Carlos, Philippine News Agency, "PDRD orders DENR to shut applications for reclamation activities," <https://www.pna.gov.ph/>

⁷Articles 17766, last accessed June 7, 2022.

⁸DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Background.

⁹DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 4.1.2 — EIA Study and Report Preparation (c).

¹⁰DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 4.1.2 — EIA Report Review and Evaluation (a).

¹¹DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 4.1.2 — Scoping (a).

¹²DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 4.1.1.

¹³DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 4.1.2 — EIA Study and Report Preparation (a).

¹⁴DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 4.1.2 — Scoping (c).

¹⁵DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 4.1.2 — EIA Report Review and Evaluation (c).

¹⁶DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 4.1.2 — Monitoring and Evaluation (a).

¹⁷DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2022-018, Section 5.

This article is for informational and educational purposes only. It is not offered as and does not constitute legal advice or legal opinion.

DUANE MICHAELS U. PO is an attorney of the Cebu Branch of the Amigos Abogado Corporation (RA 8248) Cebu Law Office (AGORALAW).





THE: As gov't scrambles to achieve food security it mustn't... PAGE V4

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As gov't scrambles to achieve food security, it mustn't forget about climate change

By Luisa Marla Jacinta C. Jocson
Reporter

CLIMATE CHANGE is expected to reduce agricultural productivity and disrupt food availability if the government does not integrate mitigation measures in future policy, analysts said.

"We have been experiencing extreme weather events due to climate change. Torrential rains and strong typhoons lead to floods which cause heavy damage to crops. These calamities are occurring more frequently and it is expected that they will get worse," Vincer V. Quibral, Food Security Cluster Coordinator of The Climate Resility Project Philippines, said in an e-mail.

According to the World Bank, storm surges are projected to affect about 14% of the Philippine population and 42% of coastal populations.

Informal settlements, which account for 45% of the Philippines' urban population, are particularly vulnerable to floods due to less secure infrastructure, reduced access to clean water, and lack of health insurance.

"For the ordinary Filipino, climate change is increasing temperature and precipitation that leads to droughts and floods. When these are intensified by wind from typhoons, the physical destruction of agriculture and food production areas could be massive," Roy S. Kempis, retired Pampanga State Agricultural University professor, said in an e-mail.

In agriculture, the effects of climate change manifest in pest damage, crop failure, and crop diseases, among others.

"As temperature rises, insects digest food faster, thereby damaging more crops. Crops also become more susceptible to pests when the temperature rises, which in turn affects the health of the crops. If these issues are not properly addressed, food production will diminish and it will be hard to provide food to all," Mr. Quibral added.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), pests like the golden apple snail threaten the top Asian rice-producing countries.

"Increasing temperatures, changing precipitation levels, and extreme climate events like heat waves, droughts and typhoons will persist to be important vulnerability drivers that will shape agricultural productivity particularly in South Asia and Southeast Asia," the report added.

Rowena A. Buena, a regional director with the Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG), said changing weather patterns and erratic rainfall brought about by climate change floods farms and destroys crops and agricultural infrastructure like roads, seed storage, and post-harvest facilities.

"Specifically, intense drought and rainfall are hurting our rice farmers (to the extent that) planting is now seen as an unsustainable livelihood (because farmers are) unable to harvest and sell their crops. Their children and the youth in the rural communities who are supposed to continue farming and food production are now choosing to find work in urban areas to avoid agricultural work, becoming wage laborers instead, further weakening the future and continuity of the agricultural sector," she said in an e-mail.

The IPCC said that recent studies have linked the frequency and extent of the El Niño phenomenon with global warming, which can substantially degrade crop and fisheries production.

According to the World Resources Institute, the Philippines will likely experience severe water shortages by 2040, with agriculture bearing the brunt.

"The looming impact is on food security because climate change can lead to hunger and malnutrition in some pockets of our popula-

tion, in areas directly affected by droughts and floods brought about by high temperatures, high rainfall, or typhoons," Mr. Kempis said.

"While only some pockets of the Philippine population will be affected by reduced physical supply of food, efforts to meet their needs from areas where there is sufficient

supply could increase prices, not only in the physically affected areas but also in the areas where the supply comes from. So overall, there will be further impact," he added.

Among the segments of agriculture, rice is considered one of the most at-risk crops when the climate changes.

