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# NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE





## DENR: Partners needed to curb illegal flora, fauna trade

March 21, 2022 [Cory Martinez](#)

CONTINUED partnerships with stakeholders are very important to combat illegal wildlife trade vigorously and effectively.

This was stressed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna in his keynote message during the recent virtual celebration of World Wildlife Day 2022.

“We need to establish a partnership with various stakeholders and continue to raise awareness among local communities to empower them towards more effective responses to environmental issues on the ground,” Sampulna said.

“We are assured knowing that we have allies working from the international to the local level in helping us protect key species in the ecosystem,” he said.

With the theme “Recovering Key Species for Ecosystem Restoration,” this year’s World Wildlife Day celebration aimed to draw attention to the conservation status of some of the most critically endangered species of wild fauna and flora and to drive discussions towards imagining and implementing solutions to conserve them.

Sampulna also pushed for the approval of the revised Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001 which has remained pending in the Senate.

The bill seeks to expand the protection and coverage of RA 9147, strengthen and improve enforcement, and inter-agency cooperation to combat illegal wildlife trade including responses to transnational wildlife crimes.

The DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) led the country’s celebration of World Wildlife Day through webinars that highlighted wildlife conservation programs for key species such as Rufous hornbill, flying fox, Philippine cockatoo, Philippine pond turtle, Dugong, and threatened native flora.



Conservation partners such as the Katala Foundation Inc., Community-Centered Conservation, Energy Development Corporation, Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc., and the Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Society Inc. shared their expertise and conducted the webinars in partnership with the DENR-BMB.

At present, there are more than 40,000 species of flora and fauna worldwide that are threatened with extinction.

In the Philippines alone, the DENR had listed a total of 1,106 threatened fauna species and 984 threatened flora.

Meanwhile, DENR Undersecretary for Enforcement Benito Antonio de Leon, who serves as BMB's Supervising Undersecretary, said that the DENR will continue to uphold its mandate to conserve and protect the country's natural resources.

"Despite these efforts, we need stronger enforcement to address and meet the growing intricacies of illegal wildlife trade. We are one with our fellow partners in underscoring the importance of a strengthened enforcement system for wildlife protection," de Leon said.



# Cement plant + plastic waste = saving planet?

DENR pushes option to transform plastic refuse into a key ingredient in cement manufacturing

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA



To help reduce the country's solid waste generation, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is urging cement manufacturers to explore ways to utilize plastic waste as raw material and help cut half of the country's garbage problem.

"When all these cement plants will participate, we can dramatically reduce the volume of plastic waste which will be now regarded as raw material of the cement plants in their current processing," DENR-Environment Management Bureau Director William Cuñado said in a news statement.

He said several cement firms have already adopted the conversion of plastic waste into energy in the country.

"This measure will reduce by 40 percent to 60 percent the volume of plastic waste," he pointed out.

The DENR-EMB chief also said that the participation of local government units (LGUs) through their solid waste management efforts would contribute to the decrease in plastic waste volume.

Cuñado noted that the conversion of plastic waste into raw material for cement plants would result in the reduction of plastic waste generated in cities and municipalities.

DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs and department spokesperson Atty. Jonas R. Leones also pointed out that cement plants could recycle campaign materials made out of plastics that are being used for the May 2022 elections.

"Plastic tarpaulins are also used in co-processing, in energy. These are mixed into cement as fillers; sometimes these are used to create pots," Leones, who held the position of EMB director during his early years in the DENR, pointed out.

"Plastic tarpaulins are melted to have some other products out of these plastics," he added.

While the Philippines has been implementing Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 for more than 20 years, the country is facing a looming garbage crisis.

With its estimated population of over 100 million, the country produces around 40,000 tons of garbage every day or 14.6 million tons of garbage annually. Metro Manila produces slightly less than a quarter of that figure with around 9,000 tons every day.

## 'Harmful to environment'

WASTE and pollution watchdog EcoWaste Coalition said plastic waste as an alternative raw material or fuel for cement manufacturing does not address the root problem of the plastic pollution crisis, and could even potentially do more harm than good to the environment.



“Cement kilns, incinerators, and other combustion units burning waste, especially chlorinated materials, release harmful pollutants into the environment,” Coleen Salamat, Plastic Solutions Campaigner of EcoWaste Coalition, said.

“Before any blanket endorsement is made on this disposal scheme for plastic waste, we urge the authorities to make publicly available independent studies, as well as verified monitoring reports, presumably used by DENR to justify its push for such a scheme,” she said.

To improve the recyclability and circularity of plastics, the government should draw up real solutions such as policies that prevent and reduce the volume and toxicity of plastic waste without aggravating the already alarming climate crisis, Salamat stressed.

### **‘Toxic emissions’**

SOUGHT for reaction, Greenpeace said using plastic waste as fuel in co-processing and waste-to-energy produces significant amounts of toxic emissions and greenhouse gases, further aggravating the plastic pollution and climate crises.

“Plastic-to-fuel schemes are false solutions which do not result in the behavioral changes or systemic shifts our planet needs. They instead incentivize continued waste generation and dependence on plastic. We only get one side of the story from the proponents of such schemes, as local governments and the wider public are not well informed about the risks. The costs of refuse-derived fuel and waste-to-energy on human and environmental health are considerable. They’re essentially converting plastic pollution from waste to another form—air pollutants,” Marian Frances T. Ledesma, Zero Waste Campaigner of Greenpeace Southeast Asia-Philippines, said.

“The Philippine government should not be encouraging or investing in technology that compromises the safety and health of people and the environment,” she added.





# DENR holds series of information campaign on importance of water



ZAMBOANGA. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) conducted last week a series of information, education and communication (IEC) campaigns on the importance of water and 'Water Code of the Philippines' in four villages of RT Lim, Zamboanga Sibugay. A photo handout shows the participants listening intently to Regional Strategic Communication and Initiatives Group (RSCIG) Chief Rosevirico Tan, one of the event's resources speakers. (SunStar Zamboanga)

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Licenses, Patents, and Deed Division (LPDD), conducted last week a series of information, education and communication (IEC) campaign on the importance of water and the "Water Code of the Philippines" in four areas of RT Lim town, Zamboanga Sibugay.

The IEC was conducted together with the Regional Strategic Communication and Initiatives Group (RSCIG) in the villages of New Sagay, Sto. Rosario, Taruc and Malubal in R.T. Lim town.

Rosevirico Tan, RSCIG chief, said the IEC campaign was conducted in line with the celebration of World Water Day on Tuesday, March 22, which is anchored on the theme "Groundwater: Making the Invisible, Visible."

Tan said the series of activities is aimed to engage people to increase their level of awareness on the use of water, causes of water pollution, water regulation and permit applications, its different prohibitions, fines and penalties.

He said the four-day event was participated by around 170 selected village officials and residents from the four of the 26 villages of RT Lim municipality.

The four-day activity was facilitated by designated Info Officer Jessalou Tabat and personnel from the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office-Kabasalan.

Aside from Tan, other resource speakers were LPDD Chief Arlene Gabayno, Foresters Arcel Candido and Boy Sumpiao.

The DENR will continue its commitment to enhance environmental awareness on the programs and bring basic services closer to the people from all over the region. (SunStar Zamboanga)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1924261/zamboanga/local-news/denr-holds-series-of-information-campaign-on-importance-of-water>



# “GROUNDWATER: MAKING THE INVISIBLE, VISIBLE” SINIMULAN NG DENR



SINIMULAN ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang selebrasyon ng World Water Day ngayong taon sa pamamagitan ng pagtitipon ng policymakers at mga eksperto para sa 1<sup>st</sup> National River Basin Summit noong Marso 15.

Ayon kay DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna, ang dalawang araw na summit na inorganisa ng River Basin Control Office (RBCO) ay bahagi ng selebrasyon ng World Water Day sa Marso 22 na may temang “Groundwater: Making the Invisible, Visible.”

Aniya pa, hangarin ng summit na maidokumento ang mga gawain at mga natutunan mula sa mga nakalipas na river basin initiatives na krusyal sa pangangailangan ng bansa para mapanatili at mapagsama-sama ang river management practices at sa implementasyon ng 421 principal river basins.

Hinikayat ni Sampulna sa kanyang keynote message ang mga policymakers at experts na magplano ng partikular na aksiyon at comprehensive framework para mapaghandaan ang mga kalamidad dulot na rin ng climate change.

Binigyang-diin nito na ang aplikasyon ng integrated water resources management approach ay susi para maprotektahan ang river systems ng bansa na labis na dumedepende sa groundwater para sa annual flow nito.

“The deterioration of groundwater quality may directly affect aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems,” saad ni Sampulna at idinagdag pa nito na ang pinsala ng river systems ay magdudulot ng ecological at economic losses at nakaaapekto sa kalidad ng buhay ng mga tao.

Sinabi ni Sampulna na labis sa 50 percent na water flow ng mga ilog ang umaasa sa groundwater habang higit sa 90 percent naman ng water flow ang nagagamit sa panahon ng tag-init.

Ipinisinta sa pagdiriwang ang dalawang best practices ng river basin governance. Ito ay ang Cagayan de Oro River Basin Experience (NGO-led River Basin Governance) na ipinakita ni Cagayan de Oro River Basin Management Council Executive Director Hilly Ann Roa-Quiaoit at ang Pampanga River Basin Experience (Regional Development Council-led River Basin governance) na tinalakay ni National Economic and Development Authority-Central Luzon Regional Director Gina T. Gacusan.

Tinalakay naman ni National Water Resources Board Executive Director Seville David, Jr. ang “Results of the Study on Groundwater Assessment” habang ipinisinta naman ni DENR-Climate Change Service Director Elenida Basug ang “Build Back Better: Updates and Initiatives.”

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/groundwater-making-the-invisible-visible-sinimulan-ng-denr/>



# 'Responsible mining a priority'

By [Vince Jacob Visaya](#)

**TUGUEGARAO CITY:** An official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ordered key officials of Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) to ensure the cleanliness of water bodies and mining companies' compliance with policies.

"We have to give importance to the cleanliness of all waterways. Let us take this seriously," Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna told the DENR regional officials in the recent management conference held in Santiago City, Isabela.

Cuna said the government's efforts in the rehabilitation of the famous Boracay Island and Manila Bay should be replicated in restoring other water bodies in the country.

Citing the accomplishments of the DENR-led Build Back Better Regional Task Force to restore the Cagayan River, Cuna directed the field officials to ensure that no structure shall be established in no-build zones or within the easement areas.

The DENR official also made a reminder of the agency's obligation to ensure responsible mining.

"This is a mining region. With the lifting of the moratorium on mining permits, there is a corresponding responsibility for us to ensure that the mining is done properly. We make sure that these mining companies are compliant," the Environment undersecretary said.