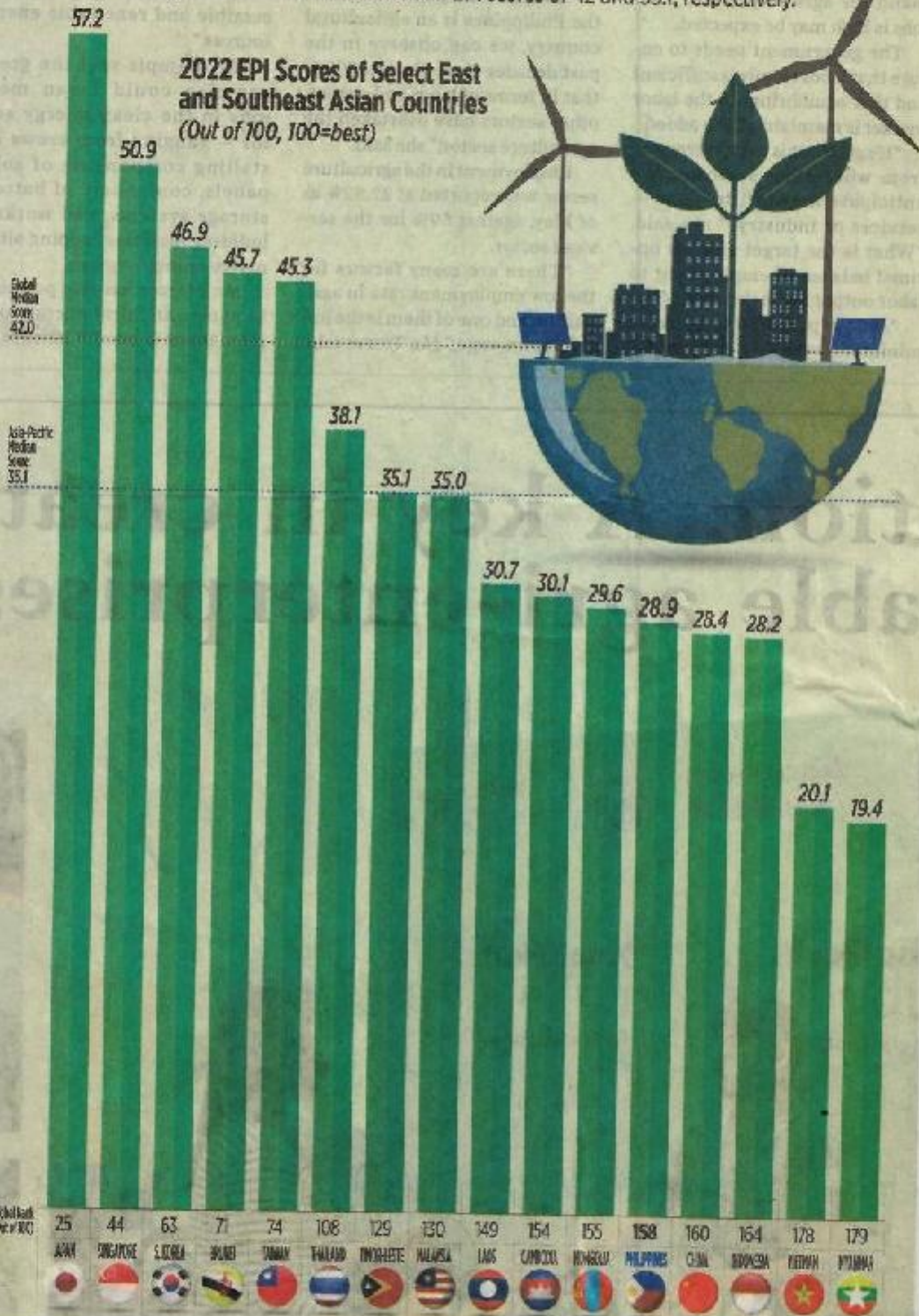


FILE: As gov't scrambles to achieve food security, it mustn't... PAGE 2/4

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PHILIPPINES PLACES 158TH OUT OF 180 IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY RANKING

The Philippines placed 158th out of 180 countries in the 2022 edition of the biennial Environmental Performance Index (EPI). The index ranked countries on their progress toward improving environmental health, protecting ecosystem vitality, and mitigating climate change. The Philippines got an overall EPI score of 28.9 points out of a possible 100, fifth lowest among select East and Southeast Asian countries. Its overall performance also fell below the global and Asia-Pacific median EPI scores of 42.0 and 35.1, respectively.





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Top 10

| Global Rank (Out of 180) | Country | 2022 EPI Score (Out of 100) |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Denmark | 77.9 |
| 2 | United Kingdom | 77.7 |
| 3 | Finland | 76.5 |
| 4 | Malta | 75.2 |
| 5 | Sweden | 72.7 |
| 6 | Luxembourg | 72.3 |
| 7 | Slovenia | 67.3 |
| 8 | Austria | 66.5 |
| 9 | Switzerland | 65.9 |
| 10 | Iceland | 62.8 |

Bottom 10

| Global Rank (Out of 180) | Country | 2022 EPI Score (Out of 100) |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 180 | India | 18.9 |
| 179 | Myanmar | 19.4 |
| 178 | Vietnam | 20.1 |
| 177 | Bangladesh | 23.1 |
| 176 | Pakistan | 24.6 |
| 175 | Papua New Guinea | 24.8 |
| 174 | Liberia | 24.9 |
| 173 | Haiti | 26.1 |
| 172 | Turkey | 26.3 |
| 171 | Sudan | 27.6 |

Philippines' 2022 Scorecard

| Components | Rank (/180) | Score (/100) |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Ecosystem Vitality | 120 | 38.6 |
| Biodiversity | 100 | 54.2 |
| Ecosystem Services | 89 | 26.7 |
| Fisheries | 21 | 34.8 |
| Acidification | 161 | 34.8 |
| Agriculture | - | - |
| Water Resources | - | - |
| Health | 112 | 31.1 |
| Air Quality | 132 | 25.9 |
| Sanitation Drinking Water | 110 | 39.0 |
| Heavy Metals | 91 | 47.4 |
| Waste Management | 116 | 23.4 |
| Climate Policy | 175 | 16.9 |
| Climate Change | 175 | 16.9 |

NOTES:

- The 2022 edition of EPI covered 40 performance indicators grouped into 11 issue categories, which in turn, were aggregated into three policy objectives: Environmental Health (with 20% weight), Ecosystem Vitality (42%), and Climate Change (38%).
- Countries are scored on a 0-100 scale, from worst to best performance.
- With every version of the EPI, new methodology and new datasets are used, hence a country's current score should not be compared to scores from previous versions of the index.

SOURCE: YALE UNIVERSITY (YALE CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND POLICY) AND COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EARTH SCIENCE INFORMATION NETWORK'S ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE INDEX 2022
BUSINESSWORLD RESEARCH: ADICIL MARIE P. YRAOLA
BUSINESSWORLD GRAPHICS: BONG R. FORTIN



Gov't committed to extreme food security, it must...

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"Rice farming is the most vulnerable agri-subsector in the Philippines against climate change. First, rice is the most important staple food in the Philippines. Despite that, the majority of rice farmers are living in poverty. Rice farmers can hardly protect themselves from extreme weather events," Mr. Quibral said.

"Second, rice is mostly cultivated in lowland areas which makes it vulnerable to floods. Most rice production depends on an abundant supply of water. With dwindling sources of water due to climate change, less rice is being produced," he added.

Ms. Buena said it is getting harder to maintain a substantial crop yield as erratic weather conditions and intense typhoons either destroy farmers' disrupt cultivation and planting schedules.

An analysis of temperature trends and irrigated field experiments at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) shows that grain yield declines by at least 10% for every 1°C increase in growing-season minimum temperatures during the dry season.

Apart from crops, the livestock industry is also at risk as farm animals become more susceptible to diseases due to fast-changing weather.

"Moreover, livestock shelters are now more easily destroyed by strong wind and rain leaving them exposed and vulnerable to extreme weather events," Ms. Buena added.

A study on water buffalo production in Nueva Ecija cited feed availability and animal health as the factors most severely affected by extreme weather, according to the IPCC.

Moving forward, the government must ramp up its efforts to prepare farmers, fisherfolk, and agricultural workers to deal with the impending effects of the climate crisis.

"Government representatives from the agriculture sector must reach out to every farmer and show that their roles are very important in securing food for the country. It is important that farmers' concerns are heard. Creating a healthy relationship will make it easier to educate farmers regarding climate issues," Mr. Quibral said.

"The government must ensure the provision of wider insurance coverage for crops and livestock, as well as assistance and incentives for practitioners of environment-friendly farming practices. Our forests must also be rehabilitated to increase water supply, protect farmers from unfavorable weather conditions, and provide natural and regenerative resources," he added.

Ms. Buena said conventional farming practices render farmers uniquely vulnerable to climate change.

"Conventional farmers have already become dependent on the use of costly chemical-based inputs which they can access usually through debt. The use of chemical inputs through time has weakened soil structure and degraded soil integrity which makes it more challenging for farmers to harvest more than the value of their input and increases the possibility of soil erosion," she said.

"Thus, conventional agriculture does not only make farmers vulnerable to the hazard of landslides and flooding during disasters but also challenges them financially limiting their resilience and ability to prepare for the impact of natural disasters aggravated by climate change," she added.

"Organic agriculture should also be promoted, as it offers a sustainable approach to ensuring food security while maintaining agrobiodiversity.

"Maintaining diverse crops and livestock and the effective integration of different components, promote resilience that can support the communities need for food and reduce the hazards (from) natural calamities," Ms. Buena added.

Mr. Kempis said some short-term solutions are to ramp up the replenishment of seed and seedling stock, as well as other crop production inputs, starter livestock and poultry stock including native chicken, fingerlings for aquaculture, and equipment for the fish capture industry.

"In the long run, the government should further strengthen research and development and innovation, starting with increasing budgets to hire more scientists, technology professionals, and marketing and logistics persons," he added.

"In order to deal with the changing climate, climate-smart technology and mechanics should be among the priorities, including organic agriculture, agroforestry, high-intensity farming, and many more," Mr. Quibral said.

"This way, farmers will have increased production and income and will be adapted and resilient against climate change. On top of that, greenhouse gas emissions are either reduced or removed. Instead of harming the environment, agriculture can be a solution to climate change and other environmental issues," he added.

Ms. Buena touted MASIPAG's Collection, Identification, Maintenance, Multiplication, and Evaluation (CIMME) program which identifies climate-resilient varieties of rice.

"Through CIMME, indigenous and local rice collected are organically grown and maintained in trial farms, while some are improved through breeding. Some of the varieties or selections are observed to have climate change resilient characteristics," Ms. Buena added.

Mr. Kempis said that the Early Warning Intelligence and Information System (EWIIS) is still among the most available measures for droughts, floods and typhoons.

In terms of learning practices, he said, protection starts with identifying the vulnerable agricultural and food production areas.

"A rotational schedule of enhancing production in less vulnerable areas and reducing production in vulnerable areas, according to data and information of projected occurrences using EWIIS, should be followed as a public policy and adhered to by communities. Crops will vary following this rotational schedule," he said.

"Then there is the enhanced research and discovery of more resilient varieties of crops and breeds of animal. These resources must be made available by way of storing crucial stocks of certified seed and genetic material of animals in secure facilities," he added.

The new government appears to recognize the threat from climate change and the need to finance mitigation projects, but Mr. Quibral called for active participation by farmers in policy making.

"Project implementation should be encouraged and the government should bring the technologies and know-how to every Filipino farmer. Moreover, grants and projects for farmers must be climate-sensitive," he said.

"Building the capacity of our farmers on climate-smart agriculture is also critical in the coming years. If properly educated, our farmers can eventually provide food for the country instead of relying on importation," he added.

"The Philippines is not lacking in ideas, talent, resources, and existing models of modern food and agriculture production," Mr. Kempis added.



Earth Day is the worst time to be planting trees (and other practical advice for companies trying to get to net zero)

By José Andres A. Canivel

*Executive Director,
Forest Foundation Philippines*

MANY PEOPLE want to plant trees on Earth Day, April 22, which is in the middle of our summer. We don't encourage planting on that day. We tell our partners, unless you're planting in your own backyard, do not have any illusions about planting on Earth Day. The best time to plant is during the rainy season. There's plenty of water for the plants and the soil is just cool enough for their growth. The core considerations for tree planting are planting the right species, at the right time, in the right area, for the right reasons. These are the "four rights."

Typically, companies prefer to plant in sites that are accessible by road. Which is fine, we can bring them to sites like these. But the effort might not amount to much, es-

pecially if our sites are not suitable for our planting objectives. If you're planting to protect trees, plant in protection zones. If you're planting for food, plant in agricultural land. If you want to harvest non-timber forest products for livelihood, plant in multiple-use zones.

Aside from tree planting, there are many ways to contribute to the protection and conservation of our forests. Forest Foundation Philippines implements a four-pronged approach to conservation. We grow forests, livelihoods, partnerships and advocates in the most critical forest landscapes of the country: the Sierra Madre range, Palawan, Samar and Leyte, and Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental.

GROWING FORESTS

We have meaningful partnerships with communities in the forests. Since these are in remote areas, it's difficult to market these planting sites. However, these sites can absorb carbon, improve forest biodi-

versity, and positively impact the lives of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities. That's the kind of tree planting project that we offer. Tree planting that will be sustained beyond project timelines because we work with tenured communities, not just organizations that come and go. Last year, we partnered with Origins to reforest a hectare of land in Palawan. Together with our community partners, we planted 1,000 mangrove seedlings that are now being nurtured and maintained by forest guards, who are deputized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to protect the site. Beyond planting trees, we also need to protect mature trees. Early this year, we worked with Co Ban Kiat Hardware to facilitate their donation of tools and equipment to the forest guards in Mt. Balabag, which serves as the boundary line of Ipo Watershed, a critical part of the Umiray-Angat-Ipo Watershed that supplies 98% of Metro Manila's water. ▶



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BusinessWorld ANNIVERSARY REPORT • WEDNESDAY, JULY 27, 2022

Searching for signs of an economic recovery

GROWING LIVELIHOODS

It is also important to support livelihoods that are consistent with managing and protecting forests. We're doing this because we want to incentivize communities who protect the forests, so they will veer away from illegal activities. Of our livelihood projects that are connected to forest conservation, our exemplar is coffee. We have a partner, the Philippine Coffee Alliance, that works with indigenous peoples and forest-based coffee farmers in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental. By providing livelihood support to the forest-dependent communities and forest guards, they are able to plant better coffee using upgraded technology, while earning a livelihood. During the pandemic, we were also able to sustain the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities in Samar and Palawan by providing diversified income streams to the community, so they can sustain their forest conservation and protection activities. They were able to successfully pivot from ecotourism to food security projects despite challenging times.