In April 2021, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Executive Order 130, lifting the nine-year ban on mineral agreements to boost the country's economy and to support government projects by providing raw materials for the construction and development of other industries and by increasing employment opportunities in remote rural areas where there are mining activities thereby stimulating countryside development.

The order directs the DENR to strictly implement mines' safety and environmental policies. It shall also ensure strict implementation of and compliance with the recommended measures of the Mining Industry Coordinating Council involving all mining operations, including other pertinent laws, rules and regulations, and the terms and conditions of the mineral agreements.

During the regional management conference, the status of the Forestry Master Plan, Philippine Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan, and Lands Strategic Plan were presented. The importance of strategic and geospatial planning was also discussed.

Regional Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan said revisiting master plans and knowing the baselines and universe data are necessary for coming up with good plans.

"We don't just implement. We implement programs toward addressing particular DENR concerns that is why we have to have good plans," she added.

Bambalan reminded the assistant regional directors, bureau regional directors, provincial and community environment and natural resources officers, and division chiefs regionwide of the order of Environment Secretary Jim Sampulna to strictly observe and implement environmental laws and applicable guidelines in exercising their duties and responsibilities.





# Owl rescued in Capiz

by Tara Yap



The barn owl was rescued in Capiz province recently. (Photo courtesy of the Capiz PENRO / MANILA BULLETIN)

ILOILO CITY — A barn owl (*Tyto alba*) was recently rescued in Capiz province.

Analyn Delfin of Maayon town personally took the owl and turned it over to the Capiz Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Capiz PENRO).

According to Delfin, it was her sister who first saw the owl when it was chasing a kitten in her backyard.

The sisters surmised the owl may have possibly been nesting at a tall tree in their backyard. No traces of injuries were seen on the owl.

After the incident with the kitten, the sisters decided to catch the owl and put it inside a cage. They immediately contacted Capiz PENRO since they didn't know what to do with it and they noticed the owl was getting sickly.

When it was turned over to Capiz PENRO, the owl was also checked by the Office of the Provincial Veterinary.

The Capiz PENRO is set to turn it over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-Capiz), which will be the government agency that will release it back to the wild once it gets well enough.

# Consunjis first to benefit from lifting of ban on new mines; Semirara's Himalian project gets MPSA

Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) was granted a mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the first mining contract ever approved by the government in almost a decade.

In a regulatory filing, SMPC said it received a copy of the DENR-approved MPSA for its Himalian limestone project covering 3.8 million hectares on Semirara Island in Caluya, Antique.

The MPSA has a contract period of 25 years, renewable for another 25 years.

It gives SMPC the exclusive right to immediately undertaking mining operations within the contract period.

The MPSA was issued almost a year after President Duterte lifted the nine-year ban on new mining projects in a move aimed at boosting the country's economy.

The Philippines is one of the world's biggest suppliers of nickel ore. It is also rich in copper and gold.

SMPC rose as much as 3.4 percent to P32.30 Monday as investors welcomed the new development. The stock is now trading at P31.70, 1.4 percent higher than the previous close of P31.25 per share.



# COMP picks ‘external verifiers’ in sustainable mining program

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) recently released the names of the first batch of accredited Verification Service Providers (VSP) who will critically review the performance of large-scale mining companies under the group.

Also called ‘external verifiers,’ the members of the VSP are all experienced independent experts in social, environmental as well as mining, and other related sciences, said COMP.

The 13 newly accredited VSPs, all trained by the Mining Association of Canada with the support of the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines, include Joey Nelson Ayson, president of the Philippine Mining & Exploration Association and the UP Geological Society; Joselito Bacani, former president of Intex Resources Phils., Inc. and a former member of the independent audit team that investigated the Rapu-Rapu mines spill incident;

Michael Cabalda, a former social development consultant of Holcim Phils., Inc. and former division chief of the Mining Environment and Safety Division of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB); Jose Dagala, who held key positions in large-scale metallic mining projects as an expert in the areas of indigenous peoples relations, corporate social responsibility, community organizing, and community development;

Roland de Jesus, 12-year regional director of the MGB, and a recipient of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ EAGLE Award; Maria Karla Espinosa, a lawyer who is now consultant of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative;

Katrina Francisco, senior director for Climate Change and Sustainability Services of the SGV and an accredited Corporate Governance facilitator of the Securities and Exchange Commission; Karen Jago-on, professor at the UP School of Urban and Regional Planning and member of a Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) fact-finding team that reviewed the operations of existing mining operations following the closure and suspension orders issued by the late former Environment Secretary Gina Lopez;

Corinthia Naz, also part of the MICC fact-finding review and former consultant of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; Constancio Paye Jr., a retired 26-year regional director of the MGB and also a DENR EAGLE awardee;

Fernando Sajona, an MICC fact-finding review team leader and MGB official, and consulted for various structural and engineering geology projects; Ramon Santos, a mining engineer and geologist with 40 years’ experience in the mining industry; and Benjamin Villacorte, a partner with SGV’s Assurance Practice, among them in Climate Change and Sustainability Services where he assists clients in understanding and identifying key sustainability issues.

COMP Chairman Michael Toledo said VSP members will conduct critical reviews of the performance ratings of COMP members following the measurement tools prescribed by the Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) program.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/03/21/comp-picks-external-verifiers-in-sustainable-mining-program/>





# SBMA launches 1st quarter offshore clean-up in Subic Bay

CHARLENE A. CAYABYAB

THE Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), along with other authorities in the Port of Subic, launched the 1st Quarter Offshore Clean-Up 2022 in response to the call for a cleaner and safer freeport.

Newly installed SBMA Chairman and Administrator Rolan Paulino lauded personnel from SBMA Seaport Department, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine National Police (PNP)-Maritime Group, and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) who participated in the activity.

Earlier this March, in his first appearance as SBMA chairman, Paulino appealed to employees, locators, residents and stakeholders to help in maintaining cleanliness and safety in the freeport to attract more tourists and investors.

As part of the strategic measures to revitalize the business climate, the SBMA Seaport Department launched the off-shore clean-up drive, which kicked off on Friday, March 18.

“The objective of this offshore clean-up is to engage people to remove trash and debris from beaches, waterways and other waterbodies,” said Jerome Martinez, manager of the Seaport Department.

The project also aims to identify the sources of litter that come to the bay, to change behaviors that cause pollution and raise awareness on the extent of the marine debris problem.

Meanwhile, Chief of Maritime Safety Branch of the Seaport Department Diego Aviles said the SBMA has launched several activities that have safeguarded and protected Subic Bay’s marine and coastal resources such as information and education campaigns, oil spill and fire exercises, and off shore clean-ups.

Using three SBMA watercrafts and two PNP Maritime patrol boats, the group cruised off shore and scooped plastics and other non-biodegradable litter from the water.

An hour into the clean up activity, the group proudly shared that only a few plastic trash and soda bottles and were collected.

“This is the result of our regular clean ups around water bodies of the bay,” Aviles said.

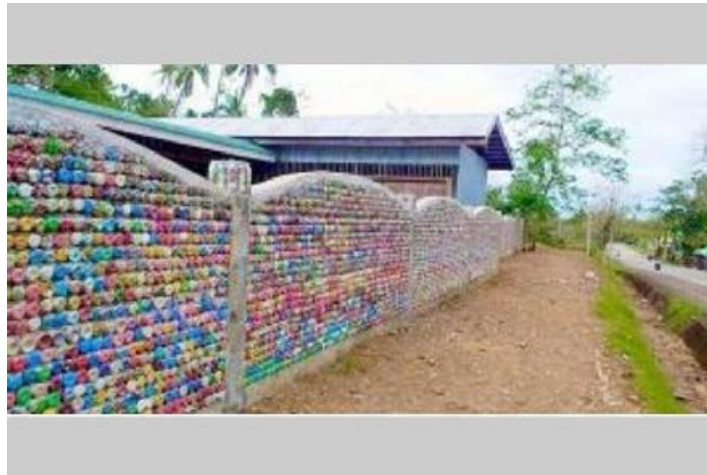
“This activity will serve only as an exercise for the group. We expect that the real work will come during the rainy days when bulks of trash will be directed to areas surrounding the ports by strong winds and waves,” he added.

Aviles said the offshore clean-up drive will be held every quarter, and may extend farther offshore with the added participation of more individuals and organizations who may wish to join in this environmental protection campaign.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1924234/pampanga/local-news/sbma-launches-1st-quarter-offshore-clean-up-in-subic-bay>



# DSWD's climate change mitigation project produces beautiful eco-brick wall



The eco-brick wall, a recycling project, along the Cantilan-Tandag Rd. in Surigao del Sur, never fails to attract the attention of passersby.

The strongest governments on earth cannot clean up pollution by themselves. They must rely on each ordinary person, like you and me, on our choices, and on our will.” — Chai Jing, journalist & environmental activist.

Supportive to this goal of preserving and caring for the environment, the Department of Social Welfare and Development ([DSWD](#)) as a member of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCAM-DRR), implements the Risk Resiliency Program- Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation- Disaster Risk Reduction or RRP-CCAM-DRR.

The RRP is aimed at strengthening the resiliency of the natural ecosystems and the adaptive capacity of the vulnerable groups and communities to short and long term risks. Projects and activities are conducted through the Cash-for-Work (CFW) modality which provides short-term intervention and temporary income opportunities to economically-vulnerable segments of the population in exchange for community works rendered related to climate change adaptation, and disaster mitigation.

The DSWD through its RRP supports initiatives being implemented in different municipalities along Plastic Bottles Recycling, Mangrove Reforestation, Urban Gardening, Riverbanks Rehabilitation, among others.

## Plastic bottles turn walls

In Caraga, “unexpected outcome,” were the first words uttered by Jude Limbaro, the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer (MSWDO) of the local government unit (LGU) of Bayabas, Surigao del Sur, when asked about the outcome of their RRP-CCAM-DRR plastic bottle recycling project in 2021.

The innovative project was the LGU's Recycling Project implemented under the RRP-CCAM-DRR through the CFW modality of the DSWD. With the locals full cooperation, they were able to produce 20,000 eco-bricks in 10 days from the plastic wastes they collected. The end product is an eco-brick wall which is a colorful wall made of plastic-bottle bricks. The colorful brick wall captured the attention of a passer-by who uploaded a video of the project on social media.



Consequently, in early January 2022, local netizens got excited about the aesthetic fence of a vermi-bed facility along the national highway of Cantilan-Tandag Road. The project amazed those who have seen the ingenuity of making colorful walls out of plastic bottles with colored cellophanes.

### **Creating recycled beauty**

“(This is part of) our goal to reduce solid wastes and be part of the mitigation and adaptation initiatives of the government against the climate change problems. The said project is among the different RRP-CCAM-DRR implemented by the LGU, together with the Mangrove Reforestation (Sagip-Wakatan), Kawayanihan (Sagip-ilog), Guavayanihan (Sagip-tubig), and Gulayan-Bayanihan,” LGU Bayabas Mayor Maria Clarita Limbaro proudly posted on her social media, expressing fulfilment of the initiatives of LGU Bayabas.

It may have started out as an LGU plan, but the result was through the efforts of the residents wanting to partake in helping the environment and becoming advocates for climate change resiliency.

MSWDO Limbaro underscored that the success of the project should be rightfully merited to the hardworking people of Bayabas. He also noted that this battle against plastic bottles is not exclusive to coastal communities but a universal one.

“Kini nga kalampusan naghatag sa mga beneficiaries ug dugang kadasig nga muapil sa mga sumusunod pa nga proyekto sa gobyerno batok sa environmental degradation.” (The success of this project inspires the beneficiaries to be involved again in future government projects to combat environmental degradation), MSWDO Limbaro added.

The [DSWD](#) re-echoes what the head of Bayabas Social Welfare and Development Office has said, emphasizing that program beneficiaries are not just passive recipients of government assistance but they can also be active participants of development efforts.





## Eco-brick making facility, ipapapatayo sa Toledo, Cebu



Eco brick making facility, ipapapatayo sa Toledo, Cebu



## World Water Day, ipinagdiwang ng PRC

MANILA, Philippines – Ipinagdiriwang ng Philippine Red Cross (PRC) ang World Water Day (WWD) 2022 para itaas ang kamalayan sa 2.2 bilyong tao na nabubuhay nang walang access sa ligtas na tubig.

Ang WWD ay tungkol sa pagkilos para harapin ang pandaigdigang krisis sa tubig at pagkamit ng Sustainable Development Goal 6: Tubig at kalinisan para sa lahat pagsapit ng 2030.

Ito ay isa sa 17 Sustainable Development Goals na itinatag ng United Nations General Assembly noong 2015.

Ang WWD ay ipinagdiriwang taun-taon mula noong 1993 matapos ang United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development na ginanap sa Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, noong Hunyo 1992 ay pinili ang petsang Marso 22 bilang World Water Day

Bawat taon, ang UN ay pumipili ng isang partikular na tema para sa WWD upang ipakita ang iba't ibang aspeto ng tubig.

Ang pang-internasyonal na kaganapang ito ay upang maakit ang atensyon ng mga tao mula sa buong mundo sa kahalagahan ng mga mapagkukunan ng tubig, lalo na ang tubig-tabang, at tumulong na mapahusay ang napapanatiling pamamahala ng mga mahahalagang mapagkukunang ito.

Ang tema ng WWD 2022 ay Ground Water, Making the Invisible, Visible.

Higit pa sa mga isyu ng pagpepresyo, kasama sa paksang ito ang pangkapaligiran, panlipunan, at cultural value na inilagay sa tubig.

Binibigyang-diin ni PRC Chairman at CEO Sen. Dick Gordon ang kahalagahan ng pagbibigay ng access sa ligtas na tubig, lalo na sa mga lugar na apektado ng iba't ibang kalamidad at disaster.

“As we celebrate World Water Day 2022, I would like to emphasize the importance of freshwater, where we use it in supporting drinking water supplies, sanitation systems, farming, industry, and ecosystems. We must protect groundwater from pollution and use it sustainably, balancing the needs of people and the vital role of groundwater in our daily lives.” ani Gordon

Ang PRC ay naging aktibo sa pagbibigay ng tubig sa mga lugar na naapektuhan ng kalamidad upang maibalik ang mga linya sa mga lalawigan kung saan ang mga tao ay wala pa ring access sa malinis at maiinom na tubig.

Kamakailan, sa panahon ng Typhoon Odette operations, ang PRC ay nagbigay ng mahigit 14 milyong litro ng malinis na tubig at nagsulong ng tamang kalinisan sa 239,526 na indibidwal.

Ang WASH Unit ng Philippine Red Cross ay isang tanggapan na nagbibigay ng mga serbisyong nauugnay sa pagtugon sa pangangailangan para sa pag-access sa malinis at ligtas na tubig, mga pasilidad sa kalinisan, at edukasyon sa kalinisan sa panahon ng emergency at non-emergency responses. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**



# Coast Guard conducts underwater cleanup in Corregidor Island

By [Dennis Abrina](#)



A member of the "SCUBAsurero"™ cleanup drive picks up the underwater garbage at the vicinity of Corregidor Island on Saturday, March 19, 2022. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**CAVITE CITY:** Members of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) conducted an underwater cleanup drive on Saturday, March 19, in Corregidor Island. The cleanup drive gathered 85 sacks of garbage during the underwater cleanup drive dubbed as "SCUBAsurero." The local government unit of Corregidor Island facilitated the proper disposal of the collected waste materials. The other government units who supported the marine environmental protection initiative include the Coast Guard District NCR-Central Luzon; Coast Guard Special Operation Units of Cavite, Malacañang and Bataan; Coast Guard Aviation Force, Marine Environmental Protection Group-Cavite; BRP Capones (MRRV 4404); Naval Special Operations Group Cavite; and the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office. The 107th, 108th, 110th and 125th PCG Auxiliary Squadrons also participated in the community service.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/03/22/news/regions/coast-guard-conducts-underwater-cleanup-in-corregidor-island/1837117>





# Maynilad customers to experience water service interruptions until April 1

The off-peak water service interruptions being experienced by Maynilad customers in various areas of Luzon will persist until April 1.

According to a Monday 24 Oras report, the affected areas in Obando, Bulacan and the cities of Parañaque, Makati, Valenzuela, Pasay, Navotas, Manila, Caloocan, Malabon and Quezon City would experience service interruptions from 10 P.M. to 4 A.M. every day.

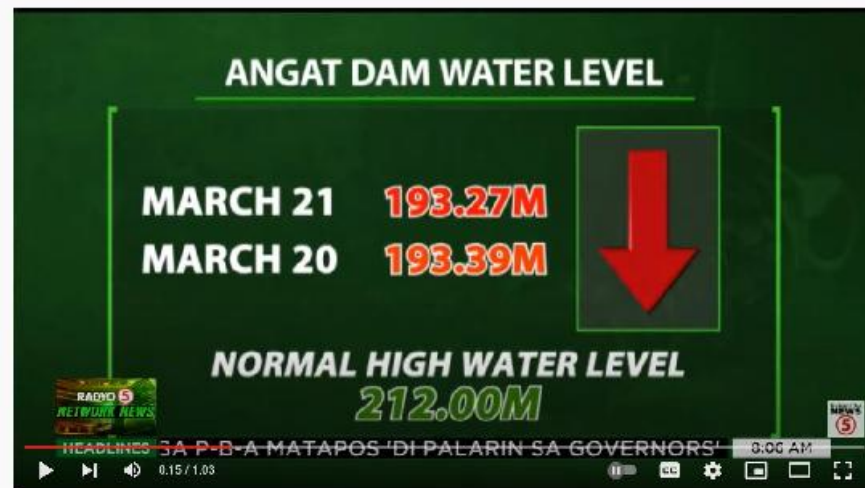
Maynilad said this would help manage water the supply from dams amid the higher demand for water due to the summer season.

The latest data from PAGASA indicated the water level of the country's reservoirs remained under its normal-high water level. — **Sundy Mae Locus/DVM, GMA News**

Source: [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/companies/825813/maynilad-customers-to-experience-water-service-interruptions-until-april-1/story/?utm\\_source=GMANews&utm\\_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2HbiWqA14g1XG2oumJpQANfoCQao1vEgUZAJOcbO9su-R6MRTXDTjVSbE](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/companies/825813/maynilad-customers-to-experience-water-service-interruptions-until-april-1/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2HbiWqA14g1XG2oumJpQANfoCQao1vEgUZAJOcbO9su-R6MRTXDTjVSbE)



## Lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam, bumaba



Lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam, bumaba

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# Mati City taps bulk water provider to tap river water

BY MANUEL CAYON

DAVAO CITY—Mati City, the capital of Davao Oriental, is tapping the services of the lone bidder of the city's bulk water system project to tap the still pristine surface water of the Mayo River.

The city information office (CIO) said the P296.5-million bulk water supply project in Mati City would start this April.

"The project is expected to help solve the perennial problem of inadequate water supply in the city," the CIO added.

The CIO further said the project is owned by the Provincial Government of Davao Oriental and the Mactan Rock Industries Inc. would undertake the construction of the project. The company is the lone bidder for the project.

The bulk water project would use surface water during the wet season and ground water during dry seasons. The facility would provide clean potable water to water retailers in the city like the Mati Water District, Ruwasa and Balibago Waterworks.

The bulk water supply system would be constructed along Mayo River, some 17 kilometers west of downtown Mati City. The river drains into Mayo Bay, which has been listed, along with two other bays of Mati City, in the Most Beautiful Bays in the world.

The project would provide potable water to the 11 barangays of Mayo, Don Salvador Lopez, Don Enrique Lopez, Don Martin Marundan, Dahican, Bobon, Tamisan, Lawigan, Matiao, Central and Sainz.

Governor Nelson L. Dayanghirang said the project "is a solution to the long-standing problem among residents in Mati City, the capital of the province."

"This is a long overdue project of the province. I conducted a survey to find out the main problem of the residents, when the survey came out I discovered that their number one complaint has been the lack of water," he said.

The bulk water project also aims to prepare for the growth of Mati City, which currently has 150,000 residents. The city famed for its tourism attraction such as white sand beaches and stunning seascape is expected to grow with the expected recovery of the global economy and the return of tourism, its information office said.

The provincial government has inspected the other water supply projects of the contractor Mactan Rock Industries Inc., one of which is located in the province of Cebu, to ensure the viability of the contractor and the success of the project.





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Marami ang muling isinusulong ang pagpapadyak!



# UN weighs listing Great Barrier Reef as 'in danger'



Tropical fish swim along the edges of a coral reef off Great Keppel Island, Queensland, Australia, on November 25, 2016. *Dan Peled, EPA-EFE/file*

The United Nations began a monitoring mission on the Great Barrier Reef Monday, assessing whether the World Heritage site is being protected from climate change as it suffers further widespread bleaching.

Higher-than-average temperatures have again caused severe bleaching in parts of the reef, authorities confirmed last week, dashing hopes a cooler La Nina summer could spare corals from another season of heat damage.

UNESCO's mission will assess whether the Australian government is doing enough to address threats to the Great Barrier Reef, including climate change, before the World Heritage Committee considers listing it as "in danger" in June.

Reef expert Scott Heron of James Cook University told AFP he hoped "there is some transparency in the areas of the reef [the UN team] are visiting", including those affected by the current bleaching event.

"There are parts of the reef where the condition is so poor there is no opportunity for coral bleaching this year because there are few corals left," he said.