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

Growing partnerships allows us to work with the private sector.

In 2012 and 2013, we worked with Comden through their Cordura Skyway Marathon program to plant 20 hectares of mangrove forests in Zambonga Sibuyan. More recently, we worked with Cebu Pacific so they can offset their carbon emissions to meet the requirements set by the Civil Aeronautics Board. Together, we are planting 5,200 native seedlings on forest land in Binal. The area serves as a window to the Sierra Madre, which we consider to be the backbone of Luzon because it protects the country from the onslaught of typhoons. These native trees will recover and expand forest habitats for wildlife, protect watershed and freshwater resources, improve the local natural landscapes, connect forest fragments and secure the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities.

GROWING ADVOCATES

To ensure that the trees that we plant will be nurtured and protected by the people, we must rally them into becoming forest advocates. You cannot grow forests in three years' time, which is why some of our grants fund advocacy projects, like documentaries and visual projects. We are working with Dilksider Philippines to produce a film

Session 5: FORESTS IN CITIES: Plans, Practice and Partnerships

UNDERSTORY

URBAN FORESTS
CONSTITUTED BY MANGROVES, JARDIN DE PLANTAS, TREES, LAWN AND PAVEMENT TREES

UP BILIMAN IS A HOME OF URBAN FORESTS

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC!

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES & POLICIES

IMPORTANCE

THE TREE WALK

3-30-300 Acre
3 TREES FROM EVERY HOME
30% TREE COVER
300 METERS OF SECURITY FROM HIGHWAY

429 HECTARES OF TREES

PROCESSES & POLICIES

IMPORTANCE

THE TREE WALK

Session 4: Bloom where you are planted: Turning our passions into actions

UNDERSTORY

WHY AN ADVOCATE?

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES BY STORYTELLING

PROMOTING FOREST CONSERVATION THROUGH ART

IMPROVING THE WELL-BEING OF FOREST CONSERVATION ADVOCATES

YOU CAN BE AN ADVOCATE!

REBUILD THE FORESTS

SPREAD THE MESSAGING OF MANGROVE TRAVEL

TRAVEL CAN BE A TEACHER

LEARN MORE ABOUT FOREST PROTECTION CONSERVATION

SHARE YOUR PASSION

FIND YOUR TRIBE

ACE ON IT!

THE COMMUNITY MUST BE AT THE HEART OF CONSERVATION

WHEN YOU STEP INTO YOUR PASSION, THE INSPIRATION IS UNLIMITED

OBJECTIVES

CLIMATE RESILIENT

CLIMATE RESPONSIBILITY

CREATES INCLUSIVE

BIOMIMETIC MOVEMENT VISION

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END GOAL

documentary called Bantay Bakid, which highlights the important role of forest guards in protecting the forests. It will be released later this year. We are also working with Ms. Cynthia Rowson-Arre to mainstream the important role of native trees in tree planting. Our experience shows that rather than planting a great number of fast-growing exotic trees, native trees are better options because they have higher chances of growth and have the ability to nurture local wildlife.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FORESTS

Guided by our experience, we have developed measures that have allowed us to leverage private sector investment towards sustainable development. Measuring results. We have metrics for what it costs to restore and protect the forests. We also have environmental and social safeguards to ensure that our projects do not have any negative impacts on the environment and the communities. With this, we are confident that we can protect the investments made by the private sector. Accelerating impact. Rather than starting from scratch, by working with us, the private sec-

tor can contribute to various ongoing initiatives that protect, restore, sustainably manage and conserve forests. We can also build private sector capacity by providing technical assistance in nursery management and tree planting, among others. We hope these initiatives can encourage more stakeholders in the private sector to support our work.

Promoting inclusive development. We can leverage the support of the private sector by forging partnerships between communities and businesses to implement nature-based solutions that will grow forests, while addressing other issues, such as water security, food security, and disaster risk management. We do not just plant trees. We also look after the communities that plant in and the people that plant with.

Having said all of that, of course, you can always join us in planting trees. Just not on earth day.

JOSE ANDRES A. CAMAY is a lawyer and environmental policy expert. He has served as development assistance specialist at the Office of Energy and Environment of USAID Philippines and executive director of the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC).



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PUSH FOR RENEWABLE SOURCES OF POWER

ENERGY PROJECTS MUST RESPECT IP RIGHTS, GOV'T TOLD

TABUK CITY—President Marcos' plan to push for renewable energy projects to fill the gap in the country's energy demand should not be at the peril of the environment and indigenous peoples (IPs), according to an Apayao province-based organization, Kabugao Youth.

In his first State of the Nation Address (Sona) on Monday, the President said the government would increase the use of renewable energy sources, such as hydropower, geothermal, solar and wind, to cushion the impact of climate change.

"For the welfare of our people, it is incumbent upon us to lessen our vulnerability. Studies show that many areas in the Philippines are already at high risk from the rise in sea levels brought about by the increase in global temperature. We must adapt to this phenomenon with disaster-proof urban planning," Mr. Marcos said in his speech.

But Kabugao Youth said energy projects, such as hydropower, have been proven "more destructive" to IPs and their resources.

"Previous and current renewable energy projects in the country also created a cycle of abuse against IP rights," it said in a statement on Monday.

Community clearance

Kabugao Youth, composed of students and young professionals in Kabugao town, has been opposing the ongoing plan to build two large hydropower plants in Apayao, the 150-megawatt Gened 1 and the 335-MW Gened 2.

The P19.8-billion dam projects involved the construction of hydropower plants along the 175-kilometer Apayao-Abulog River.

A certification precondition has already been issued by the National Commission on Indige-

nous Peoples for the project.

But Kabugao Youth and other groups opposing the hydropower plants alleged that there were "anomalies and flaws" in securing clearance from IPs living in affected areas. A certification precondition states that "free, prior and informed consent," or FPIC, has been obtained from the concerned IPs.

"We reiterate our stand against large renewable energy projects, such as the Gened dams in Apayao," Kabugao Youth said.

Instead, the group said the government should focus on alternative solutions, such as mini-hydropower plants, solar and wind power options.

Noting that Mr. Marcos won in Apayao in the May polls, Kabugao Youth is hoping that the President would help them, fearing the dam project would displace IP communities and cause irreversible damage to the environment in the area.

Bataan nuke plant

In Bataan province, the group that opposed the construction and operation of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant during the term of Mr. Marcos' father and namesake said the incumbent President was "inconsistent" in his administration's energy program.

David Honra, secretary general of the Nuclear-Free Bataan Movement, said Mr. Marcos was "not being consistent when he said he would be prioritizing renewable [sources of energy] while at the same time urging the use of nuclear energy."

"If we really want a sustainable source, it's best to concentrate on renewable energy sources instead of other dirty and dangerous sources like [nuclear power plants]," Honra told the Inquirer in a chat message. —REPORTS FROM KARLSTON LAPNITEN AND TONETTE OREJASING



Green groups cheer PBBM's push for RE, but nix nuke, LNG tack

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

PRESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. on Monday drew mixed reactions from environmental groups who hailed the push for renewable energy (RE), but criticized plans to boost energy security through nuclear energy and liquefied natural gas.

Greenpeace Philippines said Marcos's State of the Nation Address (SONA) was somewhat confusing, at the least.

In his first SONA, the President said RE and addressing climate change are at the top of his agenda. Yet the President put nuclear and fossil gas plans ahead of RE sources, such as solar and wind.

It is sending mixed signals, and somewhat "worrying," said Greenpeace Campaigner for Renewable Energy Transition Khevin Yu.

"The mixed signals coming out of the Marcos administration's first SONA are worrying. Nuclear and fossil gas should be out of the picture today; it's hypocritical to talk about addressing the climate crisis while prioritizing dangerous energy sources. If the President is sincere about acting on the environment and climate, he should head straight for genuine renewable energy—and stop promoting nuclear and fossil gas," he said.

According to Yu, the necessary push for RE and climate action is somehow being maneuvered to suit the administration's misguided nuclear and fossil gas agenda.

According to Greenpeace Philippines, nuclear in any context is a dangerous proposition—even more so for the Philippines.

"Housing a nuclear plant in a country constantly battered by typhoons and earthquakes is like building a ticking time bomb, not to mention the amount of radioactive waste we wouldn't know how to dispose of. The cost of building up and maintaining this energy source will also be staggering for a country already swimming in debt—and will no doubt be passed on to consumers, who are already struggling with food, energy, and climate crisis," said Yu.

Likewise, Yu said fossil gas is no better, as it also produces another greenhouse gas—methane, which is up to 105 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year time horizon.

"Any new facility built now will lock the country into 40 more years of fossil fuel dependence and will considerably delay the country's much-needed transition to RE," Yu argued.

According to Yu, the country's existing energy problems will be further exacerbated by the President's insistence on public-private partnerships—surrendering the fate of our energy sector to corporations, when the administration's primary concern should be providing Filipinos with safe, affordable, and reliable power. "We have a vast amount of renewable energy resources waiting to be tapped, and RE has been proven to be more cost-efficient and dependable in the face of climate," he said.

"With the world and our country facing the impacts of a rapidly worsening climate crisis, we have no lead time and no room for nuclear and fossil gas. The President should walk the talk on his statements about preserving the environment and human life, and stop creating barriers to RE. Distracting ourselves with more costly and risky sources only sacrifices valuable time and resources—and threatens the very lives he wants to preserve," he said.

Energy consumers from the Power for the People Coalition (P4P) likewise expressed disappointment, saying Marcos's RE plan is full of contradictions.

In particular, the group said while Marcos declared that the use of RE is at the top of our climate agenda, gas remains necessary for the transition, calling for the development of new power plants and the use of natural gas as another energy source alongside renewables.

"President Marcos's energy plans are at odds with what he promises. He cannot say that renewable energy is his top agenda when he is peddling nuclear and natural gas, both of which are not clean sources of energy, not to mention the environmental risks and hazards that come with it," said P4P convenor Gerry Arances.

Marcos, during his SONA, also bared his plan for the enactment of an enabling law for the natural gas industry and providing incentives to liquefied natural gas (LNG) as a bridge fuel.

"Renewable energy is a top priority not just by saying it, but by committing to minimizing, then eliminating the use of fossil fuels to protect the environment and consumers. It's disappointing to hear him talk about incentives and bill for gas and action point for nuclear but no actual plans for renewable energy," Arances explained.

"Marcos was on point on renewable energy as a priority both for lowering costs and transition but his plans were distracted and unsound with his push for LNG and nuclear. However, the more we invest in imported, expensive, capital-intensive gas-powered facilities, the harder it becomes to discard them, essentially locking us into using gas instead of moving forward to renewable energy. And the more we rely on fossil fuels, the more consumers suffer during times of high prices in the world market, as we are experiencing now," Arances added.



DoE's Lotilla outlines priorities; renewables and nuclear in focus

THE PHILIPPINES needs to diversify its sources of energy for the security of supply, the Energy chief said on Tuesday, as he outlined the administration's priorities to include developing indigenous sources and possibly adopting nuclear energy.

"For power, this will include the 28,000 gigawatts of offshore wind which can be mobilized by 2030," Department of Energy (DoE) Secretary Raphael M. Lotilla said in a briefing led by the country's economic managers after the President's State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday.

He also said that to achieve energy diversification, new technologies and nuclear solutions could be utilized to partly address energy supply issues.