Heron said climate change was pushing the reef closer to the limits of its stress threshold, making bleaching events more likely.

"We need urgent action on climate change this decade," he said.

Since 2016, the Great Barrier Reef has been hit by three mass bleaching events, during which heat-stressed corals expel algae living in their tissues, draining them of their vibrant colours.

A decision by the World Heritage Committee last July not to list the reef as "in danger" surprised many, given UNESCO had recommended the listing just weeks earlier.

When the UN previously threatened to downgrade the reef's World Heritage listing in 2015, Australia created a "Reef 2050" plan and poured billions of dollars into protection.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/03/21/22/un-weighs-listing-great-barrier-reef-as-in-danger?fbclid=IwAR3lRgakwfvuxPk1NQAHutCwg6LFB9wLE6SyQAzGFAiEJlOqBy6W6cQDgG8>



# Mitigating the impact of climate change on human life

[March 22, 2022, 12:00 am](#) in [Columns](#), [Opinion](#)

By Deputy Director General Amy E. Pope

*International Organization for Migration*

Typhoon Rai, locally known as Odette, smashed the Philippines three months ago, sweeping through 11 of the country's 17 regions, destroying or damaging over 2 million houses, far eclipsing that of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Approximately 32,200 people remain displaced mostly in evacuation centers.

The road to a full recovery will be long and full of challenges. Yet returning from my field visit to Siargao, Philippines, I was inspired by the "Bayanihan" spirit. From the community where people are assisting their fellow neighbors to rebuild their houses, to the intervention led by Local Government Units, Mayors, Governors and National level counterparts, the desire to recover and help one another in times of a crisis is palpable and something that will stay with me long after my visit.

This typhoon, however, must serve as a wake-up call to the international community. The Global Climate Risk Index 2020 ranks the Philippines as the second most vulnerable country in the world affected by climate change despite being one of the smallest contributors to CO2 emissions. More than 60 percent of the Filipino population resides in coastal areas and will be forced to move with one-meter sea rise brought about by global warming—that equates to 60 million people having to move by the end of this century. As President Duterte warned in his address during the 76th United Nations (UN) General Assembly, "the risks and burden of a warming climate are simply not the same for everyone. ... But here we are now at a critical tipping point, where failure to act leads to cataclysmic consequences for the whole of humankind."

Knowing that climate impact is inevitable and recognizing that failure to act will be cataclysmic, there are three things we must do now to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change on human life.

First, we have seen time and again that human mobility is inextricably linked to climate change. Nowhere is that more evident than in the Philippines. Migration is one of the coping mechanisms of affected Filipinos facing climate crisis, either as a choice or a force of circumstance. We must acknowledge that the protection of the most vulnerable should be at the forefront of our climate action, and collectively build migration into our climate change mitigation measures. National and regional policies must include more migration adaptation measures, and resources are needed to address and prevent displacements while increasing people's resilience, especially in the most vulnerable countries.

Second, it is imperative to ensure that adaptive migration as a solution is safe, informed, and desired. For instance, IOM is working closely with the Philippines Government and communities on planned relocation and transitional sites in typhoon affected areas. Through the generous support from donors such as USAID, Australia, Japan, Canada, UN Central Emergency Fund and Germany, IOM is providing critical shelter assistance, hygiene and sanitation, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Health and COVID prevention and Mental Health and Psychosocial Services. While essential, these actions are primarily reactive. Our actions in the field today can and should be a pathway towards managing climate vulnerabilities. They must be done proactively and strategically in a contextually grounded manner and with strong community engagement.





Finally, we need to harness the power of the estimated 10 million Filipinos living abroad to strengthen climate resilience locally. The Philippines is a country that has for decades made the most out of migration. Since the 1980s, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) have been hailed as bagong bayani (modern-day heroes). In 2019, remittances from OFWs reached a record high of USD 33.9 billion, equivalent to nearly 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). With one of the largest diasporas in the world, we need to leverage this support and direct these financial contributions to build back better using the lessons learned from past climate emergencies—such as building four-corner roofs over home in typhoon-prone areas to protect these rebuilt communities from future devastation.

As the cost of the climate crisis is reaching irreversible heights, I depart the Philippines reflecting on the devastating impacts of Typhoon Rai and the future of the communities in the Philippines. While the “Bayanihan” spirit gives me hope, we now need bold collective action to build the resilience of communities at risk, to protect the most vulnerable, and to ensure that migration remains a choice rather than a necessity.



# Body composting takes root in US 'green' burial trend

[By Agence France-Presse](#)



Return Home CEO Micah Truman shows a demonstration "vessel" for the deceased, decorated with flowers and compostable mementos on top of a bed of straw by Return Home, during a tour of the funeral home which specializes in human composting in Auburn, Washington on March 14, 2022. AFP PHOTO

**KENT:** A woodpecker settled on a branch overhead as Cindy Armstrong stood near a grouping of trees, gazing at a patch of soil that contained bits of her son's composted remains.

Armstrong is one of a growing number of Americans embracing environmentally low-impact burials for their loved ones.

Armstrong recalled that her son Andrew insisted on the so-called "terramation" process after the western state of Washington became the first in the United States to make the practice a legal alternative to cremation in 2019.

"I was mortified," she told Agence France-Presse. "Now that I've gone through the process, I'm all for this. I will be terramated."

The composted remains of Andrew, who died from cancer last year at age 36, have joined remains of dozens of others on a hillside in the town of Kent, in the Seattle area, set aside as their resting place.

Thousands of Americans choose "green" burial — which eschews chemical embalming as well as materials like concrete or metal which come with climate-harming carbon footprints — each year.

"He wanted to give back to nature," Armstrong said on a recent March morning, with trees and plants taking root in the verdant, wet hillside.

The land is owned by Return Home, a startup that has performed 40 terramations since launching in the neighboring city of Auburn seven months ago.

## 'Dying better'

"It's like these people are teaching us to die better," Return Home founder and chief Micah Truman said as he showed AFP a warehouse-sized room with racks of metal containers referred to as "vessels," which hold remains during the 60-day, sealed decomposition process.



The space was brightly lit and upbeat music played. Loved ones who visit during those 60 days can pick songs celebrating the lives of those they have lost.

Bodies in vessels are not embalmed, and family members are invited to add flowers or compostable mementos to the straw and other natural ingredients used in the process.

The amount of organic material added to the vessels to help in the composting process is about triple the body weight of the human remains inside, resulting in hundreds of pounds of compost being produced.

No enzymes are added, the company said.

Sensors tracking moisture, temperature and air flow synched with a computer to optimize conditions for decomposition.

Halfway through the process, bones are removed and ground into fine pieces before being put back in the vessel to finish composting.

The result looks and feels like ordinary mulch.

Families can take as much or as little as they want, with the rest spread at "The Woodland" in Kent.

Local zoning rules restrict the land — which was once strewn with ruined cars, some scarred by bullets — from ever being built on.



# Untapped groundwater offers 'vast potential'

**DAKAR:** Untapped groundwater resources have "vast potential," the United Nations' cultural agency said on Monday, potentially alleviating the demand for ever-scarcer water supplies across the world.

In a report, the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) said about 99 percent of all of the liquid groundwater on Earth is groundwater, although the resource is often poorly understood or undervalued.

"In the context of growing water scarcity in many parts of the world, the vast potential of groundwater and the need to manage it carefully can no longer be overlooked," it said.

Water consumption is expected to increase by 1 percent annually over the next 30 years, the agency said, driven by population growth and demand from industry and agriculture.

Unesco Director General Audrey Azoulay said humans were increasingly polluting or drying up existing water resources, "sometimes with irreversible consequences."

"Making smarter use of the potential of still sparsely developed groundwater resources, and protecting them from pollution and overexploitation, is essential to meet the fundamental needs of an ever-increasing global population and to address the global climate and energy crises," she said.

Groundwater currently constitutes about 50 percent of the water withdrawn for domestic use worldwide, and 25 percent of the volume used for irrigation, according to Unesco.

But governance of the resource is often poor and there is a shortage of technical expertise in some parts of the world, notably in sub-Saharan Africa.

Among other things, Unesco urged better data collection for groundwater resources, suggesting that oil, gas and mining firms share their in-house data with public authorities.





# Partnering with Israel on water management

By: [Ilan Fluss](#) - [@inquireidotnet](#) Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:25 AM March 22, 2022

Water, one of the most critical elements for the survival of humanity, is something we can't take for granted. Israel, for one, has shown how it has developed policies, practices, and technologies to save and maximize water as a country with an arid climate, not enough rainfall, and occasional droughts. Israel has become a global leader in water management and water reuse.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further stressed the importance of water as it is crucial for sanitation and hygiene to mitigate the spread of the virus. But many places still experience water scarcity and accessibility issues, making them prone to other viruses and diseases.

As we mark World Water Day, it is worth looking into the critical issue of water management, including water sources. Water shortage and contamination pose a threat to humanity, as they exacerbate such risks as climate change, desertification, and pollution.

The water crisis is characterized by three parallel processes. The first is the decline in water availability for drinking, agriculture, and industry, as population and corresponding consumption rate continue to grow. Second is the ongoing decline in the quality of water, becoming more polluted or saline with the passing of time. Third is the availability of water: in many places in the world, water sources have moved farther away from population centers, while many households remain unconnected to water systems.

There are many aspects to consider when discussing water management, ranging from legislation, central government and local government management systems, and their implementation by water companies, as well as modern technologies. Every aspect is critical to increase water use efficiency and coordination, accrue international, public, and private funding, rehabilitate polluted water sources, and encourage investment and research and development.

One of Israel's creative innovations that enables farmers to increase crop yield and quality while using less water is drip irrigation. The embassy is working with the Department of Agriculture, the National Irrigation Administration, and the Mindanao Development Authority of the Philippines to introduce drip irrigation and other methods for efficient use of water in the agricultural sector. Israel also promotes the use of remote technology for automatic water metering and identification of water loss and quality in residential and commercial areas. Other technologies are water desalination, water purification systems, creating water from air, sophisticated management systems, and so on.

The Israel embassy has also donated Israeli-made water filtration units to typhoon-stricken areas in Bohol and Siargao in December 2021, to the indigenous community in Nueva Ecija, and to the Dumagat tribe in Davao. More units will be distributed to areas that need access to clean drinking water. The portable water filtration unit is ideal for use in far-flung areas with limited access to clean and safe drinking water. In addition, the embassy has conducted a water management seminar for local government units in Mindanao and is looking to repeat it on a national level.

Israel can become the model for integrated water management and use. It treats and recycles sewage water, with 90 percent of its treated wastewater used for agriculture. An Israeli company operating in the country uses the same innovation to treat wastewater in residential



areas such as Pampanga, Laguna, and Cebu.