"100% of our fuel requirements are imported. In the power sector, 45% of our plants use coal for fuel and 80% of that coal is imported. Another 11.8% of the fuel for power is oil-based," said Mr. Lotilla, who gave his comments by phone in the event shown by state media.

"These show our country's vulnerability to volatilities in global prices," he said.

Mario C. Marasigan, director of the DoE's Electric Power Industry Management Bureau, said during the briefing that while the country has a sufficient supply of liquid fuel and electricity, the cost is dictated by imported fuel.

Mr. Lotilla said that he had been instructed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. that top priority should be given to addressing uncertainties regarding investment incentives to the upstream sector, especially natural gas.

He said one of these is the interpretation of Presidential Decree (PD) 87, which was issued to revamp petroleum legislation by introducing the service contracting system.

"PD 87 allowing the service contractor's corporate taxes to form part of the government's 60% net share has hindered investments and roll out in this sector. The DoR will be submitting a clear articulation of that policy. We will seek legislative articulation of that policy," Mr. Lotilla said.

He also said that his department would pursue the electrification targets for households nationwide.

"There are still more than a million unserved households in the country, with more than 800,000 in Mindanao," he said.

In Mr. Marcos' SONA, he said that it is time to re-examine nuclear energy to attract more investors and ensure enough power supply. He said that cheap and reliable energy is a requirement for economic growth as it is related to the ease of doing business.

"There is some room to expand our present power supply through existing power sources,

but this is only to a very limited extent. We must build new power plants. We must take advantage of all the best technology that is now available, especially in the areas of renewable energy," he added.

Philippine Nuclear Research Institute Director Carlo A. Arcilla told *BusinessWorld* through Viber that adopting nuclear energy is feasible as long as there is political will.

Meanwhile, several energy companies and environmental groups were divided on the government's energy agenda.

Philippine Energy Efficiency Alliance (PE2) President Alexander D. Ablaza said that energy efficiency should be planned as a primary resource when determining additional capacity requirements in the 2040 energy mix.

In a statement released by PE2, it said that Mr. Marcos' push for a closer linkage between the energy sector and the country's climate agreement compliance is a welcome policy statement.

It said that the President in his address sought "several reforms in the energy sector targeted toward increasing generation capacities, decarbonizing the supply-side of the power industry, while reducing energy prices."

"What the energy efficiency industry was hoping to hear from his address however was the explicit scale-up of energy efficiency interventions as a cost-effective

solution to support the energy security and decarbonization objectives of the Philippines," it said.

Alternergy Holdings Corp. led by Energy chief Vicente S. Pérez, Jr. backed Mr. Marcos' call to improve the mix of energy supply between traditional and renewable sources.

"This is a strong statement and sets a clear direction for the energy industry to rally behind [Mr. Marcos'] call to build new power plants and with the use of renewable energy," Mr. Perez said, noting that Alternergy and its subsidiaries plan to bring some 1,245 MW of new renewable energy capacity in the next five years.

On the other hand, Greenpeace campaigner Khevin Yu described the government's call to include nuclear in the country's energy mix as a "dangerous" proposition.

Mr. Yu said that housing a nuclear plant in the Philippines is like building a ticking bomb because the country is often devastated by typhoons and earthquakes.

"Nuclear and fossil gas should be out of the picture today; it's hypocritical to talk about addressing the climate crisis while prioritizing dangerous energy sources. If the President is sincere about acting on the environment and climate, he should head straight for genuine renewable energy — and stop promoting nuclear and fossil gas," Greenpeace said in a press release. — Ashley Erika O. Jose



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Pagtalakay sa pagbuhay sa nuclear energy, inumpisahan na

Inumpisahan nang talakayin ng mga opisyal ng Department of Energy (DOE) ang pagpapababa sa halaga ng enerhiya sa bansa kabilang ang posibilidad na pagbuhay sa nuclear energy bilang pagkukunan ng kuryente.

Sinabi ni Energy Director Mero Marasigan na kabilang sa pinag-usapan sa kanilang unang "post-SONA economic briefing" ang paglinang sa mga resources na malatagpuan sa bansa bukod sa renewable energy, paglinaw sa mga alituntunin sa dayuhang investment sa sektor at maging ang alternatibong pagkukunan ng enerhiya tulad ng nuclear power at hydrogen.

Ipinaliwanag niya na ng presyo ng enerhiya sa bansa ay idinidikta ng presyo ng imported na langis. Maasaring mabawasan ito kung hindi na aasa ang bansa dito.

"In looking for alternative options for our energy, then we need also support for the entry of alternative source of energy such as nuclear and hydrogen fuel," ayon kay Marasigan.

Hindi naman binanggit ni Marasigan kung bubuhayin din ang kontrobersyal na Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

Ipinayo pa niya na maasari rin ang mga konsyumer na gumawa ng sarili nilang "power generation" tulad ng instalasyon ng "solar system" sa kanilang mga tahanan.

Sinabi naman ni Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla na dapat na ring i-explore ang mga lugar sa pailigid ng Malampaya para makatuklas ng penibagong natural gas. Inaasahan na matutuyo na ang Malampaya pag-sapit ng 2027. (Danilo Garcia)



NATIONWIDE ROUND-UP

Government rightsizing could mean more funds for nurses, teachers, engineers

A VETERAN lawmaker said the administration's plan to "right-size" the bureaucracy could mean more funds for crucial personnel in the fields of health, education, and science.

"The idea is, scrap unnecessary positions and use them to create essential ones, or use the savings from abolished items to fill the shortage of critical workforce," Batangas Rep. Ralph G. Recto said in a press release on Tuesday.

Mr. Recto, who also previously served several terms in the Senate, said rightsizing should be guided by improving government service and not simply cutting down on manpower costs.

He did note that the government's personnel service expenses have more than doubled in the last decade to P1.405 trillion this year from P593 billion in 2012.

"Taxpayers are shelling out P3.850 billion daily for the salary and allowances of national government personnel and the pension of retired servicemen," he said.

The solon, demonstrating an example, said if rightsizing can trim down the cost by at least P20 billion annually, that savings could be used to recruit more medical workers such as nurses, medical technologists, and doctors.

He also said that more teachers could be hired, which is essential to meet the ideal ratio for a growing population.