Seawater desalination, the use of brackish water for agriculture, drip irrigation, the development of agricultural varieties that consume less water, and even the extraction of water from air, are other innovations developed and implemented in Israel that we'd be happy to share with the Philippines.

*Ilan Fluss is the ambassador of Israel to the Philippines.*



## The looming threat from polar warming

WEATHER scientists are both surprised and alarmed by what is happening in the North and South Poles. Surprised because the poles, which have contrasting seasons, are heating up at the same time, and worried because the temperature rise is unusually high.

In Antarctica it was more than 40 degrees Celsius warmer than average; in the Arctic, it was more than 30 degrees C warmer than average.

The temperature rise in Antarctica is particularly disquieting. Last week, the continent was about 4.8 C warmer than a baseline temperature between 1979 and 2000.

"Not a good sign when you see that sort of thing happen," observed one meteorologist.

Climatologists keep close track of polar temperature shifts because any significant change in global temperature happens first either in the Arctic or Antarctica.

More data is needed to confirm if the freakish polar weather is being driven by climate change. But already, environmentalists are waving red flags.

As the poles heat up, ice melts. That's a normal process, and the ice usually builds up again in the winter. When the temperature, however, stays longer than usual above the freezing point of water, less ice forms, and what is lost is not replenished. The icecaps start to shrink.

During its summer season last February, Antarctica shrank to 1.9 million square kilometers. Unless the temperature drops substantially in winter, the continent may never recover the ice that has melted.

The Arctic, on the other hand, which is more vulnerable to climate change, has been warming two to three times faster than the rest of the planet.

In 2009, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research released the first comprehensive review of the state of Antarctica's climate and how it affects the global climate system.

The review compiled the findings of 100 leading scientists from 13 countries who researched, among other subjects, the impact of climate change on Antarctica's plants and animals and the unprecedented jump in carbon dioxide levels.

As summed up by Professor John Turner of the polar research institute British Antarctic Survey, the lead editor, the review "illustrates how human activity is driving rapid climate change. By integrating this multidisciplinary evidence into a single source, we will help scientists and policy makers understand the distinction between environmental changes linked to the Earth's natural cycles and those that are human induced."

The review noted that 90 percent of the Antarctic Peninsula's glaciers have retreated in recent decades, although the bulk of the Antarctic ice sheet has seen little change.

Carbon dioxide levels rose at their fastest pace in 800,000 years "and are increasing at rates unlikely to have been seen in the [geologically] recent past," the review found.

But most disturbing was the finding that "West Antarctic ice loss could contribute to 1.4 meter sea level rise by 2100." s.



By that year, according to more recent studies, the sea will have engulfed the coastal homes of 200 million people in the world. Seventy percent of them live in just eight countries in Asia, including the Philippines.

To its credit, our government has recognized the danger from rising ocean levels and highlighted the urgency for more resolute action to address it.

During a virtual meeting last year of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, the Philippine delegation said the country's sea level was rising three to four times faster than the global pace.

Unfortunately, the threat of sea-level rise appears to have been overshadowed by more pressing environmental concerns such as capping carbon emissions. Consequently, measures to support adaptation to sea-level rise are not being implemented fast enough to match the pace and scale of the challenges ahead, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in a policy paper on country approaches in tackling coastal risks.

"While living on the coast has always come with a certain level of flooding and erosion risks, climate change will alter our coastlines, and we must prepare for this new reality," the OECD said.

The message is clear, and the time to act is now.



# Asia Pacific may take till 2065 to achieve 2030 sustainable development targets

By [Liang Lei](#)



Covid-19 and the continued regression on climate action and resource use have caused the biggest slowdown in pace since the targets were set in 2015. Southeast Asia and the Pacific are particularly lagging.

A better future is now further out of reach for over half the world's population that lives in the Asia Pacific region, according to a United Nations (UN) [report](#).

It's the biggest documented slide since a set of 17 global Sustainable Development Goals were established in 2015, as part of global efforts to eradicate poverty, protect the environment and promote economic growth.

In 2017, UN said the 2030 targets could be achieved by 2052. In 2019, the estimate extended five years to 2057, ahead of the latest extension of eight years. As per reports from past years, none of the 17 goals are on track for 2030.

Indicators on climate action continue to regress. Despite the region having better disaster management strategies, [records](#) show that nearly 36,000 people died or went missing from disasters in 2020 – the highest since 2015. Greenhouse gas emissions rose 0.6 per cent between 2015 and 2018.

According to [data](#) by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, there has never been progress on climate action since tracking began in 2016.

The responsible use of resources such as food and fuels is also in the red, due to continued fossil fuel subsidies and the increasing demand for raw materials. Two bright spots are the 150 per cent rise in renewable energy capacity and 9 per cent drop in the amount of hazardous waste produced, against 2015 levels.

The biggest gains were made in infrastructure and industrial innovation, especially in East and North-East Asia, which includes China, Japan and South Korea. However, report coordinator Arman Bidarbakht-Nia said that such gains were “not environmentally sustainable” when placed alongside the other indicators.

Southeast Asia and the Pacific regions fared the worst, with additional regressions in indices such as clean water and sanitation, and inequality.



The Asian Development Bank recently reported that 4.7 million more people in Southeast Asia [fell into extreme poverty](#) last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In total, over 23 million Southeast Asians now live on less than US\$1.90 a day.

Covid-19 has further held back development, the report noted.

“In this time of great change and difficult challenges, there is an urgent need to redouble efforts to fully implement the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, especially for those furthest behind,” said Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, under secretary-general of the United Nations.

### **Vulnerable suffering more**

The report warned that vulnerable groups in Asia Pacific could face greater risks due to Covid-19. They include children, women, poor households, the disabled and those facing social exclusion. A third of global child refugees also live in the region.

The report cited studies showing the number of children eating a healthy, diverse diet dropping 32 per cent in Indonesia and 68 per cent in the Philippines. Help for the most malnourished – numbering about 32 million – were also found to be disrupted during the pandemic.

The number of children missing regular doses of vaccines against diseases such as chickenpox and polio jumped during the pandemic, compromising their future health. In India, 3.5 million children did not get their usual vaccine regimen in 2020, compared to 2.1 million in 2019.

Meanwhile, pregnant women went for less pre-birth check-ups that protect both mothers and their unborn children. At the peak of the pandemic in mid-2020, clinics saw a 30 per cent drop in antenatal care visits year-on-year. The number of risky home deliveries was also higher on-year since March 2020.

Online search keywords such as “experiencing sexual violence” jumped as much as 70 per cent in Malaysia during lockdowns.

Recorded migrant deaths rose sharply in 2021, in part due to military conflicts in Myanmar and Afghanistan.

“Leaving no one behind, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, location, disability or migratory status, remains the central commitment of the 2030 agenda, and the need to reach those who are furthest behind has never been greater,” the report noted.

### **Data availability**

The amount of data available to researchers to track the 17 Sustainable Development Goals doubled since 2017, but over 10 per cent of 231 tracked metrics could not be measured in 2021. Another 35 per cent of data was considered insufficient for full analyses.

Data on gender, water-based biodiversity, as well as peace, justice and institutions are limited, according to the report. It called for greater coordination between national and international agencies for data collection.

Philippines provided the most data, providing information for 76 per cent of tracked figures, though not all were considered in sufficient detail. Northern Mariana Islands furnished the least details, for only 13 per cent of figures. The bottom six countries were all Pacific island states.

“It is often several characteristics that together create vulnerabilities,” said Bidarbakht-Nia. “A big part of vulnerabilities is still invisible to us. We need a lot more data to better understand them.”

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/asia-pacific-may-take-till-2065-to-achieve-2030-sustainable-development-targets/?sw-login=true>



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# NEWS ALERTS

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE





## DENR: Partners needed to curb illegal flora, fauna trade

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

**CONTINUED partnerships with stakeholders are very important to combat illegal wildlife trade vigorously and effectively.**

This was stressed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna in his keynote message during the recent virtual celebration of World Wildlife Day 2022.

"We need to establish a partnership with various stakeholders and continue to raise awareness among local communities to empower them towards more effective responses to environmental issues on the ground," Sampulna said.

"We are assured know-

ing that we have allies working from the international to the local level in helping us protect key species in the ecosystem," he said.

With the theme "Recovering Key Species for Ecosystem Restoration," this year's World Wildlife Day celebration aimed to draw attention to the conservation status of some of the most critically endangered species of wild fauna and flora and to drive discussions towards imagining and implementing solutions to conserve them.

Sampulna also pushed for the approval of the revised Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001 which has remained pending in the Senate.

The bill seeks to expand the protection and coverage of RA 9147, strengthen and improve enforcement, and

inter-agency cooperation to combat illegal wildlife trade including responses to transnational wildlife crimes.

The DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) led the country's celebration of World Wildlife Day through webinars that highlighted wildlife conservation programs for key species such as Rufous hornbill, flying fox, Philippine cockatoo, Philippine pond turtle, Dugong, and threatened native flora.

Conservation partners such as the Katala Foundation Inc., Community-Centered Conservation, Energy Development Corporation, Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc., and the Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Society Inc shared their expertise and conducted the webinars in partnership with the DENR-BMB.

At present, there are

more than 40,000 species of flora and fauna worldwide that are threatened with extinction.

In the Philippines alone, the DENR had listed a total of 1,106 threatened fauna species and 984 threatened flora.

Meanwhile, DENR Undersecretary for Enforcement Benito Antonio de Leon, who serves as BMB's Supervising Undersecretary, said that the DENR will continue to uphold its mandate to conserve and protect the country's natural resources.

"Despite these efforts, we need stronger enforcement to address and meet the growing intricacies of illegal wildlife trade. We are one with our fellow partners in underscoring the importance of a strengthened enforcement system for wildlife protection," de Leon said.





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## DENR IPINAHAYAG ANG KAHALAGAHAN NG KABABAIHAN SA ENVIRONMENTAL AT CLIMATE EDUCATION

**BINIGYANG-HALAGA** ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna ang importansya sa pagpapalakas ng women's education at kasanayan upang maprotektahan at mapangalagaan ang kapaligiran kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng National Women's Month ngayong taon.

Ayon kay Sampulna, ang papel ng DENR ang "reason behind highlighting and increasing the participation of women to expand and upscale their transformative ac-

tions, including their groups and communities."

Ang pagdedeklara sa Women's Month ay base na rin sa Proclamation No. 224 na inilabas noong Marso 1, 1988, at Proclamation No. 227 na may petsang Marso 20, 1998. Ang tema ngayong taon ay ang "Women make change amidst climate crisis and COVID-19."

Pinangunahan din ni Sampulna kasama sina DENR Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change Atty. Analiza Rebuella-Teh, DENR Climate Change Service Director Ele-



REMATE OPINION

## ANG INYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

nida Basug at iba pang DENR officials, ang ribbon-cutting ng women photo gallery on climate and disaster resiliency, and COVID-19 response sa maikling programa noong Marso 8.

Pinasinayanan din nina Sampulna at Teh ang Gender and Development (GAD) corner kung saan matatagpuan ang bulletin board at box upang makapag-bigay ng saloobin at suhestiyon ang mga kliyente at stakeholders sa hangad na magkaroon ng safe spaces at violence against women-free workplaces.

Binuksan din ang "Pamilyang Bayan" na sumusupporta sa women's economic empowerment sa gitna ng climate crisis, environmental damages at COVID-19.

Sa kanyang talumpati, sinabi ni Teh na ang statistics sa ratio ng kababaihan at kalalakihan sa hanay ng DENR para sa Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officers (PENROs) at direc-

tors ay tumaaas, mula 19% ay naging 23% para sa mga kababaihang nasa posisyon.

Para naman sa Community Environment and Natural Resources Officers o CENROs at division chiefs ang mga numero ay tumaaas mula sa 34% ay naging 40% para sa mga kababaihang nasa posisyon.

Batay naman sa Global Gender Gap Report 2021 ng World Economic Forum, dahil sa COVID-19 pandemic ay na-fend off ang global parity at nadagdagan pa ng 36-taon upang maisara ang gender gap globally.

Ang gender gap ay ang pagkakaiba ng kababaihan sa kalalakihan sa larangan ng partisipasyon, pag-abot sa basic services, karapatan at benepisyo.

Sinabi pa ni Teh, marami pang dapat gawin ang DENR-GAD office upang makamit ang gender equality para sa sustainable development.



## Owl rescued in Capiz

By TARA J. YAP

**I** LOILO CITY —A barn owl (*Tyto alba*) was recently rescued in Capiz province by two sisters who saw it chasing a kitten in their backyard.

Analyn Delfin of Maayon town personally took the owl and turned it over to the Capiz Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Capiz PENRO).

According to Delfin, it was her sister who first saw the owl when it was chasing a kitten in her backyard.

The sisters surmised the owl may have possibly been nesting at a tall tree in their backyard. No traces

of injuries were seen on the owl.

After the incident with the kitten, the sisters decided to catch the owl and put it inside a cage. They immediately contacted Capiz PENRO since they didn't know what to do with it and they noticed the owl was getting sickly.

When it was turned over to Capiz PENRO, the owl was also checked by the Office of the Provincial Veterinary.

The Capiz PENRO will turn it over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-Capiz), which will be the government agency that will release it back to the wild once it gets well enough.





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ooh la lai  
**LAI S. REYES**

**H**heavy rains, flash floods, and wildfires. The extreme weather conditions we are experiencing right now is proof that the danger of climate change is upon us. The clock is ticking. And if we don't do anything about it, no one can protect us from environmental catastrophes. We'll be knocked out for real.

What causes it and what can we do to prevent it?

When greenhouse gas emissions blanket the Earth, they trap the sun's heat, making the world warmer than normal.

"Main causes of greenhouse gas emissions are fossil fuels that give us gas, heat and oil — all very essential to our lives today," notes Viki Encarnacion, Watsons Philippines PR and Sustainability director, at the recent Do Good for Earth, *Sa Watsons Ako* webinar. "And while it may be impossible to totally prevent global warming, there are some things that we can do to lessen the Earth's greenhouse effect."

Moderated by environment advocate Arna Oposa of Save Philippine Seas, the "Smart Waste Management Towards a Sustainable Future" webinar tackled important topics such as how people can contribute to environmental conservation through 3Rs (Reuse, Recycle, Refill), the relationship of solid waste management and climate change, the impact of recycling on the environment, economy and the community, among others.

#### WASTE NOT!

Solid waste management is an integral component of climate change.

"When we speak of climate change, we look into methane emissions," says Commissioner Crispian Lao of the National Waste Management Commission.

In terms of solid waste, we normally look at methane emissions in our landfills, black carbon for the transport of our waste to the disposal facilities, as well as open burning of waste.

"In dealing with climate change, we have to focus also on how our own waste would contribute to it," notes Lao.

In the Philippines, we have the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (RA No. 9003), which provides us with a spectrum of what we, as individuals, need to do to address solid waste management problems.

"It defines the roles of the *barangays* and the LGUs," shares Lao. "The *barangays* are tasked to set up material recovery facilities (MRF) to deal with our biodegradable and recyclable wastes, while the LGUs are tasked to haul and properly dispose of only the residual waste." This includes even our household-generated waste during the pandemic such as facemasks and face shields.

Did you know that in 2019, the Philippines generated about 44,000 tons of waste per day? Each one of us contributed about .3 to .7 kilograms of waste. In Metro Manila, studies show that it's over one kilo per day. The capital city also contributed 10,000 tons of waste per day.

"Sadly, as far as compliance of LGUs is concerned, only 35 percent of our *barangays* set up MRF as mandated by law," relates Lao. "And only 31 percent of our LGUs have access to solid waste or sanitary landfill disposal facilities. That's why it's very important for all of us to deal with the waste that we generate, so that it doesn't end up in the open environment."

According to Lao, the commission is advocating for a Food Waste Management program.

"We need to compost our biodegradables as much as possible," Lao adds.

And we should all follow the five steps in the hierarchy of waste management — Prevent, Re-use, Recycle, Recover, Dispose — at home, in the office, or wherever we are.





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# 'DO GOOD' FOR YOU AND THE PLANET



Plastic products kill the oceans and worsen global warming.

Photos from Pexels



Let's follow the hierarchy of waste management as a way of life: Prevent, Re-use, Recycle, Recover, Disposal.

"Let's start by avoiding generation of waste," shares Lao. "Bring your own bag when grocery shopping, and participate in different programs in our community that aim to reduce generated waste."

Also, choose recyclables. Paper, plastic, glass and metals are highly recyclable. White paper, cardboard boxes and newspapers can be recycled as well.

"Thermal paper, carbon paper, photo papers are not," shares Lao. "Paper that comes in contact with food — grease and oil — is no longer recyclable. Of course, toilet paper should not be recycled because of the potential pathogen risk."

Plastics, on the other hand, are categorized as "rigids" and "flexibles."

"PET bottles and shampoo containers in the form of polyethylene and polypropylene are considered rigids. Flexibles are a bit challenging to recycle. But there are recycling infrastructures for flexibles, even sachets," notes Lao.

Glass is highly recyclable, too. Just don't include electronic glass like light bulbs in the recycling stream,

as well your ovenware.

"Ovenware contains boric oxide, which affects the recycling system," explains Lao. "Tin, aluminum cans and other metals, including copper can be recycled."

According to Lao, some of these recyclables are converted into building materials, school chairs, and other projects that are being done by many social enterprise groups.

There are drop-off centers in some of the biggest malls in the metro where you can bring your recyclable materials.

"It is critical for us to do our share for the environment and participate in programs that are already there," says Lao. "Again, let's follow the waste hierarchy as a way of life."



**AYOKO SA PLASTIC!**

Plastic Bank CEO and founder David Katz discussed what social plastic can do to help impoverished communities gain access to necessities such as food and water.

"Recycling isn't just an opportunity to return materials back into manufacturing in the supply chain. It's an opportunity to look at things differently. Where others saw waste, there is worth," Katz enthuses.

Plastic Bank is working to stop ocean plastic while reducing poverty. By enabling the exchange of waste plastic for money, or blockchain-secured digital tokens, Plastic Bank reveals the true value of the material, making it too valuable to throw away. This empowers recycling ecosystems around the world, driving responsible economic development in underprivileged communities and reducing the flow of plastic into our oceans.

When asked what is the pivotal role of consumers in waste reduction and environmental conservation, Katz replies: "Every time you buy something, you vote for



Watsons Philippines'  
Viki Encarnacion



Watsons Philippines'  
Patrick Yu



National Solid Waste  
Management Commission's  
Crispian Lao



Plastic Bank president and  
CEO David Katz



Save Philippine Seas  
Anna Oposa

it. And if you continue to buy products that are polluting the Earth, that's killing the oceans, that's what companies will continue producing. That's something that we have to be very conscious of. It's truly our responsibility. Don't forget you buy, you vote."

**MAKING SUSTAINABLE CHOICES**

"'Sustainable choices' is our flagship program for our customers. But we can't do it alone. For any program to make a strong impact, we must involve many stakeholders and that involves our suppliers and our employees," enthuses Vicki Encarnacion of Watsons.

In collaboration with Plastic Bank, Watsons was able to recycle 833,000 plastic bottles in 2021.

"The partnership with Watsons is an opportunity for the world to bear witness to great change. It takes the bold and the authentic to do something that hasn't been done before and we know that in partnership with Watsons, the world is going to witness the change in the communities and the lives of our collectors," Katz says.

You, too, have the power to save our environment. Viki shares small acts that you can do:

- Walk more.
- Bike more.
- Turn off the lights or use alternative energy.
- Plant a tree.
- Consume less.

"But if you really need to buy something, consider more sustainable products," advises Viki. "And for sustainable choices, as our new brand campaign says, 'Sa Watsons Ako!'"





## Mondelez Int'l, Geocycle unite to collect 102K kilos of waste

CHANGE for the environment often seems the hardest thing to do, and yet the most important one. For the past several years, Mondelez International in the Philippines has been strengthening its actions on environmental protection, particularly on plastic waste. Today, the company is proud to announce its achievement of collecting 102,000 kilos of post-consumer plastic waste with partner Geocycle in the areas of Bula-

can, Misamis Oriental, Davao City and La Union.

Starting in 2019 with a collection of just 1,000 kilos of plastic waste for the entire year, Mondelez International has been steadily understanding the opportunities for waste collection in the Philippines. In 2021, the company achieved a milestone of 172,000 kilos' worth of collection and diversion of plastic waste. That means this amount of waste was diverted to better use and did not end up as landfill nor

marine litter. This year, the Company announces its goal to collect and co-process more waste, and it's off to a good start with this partnership with Geocycle, the waste management unit of building solutions provider Holcim Philippines, Inc. The amount of waste collected and diverted through Geocycle is equal to the weight of 70 cars.

"Sustainability, particularly in the area of packaging and plastic waste, is one of the pillars of our strategy

as a Company," explains Ashish Pisharodi, Country Director for Mondelez International in the Philippines. "We call it sustainable snacking – a commitment to grow our business by making our snacks in the right way, with positive impact for people and the planet. This new partnership with Geocycle is one way we are showing our commitment to consumers, our stakeholders, our own people, and the environment." This collection of waste is brand-

neutral, meaning the company collects most types of plastic waste, regardless of the maker or product.