Mr. Recto also said the country needs more "engineers, technical and science people" to boost science-driven modernization projects.

"That is why I support this kind of rightsizing," he said. — **Matthew Carl L. Montecillo**



Recto: Rightsizing won't reduce workforce

BY EDJEN OLIQUINO
@tribunephil_eoa

Batangas Rep. Ralph Recto said Tuesday the proposed bureaucracy rightsizing won't lead to a decrease in government workers as the growing population dictates the necessity for their hiring.

He was referring to the essential workers such as teachers, nurses and police officers.

"Rightsizing would mean downsizing the personnel complement in some agencies but upsizing them in many," he said.

"Population growth is the most influential HR (human resources) recruiter, one that is impossible to ignore," he continued.

The lawmaker stressed that the goal of the "right" rightsizing initiative should be to improve government service rather than reduce payroll costs.

He explained that the goal is to eliminate unnecessary jobs and replace them with essential ones, mentioning that the government is grappling with a lack of health, science, and engineering personnel.

At the same time, he suggested using the savings from things that are eliminated to cover important workforce shortages.

Recto cited the recent testimony of a Health official before the Senate in support of his claim that there is a scarcity of 92,000 physicians, 44,000 nurses, and 19,000 medical technologists in the country.

The solon reasoned that the lack of these professionals is the "technical deficit" resulting in the country's slow infrastructure programs and other science-driven modernization projects.

Meanwhile, Recto claimed that government "personnel service" costs have stealthily increased by 137 percent over 10 years, from P593 billion in 2012 to P1.406 trillion this year.



A governance approach to rightsizing (2)

HOUSE Bill 5707, also known as the "Rightsizing the National Government Act," was the last legislative proposal that aimed to reorganize government since Congress was revived a year after the exit of the Marcos dictatorship. (At that time, Ferdinand Marcos Sr. assumed the powers of Congress to legislate.) HB 5707, however, did not go through the Senate although it passed the House of Representatives.

The bill proposed the creation of a Committee on Rightsizing the Executive Branch to develop the overall rightsizing program and to oversee the implementation of the Act. The committee was supposed to be composed of the executive secretary as the chairman, the head of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) as co-chairman, and the socioeconomic planning secretary, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) chairman and the head of the Presidential Management Staff as members. Specific tasks included formulating the policies, framework, mechanisms to be adopted in the implementation of the Act. The committee would have authority "to conduct studies on the functions, programs, projects, operations, structure, and manpower complement of the different departments/agencies and to develop and prepare the rightsized organizational structure of depart-



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ments/agencies concerned and the corresponding executive issuances for approval by the president."

The committee had to submit to the president the rightsized organizational structure of the agencies concerned and the corresponding executive issuances within 250 days from the effectivity of the IRR of the Act.

Down the line, heads of agencies needed to prepare and submit to the DBM the detailed organizational structure and staffing of their respective agencies within 90 days after the approval of the proposed executive issuances by the president.

As in previous rightsizing programs, HB 5707 proposed several packages of early retirement benefits for those who would opt to leave government on account of the rightsizing law.

The standards proposed by UN Escap for an ideal governance-driven process by which organizational restructuring can be achieved (participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law) might be easy to understand. But they are hard to carry out.

On paper, the committee pro-



posed by HB 5707 appears deficient where the goal of a participatory, consensus-oriented and inclusive process is raised. One would argue that an effective way of promoting participation and inclusiveness throughout the change management process would be to get the employee unions or associations representing the rank-and-file involved. But in a context where unions and/or associations have largely been red-tagged, far removed from the early post-Marcos dictatorship era when there was a relative expansion of democratic space, this mode of participation is hardly expected to work. (When I joined the CSC in 1982, unionism in the public sector was banned. When the Cory Aquino government rose to power in 1986, one of my tasks was drafting new sets

of rules on employee relations.)

It is thus important that alternative ways of promoting participation, consensus-building and inclusivity are adopted throughout the restructuring process. Each agency may have its own way of doing it. What is important is that there exists a universally understood and accepted strategy for moving forward. Everything else (organizational structure, staffing, etc.) should follow from that strategy.

As an example, the government of Fidel Ramos (1992-1998) adopted "Philippines 2000" which envisioned the Philippines being able to achieve newly industrialized country status by the year 2000 and beyond. He retooled government agencies to make them more responsive to challenges posed by a highly com-



petitive global export market. He appointed cabinet secretaries who were experts in the field of science and research and development. He also provided economic stimulus packages to the poorest provinces in an effort to get everyone involved in the development process.

Another example would be President Rodrigo Duterte's "war on drugs." To win the war, he needed to scare the drug users away from their addiction. He applied at the national level what seemed to work locally when he was mayor of Davao City: by getting through media lifeless images of suspected drug users, bathed in their own spilled blood. There was a need to pound on the message by highlighting the kills on a daily basis. He stuffed his intelligence funds with unheard of amounts with which the witch hunt and murder of drug suspects could be done at scale, and later on rewarded.

At varying degrees both Ramos and Duterte failed in their respective strategies on account of organizational deficiencies that hampered the implementation of those strategies. For Ramos, he was unable to establish a comprehensive organizational reprogramming to be able to cope with the energy crisis that hounded his administration at the outset. There was also the 1997 financial crisis, although he had little or no control over it.

In the case of Duterte, he appeared to have all the bases covered. Like Ramos, he appointed cabinet secretaries who fitted perfectly with his vision. He picked generals even for positions that did not require experience in mounting shooting wars. But his organizational nets had holes. His government may have foiled attempts at smuggling illegal drugs worth billions upon billions of pesos, but given that the drug problem continues to persist until today, one can only surmise that some smuggling of drugs have been done successfully, untracked by state dogs, perhaps at a larger scale than those that got sniffed and flagged.

From a governance standpoint, the war on drugs also suffered from a lack of transparency, accountability and, in many documented cases, for bucking the rule of law.

Realistically, any rightsizing effort may not need to follow the ideal process. Anything that can add value to organizational accountability, transparency, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, should always be a welcome change. The Asian Development Bank, in the context of a government being able to access the bank's development financing and technical support, identifies four basic elements of good governance, namely accountability, participation, predictability and transparency.

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DND lauds Marcos' firm stand on WPS

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

The Department of National Defense (DND) lauded President Marcos yesterday for his clear and firm position of protecting Philippine territory in the West Philippine Sea.

With the commander-in-chief's strong pronouncement that not even a square inch of the country will be surrendered to any foreign power, the military now intends to further intensify patrols in the contested waters and increase its capabilities to protect Philippine sovereignty, the DND said.

"We will adhere to the President's guidance to build stronger, multifaceted relations with our neighbors, but not at the expense of our sovereignty and territorial integrity," DND spokesman Arsenio Andolong said.

"This will be accomplished through active engagement and dialogues with our foreign defense and military counterparts," he added, following Marcos' declarations during his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday.

Andolong said the President was firm in his direction that the Philippines will not cede an inch of its territory to any foreign power.

"To this end, the DND shall continue to pursue the modernization of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and build our credible defense posture, which will allow us to further intensify our maritime and air domain awareness operations, and establish a stronger presence in our strategic border-areas and territory," he said.

While the AFP continues to modernize itself, Andolong said the DND will increase its active engagement and dialogues with foreign defense counterparts.

"It's important that we are communicating with each other as concerns

happen. At the moment, the issue of the West Philippine Sea is still in the diplomatic realm, our diplomats are working on that," he explained in Filipino and English.

"The DND and the AFP will also be doing its part in terms of the international defense and security engagement. Specifically, we will continue holding dialogues with our neighbors to ensure that we are on the same page and in order to avoid any misunderstanding or miscalculation, especially on the high seas and in the air. That's important," Andolong said.

In the meantime, he said the military "will continue to modernize because an important aspect of the modernization is to provide us with assets that will enable us to maintain a perpetual presence in our territories and borders."

Andolong admitted that the military still doesn't have that credible posture needed to patrol all of the country's territorial waters because of the long archipelagic coastlines of the Philippines.

"We'll have it, eventually, but it's not the only answer to the issue. What is important is we communicate with our counterparts so that we maintain the status quo at least," he said.

Andolong said the AFP will intensify patrols in the West Philippine Sea, noting that because of modernization efforts that have already been completed, "the operational tempo of our legitimate maritime and reconnaissance patrols has intensified; in short, we're doing more now, and I'm sure that in the next few months that will be intensified some more because we really need to establish our presence."

"I think that's the most important thing, presence. Because if we are not there, then they can do what they want. So, we have to make sure that we have a presence."

27 JULY 2022, WEDNESDAY



NEWS ALERTS

COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



19K daily cases by Aug. 31 if low vax, booster rates continue

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor [July 26, 2022, 3:30 pm](#)



(PNA photo by Avito Dalan)

MANILA – The number of detected Covid-19 cases at the national level are projected to be on a continuous uptrend with an estimated 19,306 infections per day by Aug. 31, the Department of Health (DOH) said Tuesday.

In a Viber message to reporters, the DOH said the projection is expected if Covid-19 vaccination and booster coverage and adherence to public health protocols do not improve.

“However, with the improvement of vaccination and booster rates and MPHS (Minimum Public Health Standards) compliance, case increase may be slower and more controlled at about 6,194 to 8,346 cases by the end of August,” the DOH said. “While we do consider Covid-19 case numbers in determining an area's alert level, we would like to emphasize the larger focus we have on admission and hospital utilization rates”.

The agency assured the public that the country has the capability to reduce the vulnerable population and keep hospital utilization and fatalities to a minimum due to the advances in Covid-19 treatment and the availability of vaccines to combat severe and critical disease.

It also urged the public to continue wearing best-fitting face masks, observe physical distancing and get vaccinated and receive boosters to reduce the number of infections as much as possible.

On Monday, the DOH reported a 33 percent increase in daily cases for the week of July 18 to 24. From 2,091 per day from July 11 to 17, the cases reached 2,791 daily in the recent week.

About 14,640 new cases and one verified death were added to the Covid-19 numbers in the recent week.

To date, about 71,546,355 or 91.61 percent of the country's target population (78,100,578) are fully vaccinated.

As of July 17, a total of 15,934,251 have received booster shots. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1179804>



DOH launches COVID-19 booster drive

Philstar.com July 26, 2022 | 5:03pm



A woman receives a booster shot at the launch of the “PINASLAKAS” vaccination drive on July 26, 2022

AFP / Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health launched Tuesday a campaign that aims to administer booster shots to 50% of the country’s eligible population within the first 100 days of the Marcos administration.

Authorities are targeting to administer boosters to 23.8 million individuals in the “PINASLAKAS” drive, which was launched at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange.

The campaign also seeks to immunize 90% of the target senior citizen population.

Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, officer-in-charge of the DOH, said the new vaccination drive is in line with the bid of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to bring essential health services closer to Filipinos.

COVID-19 jabs will be made available in workplaces, factories, schools, places of worship, plazas, malls, and transport terminals.

“Sa pagtanggap ng booster makapag-hanapbuhay tayong lahat nang mas ligtas, maaaring magsimula or manatiling bukas ang negosyo, mas magiging ligtas ang pagbabalik eskwela ng ating mga anak, manunumbalik ang turismo, makasasamba at maitutuloy na ang gawaing pananampalataya,” Vergeire said.

(By receiving the boosters, we will all be able to work more safely, businesses can start or stay open. It will be safer for our children to go back to school. Tourism will recover, worship activities will continue.)

“Mababawasan ang pangamba sa paggamit ng public transport, at matutugunan ang iba pang usaping pangkalusugan dahil bababa ang mga kaso at mababawasan ang pasan ng healthcare facilities at workers,” she added.

(The fear of using public transport will be minimized, and other health matters will be addressed because cases will decline and the burden on healthcare facilities and workers will be reduced.)

Out of the 71.5 million people who have completed vaccination against COVID-19, only 15.9 million have gotten boosters, latest government data showed.

According to the DOH, COVID-19 cases nationwide may reach around 19,306 cases a day by August 31. But the rise in cases may be controlled at about 6,194 to 8,346 cases per day by end-August if the vaccination rates improve and if people continue following public health protocols. — Gaea Katreena Cabico

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/07/26/2198116/doh-launches-covid-19-booster-drive>

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







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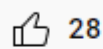
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