Increasingly, consumers are expecting companies to make more than delicious products. According to Mondelez International's 3rd State of Snacking report, "85% of global consumers surveyed said they either buy or would like to buy snacks from companies that are working to offset their environmental impact." Supporting environ-



mental goals is something people demand of the companies who make products they consume. 70% give more value to brands that act in a responsible, transparent, and honest way towards the community (Kantar, 2021).





# World 'sleepwalking' to climate catastrophe – UN chief

PARIS: UN chief Antonio Guterres said on Monday the world is "sleepwalking to climate catastrophe," with major economies allowing carbon pollution to increase when drastic cuts are needed.

The planet-saving goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius is already "on life support," he told a sustainability conference in London.

Keeping 1.5 C in play requires a 45-percent drop in emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by mid-century, according to the UN's intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

But even if nations honor newly revised pledges under the Paris Agreement, emissions are still set to rise 14 percent before

the decade ends.

"The problem is getting worse," Guterres said in a prerecorded video message. "We are sleepwalking to a climate catastrophe."

"If we continue with more of the same, we can kiss 1.5 C goodbye," he added.

"Even two degrees may be out of reach." His comments came only hours before the 195-nation IPCC kicked off a two-week meeting to validate a landmark report on options for reducing carbon pollution and extracting CO2 from the air.

The report is expected to conclude that CO2 emissions must peak within a few years if the Paris temperature targets are to be met.

Guterres described Covid recovery spending as "scandalously uneven" and a

missed opportunity to accelerate the turn toward clean energy.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, he added, could further derail climate action with importers locking in fossil fuel dependence as they scramble to replace Russian oil and gas.

## 'Addiction to fossil fuel'

"Countries could become so consumed by the immediate fossil fuel supply gap that they neglect or knee-cap (climate) policies," Guterres said.

"This is madness. Addiction to fossil fuels is mutually assured destruction." A bombshell

report last year from the Intergovernmental Energy Agency concluded that a 1.5 C world was incompatible with any new oil or gas developments or new coal-fired power plants.

Breaking with the usual practice of not singling out countries, Guterres called out Australia and a "handful of holdouts" for failing to lay out "meaningful" near-term plans to slash emissions.

He also said the development needs and economic structures of China, India, Indonesia and other "emerging economies" prevent them from making similar commitments, especially on coal.

Rich nations should provide money, technology and know-how to help these

emerging economies purge coal from their energy portfolios, he added, pointing to a pathbreaking deal for South Africa unveiled at the COP26 climate summit last November in Glasgow.

"Our planet can't afford a climate blame game," he cautioned. "We can't point fingers while the planet burns." Wealthy nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development must phase out coal by 2030, and all other countries by 2040, Guterres said.

China and India — both heavily reliant on coal — have resisted a full embrace of the 1.5 C goal, along with pressure to set more ambitious short-term emissions reduction targets.

Both nations, however, have set long-

term "net-zero" goals for carbon neutrality, 2060 for China and 2070 for India.

G20 (Group of Twenty) countries account for about 80 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

A landmark IPCC report on climate impact and humanity's capacity to adapt, published last month, details an atlas of human suffering and warns that far worse is to come.

Unprecedented floods, heat waves and wildfires seen across four continents in the last year will all accelerate in coming decades even if the fossil fuel pollution is rapidly brought to heel, the report concluded.

Guterres was addressing a four-day conference organized by *The Economist*.

AFP





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CARBON POLLUTION INCREASING WHEN CUTS ARE NEEDED

## WORLD 'SLEEPWALKING INTO CLIMATE CATASTROPHE,' SAYS UN CHIEF

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## Mitigating the impact of climate change on human life

By Deputy Director General  
**Amy E. Pope**  
*International Organization for Migration*

TYPHON Rai, locally known as Odette, smashed the Philippines three months ago, sweeping through 11 of the country's 17 regions, destroying or damaging over 2 million houses, far eclipsing that of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Approximately 32,200 people remain displaced mostly in evacuation centers.

The road to a full recovery will be long and full of challenges. Yet returning from my field visit to Siargao, Philippines, I was inspired by the "Bayanihan" spirit. From the community where people are assisting their fellow neighbors to rebuild their houses, to the intervention led by Local Government Units, Mayors, Governors and National level counterparts, the desire to recover and help one another in times of a crisis is palpable and something that will stay with me long after my visit.

This typhoon, however, must serve as a

wake-up call to the international community. The Global Climate Risk Index 2020 ranks the Philippines as the second most vulnerable country in the world affected by climate change despite being one of the smallest contributors to CO2 emissions. More than 60 percent of the Filipino population resides in coastal areas and will be forced to move with one-meter sea rise brought about by global warming—that equates to 60 million people having to move by the end of this century. As President Duterte warned in his address during the 76th United Nations (UN) General Assembly, "the risks and burden of a warming climate are simply not the same for everyone. ... But here we are now at a critical tipping point, where failure to act leads to cataclysmic consequences for the whole of humankind."

Knowing that climate impact is inevitable and recognizing that failure to act will be cataclysmic, there are three things we must do now to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change on human life.

First, we have seen time and again that

human mobility is inextricably linked to climate change. Nowhere is that more evident than in the Philippines. Migration is one of the coping mechanisms of affected Filipinos facing climate crisis, either as a choice or a force of circumstance. We must acknowledge that the protection of the most vulnerable should be at the forefront of our climate action, and collectively build migration into our climate change mitigation measures. National and regional policies must include more migration adaptation measures, and resources are needed to address and prevent displacements while increasing people's resilience, especially in the most vulnerable countries.

Second, it is imperative to ensure that adaptive migration as a solution is safe, informed, and desired. For instance, IOM is working closely with the Philippines Government and communities on planned relocation and transitional sites in typhoon af-

ected areas. Through the generous support from donors such as USAID, Australia, Japan, Canada, UN Central Emergency Fund and Germany, IOM is providing critical shelter assistance, hygiene and sanitation, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Health and COVID prevention and Mental Health and Psychosocial Services. While essential, these actions are primarily reactive. Our actions in the field today can and should be a pathway towards managing climate vulnerabilities. They must be done proactively and strategically in a contextually grounded manner and with strong community engagement.

Finally, we need to harness the power of the estimated 10 million Filipinos living abroad to strengthen climate resilience locally. The Philippines is a country that has for decades made the most out of migration. Since the 1980s, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) have been hailed as bagong bayani

(modern-day heroes). In 2019, remittances from OFWs reached a record high of USD 33.9 billion, equivalent to nearly 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). With one of the largest diasporas in the world, we need to leverage this support and direct these financial contributions to build back better using the lessons learned from past climate emergencies—such as building four-corner roofs over home in typhoon-prone areas to protect these rebuilt communities from future devastation.

As the cost of the climate crisis is reaching irreversible heights, I depart the Philippines reflecting on the devastating impacts of Typhoon Rai and the future of the communities in the Philippines. While the "Bayanihan" spirit gives me hope, we now need bold collective action to build the resilience of communities at risk, to protect the most vulnerable, and to ensure that migration remains a choice rather than a necessity.





# Three decades ago world told to 'act now' on climate

By AMÉLIE BOTTOLIER-DEPOIS

**P**ARIS, France (AFP) — With the planet facing the "potentially serious consequences" of global warming, UN experts writing 32 years ago urged an indifferent world to take immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Planet-warming carbon pollution has increased ever since.

In 1990 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change produced the first trio of reports in a cycle of climate change assessments — one on the physical science of warming, one on the impacts and one on solutions — that has repeated roughly every six years.

While the authors of the most recent IPCC report on impacts, released in February this year, can say the evidence of harm to humanity and the entire planet is "unequivocal," the authors of those first reports 30 years ago could not be as forthright.

But they were clear that the risks were so high we couldn't afford to wait.

"The potentially serious consequences of climate change on the

global environment," they said "give sufficient reasons to begin by adopting response strategies that can be justified immediately even in the face of such significant uncertainties."

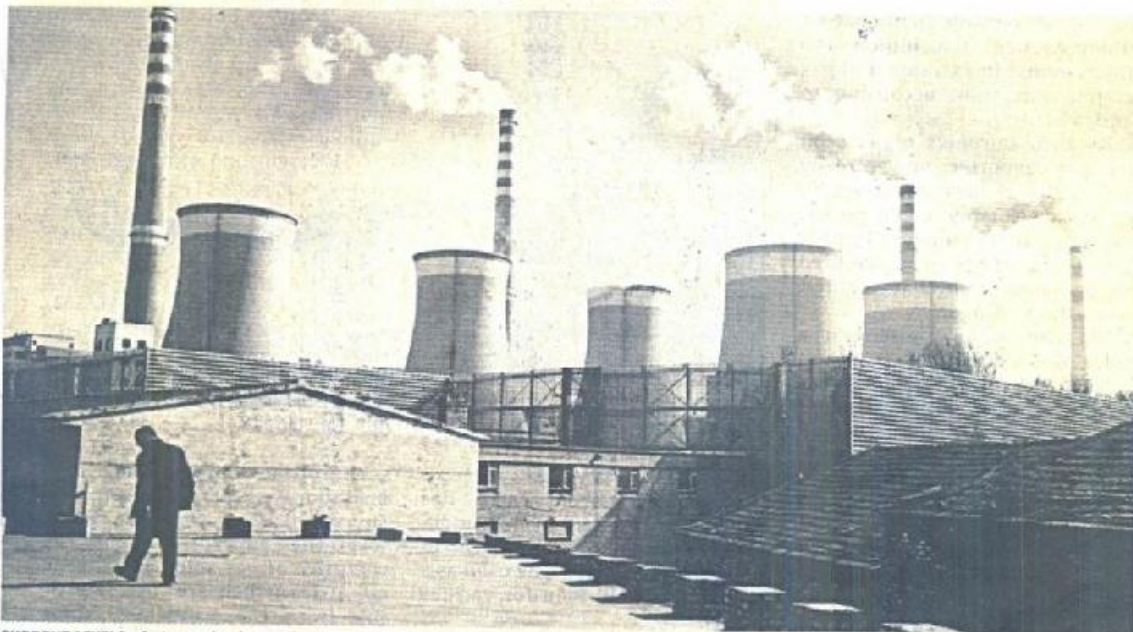
They said cuts to the planet-warming gases that humans were pumping into the atmosphere should be swift and drastic.

"Because climate change could potentially result in significant impacts on the global environment and human activities, it is important to begin considering now what measures might be taken in response," the report said.

There was never an easy answer.

The scientists writing the 1990 report underscored the need to reduce emissions of different gases — especially carbon dioxide and methane — across a range of different sectors, from energy generation to agriculture.

"Our understanding has been refined over 40 years, but the alarm has been ringing since the first IPCC report," said Celine Guivarch, one of the authors of the latest IPCC assessment of solutions, set to be published on April 4.



CURRENT LEVELS of atmospheric CO2 have not been experienced for at least two million years, the IPCC says Noel Celis. (AFP photo)

With each new cycle of climate evaluation, the description of risks in the IPCC reports has become ever clearer and more urgent. The forecasts have become increasingly catastrophic.

Meanwhile, emissions have risen almost every year, only breaking their relentless pace because of major economic crises, such as the one triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a result, CO2 in the atmosphere has never been higher.

According to data from the Mauna Loa observatory in Hawaii, which has monitored the atmosphere for decades, CO2 concentrations reached 416 parts per million in 2021, up from 354 ppm in 1990 when the first IPCC report was published.

Earth has experienced periods of much higher CO2 concentrations

in the distant past.

But in its report on the physical science released in August 2021, the IPCC said the rate the gas has increased in the atmosphere since 1900 "is at least 10 times faster than at any other time during the last 800,000 years."

"Current levels of atmospheric CO2 have not been experienced for at least two million years," it added.





## Editorial

# The looming threat from polar warming

**W**EATHER scientists are both surprised and alarmed by what is happening in the North and South Poles. Surprised because the poles, which have contrasting seasons, are heating up at the same time, and worried because the temperature rise is unusually high.

In Antarctica it was more than 40 degrees Celsius warmer than average; in the Arctic, it was more than 30 degrees C warmer than average.

The temperature rise in Antarctica is particularly disquieting. Last week, the continent was about 4.8 C warmer than a baseline temperature between 1979 and 2000.

"Not a good sign when you see that sort of thing happen," observed one meteorologist.

Climatologists keep close track of polar temperature shifts because any significant change in global temperature happens first either in the Arctic or Antarctica.

More data is needed to confirm if the freakish polar weather is being driven by climate change. But already, environmentalists are waving red flags.

As the poles heat up, ice melts. That's a normal process, and the ice usually builds up again in the winter. When the temperature, however, stays longer than usual above the freezing point of water, less ice forms, and what is lost is not replenished. The icecaps start to shrink.

During its summer season last February, Antarctica shrank to 1.9 million square kilometers. Unless the temperature drops substantially in winter, the continent may never recover the ice that has melted.

The Arctic, on the other hand, which is more vulnerable to climate change, has been warming two to three times faster than the rest of the planet.

In 2009, the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research released the first comprehensive review of the state of Antarctica's climate and how it affects the global climate system.

The review compiled the findings of 100 leading scientists from 13 countries who researched, among other subjects, the impact of climate change on Antarctica's plants and animals and the unprecedented jump in carbon dioxide levels.

As summed up by Professor John Turner of the polar research institute British Antarctic Survey, the lead editor, the review "illustrates how human activity is driving rapid climate change. By integrating this multidisciplinary evidence into a single source, we will help scientists and policy makers understand the distinction between environmental changes linked to the Earth's natural cycles and those that are human induced."

The review noted that 90 percent of the Antarctic Peninsula's glaciers have retreated in recent decades, although the bulk of the Antarctic ice sheet has seen little change.

Carbon dioxide levels rose at their fastest pace in 800,000 years "and are increasing at rates unlikely to have been seen in the [geologically] recent past," the review found.

But most disturbing was the finding that "West Antarctic ice loss could contribute to 1.4 meter sea level rise by 2100."

By that year, according to more recent studies, the sea will have engulfed the coastal homes of 200 million people in the world. Seventy percent of them live in just eight countries in Asia, including the Philippines.

To its credit, our government has recognized the danger from rising ocean levels and highlighted the urgency for more resolute action to address it.

During a virtual meeting last year of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, the Philippine delegation said the country's sea level was rising three to four times faster than the global pace.

Unfortunately, the threat of sea-level rise appears to have been overshadowed by more pressing environmental concerns such as capping carbon emissions. Consequently, measures to support adaptation to sea-level rise are not being implemented fast enough to match the pace and scale of the challenges ahead, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in a policy paper on country approaches in tackling coastal risks.

"While living on the coast has always come with a certain level of flooding and erosion risks, climate change will alter our coastlines, and we must prepare for this new reality," the OECD said.

The message is clear, and the time to act is now.





# Partnering with Israel on water management

**W**ater, one of the most critical elements for the survival of humanity, is something we can't take for granted. Israel, for one, has shown how it has developed policies, practices, and technologies to save and maximize water as a country with an arid climate, not enough rainfall, and occasional droughts. Israel has become a global leader in water management and water reuse.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further stressed the importance of water as it is crucial for sanitation and hygiene to mitigate the spread of the virus. But many places still experience water scarcity and accessibility issues, making them prone to other viruses and diseases.

As we mark World Water Day, it is worth looking into the critical issue of water management, including water sources. Water shortage and contamination pose a threat to humanity, as they exacerbate such risks as climate change, desertification, and pollution.

The water crisis is characterized by three parallel processes. The first is the decline in water availability for drinking, agriculture, and industry, as population and corresponding consumption rate continue to grow. Second is the ongoing decline in the quality of water, becoming more polluted or saline with the passing of time. Third is the availability of water: in many places in the world, water sources have moved farther away from population centers, while many households re-

## COMMENTARY

ILAN FLUSS

main unconnected to water systems.

There are many aspects to consider when discussing water management, ranging from legislation, central government and local government management systems, and their implementation by water companies, as well as modern technologies. Every aspect is critical to increase water use efficiency and coordination, accrue international, public, and private funding, rehabilitate polluted water sources, and encourage investment and research and development.

One of Israel's creative innovations that enables farmers to increase crop yield and quality while using less water is drip irrigation. The embassy is working with the Department of Agriculture, the National Irrigation Administration, and the Mindanao Development Authority of the Philippines to introduce drip irrigation and other methods for efficient use of water in the agricultural sector. Israel also promotes the use of remote technology for automatic water metering and identification of water loss and quality in residential and commercial areas. Other technologies are water desalination, water purification systems, creating water from air, sophisticated



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management systems, and so on.

The Israel embassy has also donated Israeli-made water filtration units to typhoon-stricken areas in Bohol and Siargao in December 2021, to the indigenous community in Nueva Ecija, and to the Dumagat tribe in Davao. More units will be distributed to areas that need access to clean drinking water. The portable water filtration unit is ideal for use in far-flung areas with limited access to clean and safe drinking water. In addition, the embassy has conducted a water management seminar for local government units in Mindanao and is looking to repeat it on a national level.

Israel can become the model for integrated water management and use. It treats and recycles sewage water, with 90 percent of its treated wastewater used for agriculture. An Israeli company operating in the country uses the same innovation to treat wastewater in residential areas such as Pampanga, Laguna, and Cebu.

Seawater desalination, the use of brackish water for agriculture, drip irrigation, the development of agricultural varieties that consume less water, and even the extraction of water from air, are other innovations developed and implemented in Israel that we'd be happy to share with the Philippines.

Ilan Fluss is the ambassador of Israel to the Philippines.





## UN weighs listing Great Barrier Reef as 'in danger'

THE United Nations began a monitoring mission on the Great Barrier Reef Monday, assessing whether the World Heritage site is being protected from climate change as it suffers further widespread bleaching.

Higher-than-average temperatures have again caused severe bleaching in parts of the reef, authorities confirmed last week, dashing hopes a cooler La Nina summer could spare corals from another season of heat damage.

UNESCO's mission will assess whether the Australian government is doing enough to address threats to the

Great Barrier Reef, including climate change, before the World Heritage Committee considers listing it as "in danger" in June.

Reef expert Scott Heron of James Cook University told AFP he hoped "there is some transparency in the areas of the reef [the UN team] are visiting," including those affected by the current bleaching event.

"There are parts of the reef where the condition is so poor there is no opportunity for coral bleaching this year because there are few corals left," he said.

Heron said climate change was

pushing the reef closer to the limits of its stress threshold, making bleaching events more likely.

"We need urgent action on climate change this decade," he said.

Since 2016, the Great Barrier Reef has been hit by three mass bleaching events, during which heat-stressed corals expel algae living in their tissues, draining them of their vibrant colors.

A decision by the World Heritage Committee last July not to list the reef as "in danger" surprised many, given UNESCO had recommended the listing just weeks earlier. AFP





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# ₱12-B Metro Manila water supply project on track MWSS chief says

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jonlmayuga](#)

**M**ETROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Administrator Leonor C. Cleofas said the ₱12-billion New Centennial Water Supply Project is back on track after securing the consent of indigenous cultural communities (ICC) in Rizal and Quezon.

Interviewed at the sidelines of the inauguration and opening of the Million Trees Nursery and Eco Learning Center in Quezon City recently, Cleofas said the signed memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Indigenous Peoples (IP) will be submitted to the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) ensuring that the project, also called the Kaliwa Dam, will proceed as planned.

She said the engineered detailed design is complete and the tunnel-boring machine is already positioned on the project site.

"We are doing some preparatory works in the Theresa outlet portals because the area is not part of ancestral domain. We have already signed a memorandum of agreement with IPs in Quezon and Rizal. We will submit the MOA to the NCIP Central Office, hopefully, by the first week of April, to be included in the agenda of the Commission en banc," she said.

According to Cleofas, the Kaliwa

Dam, designed to be a dependable source of raw water like Angat Dam is very important to ensure sustainable water supply for Metro Manila and nearby towns and provinces.

The Kaliwa Dam project is a new water source to be constructed to meet the increasing demand of the people of Metro Manila, Rizal, and Quezon, estimated at 17.46 million people or 3.19 million households by constructing another dam.

The construction of the Kaliwa Dam will also reduce total dependence on the Angat Dam, where about 97 percent of the raw water supply for Metro Manila and parts of Bulacan, Cavite, and Rizal provinces come from.

To be implemented by the China Energy Engineering Corporation Limited (CEEC), the five-year project is already delayed because of permitting problems, mainly securing the consent and approval of IPs in Quezon and Rizal provinces.

The dam structure is to be constructed in Barangay Pagsangahan, General Nakar, Quezon, and Barangay Magsaysay, Infanta, Quezon (60-meter high with an initial supply of 600 million liters per day).

## Protecting watersheds

In her brief message during the event, Cleofas expressed thanks to the support of the Million Trees Foundation Inc. (MTFI), the proponent of

the Million Trees Nursery and Eco Learning Center, which aims to sustain the gains of the Annual Million Trees Challenge (AMTC) to protect and conserve important watersheds.

She said the partnership with MTFI and concerned local government units (LGU) to reforest degraded watersheds are a big boost to the effort of the government to protect the watersheds, adding that without watersheds, there will be no sustainable source of raw water.

"We don't want a ningas cogon. We want a sustainable one," she said, referring to MWSS's commitment to protect and conserve the country's important watersheds.

Incidentally, MTFI is dedicated to the conservation and rehabilitation of seven critical watersheds, namely, Angat, Ipo, Kaliwa, La Mesa, Laguna de Bay, Umiray, and the Upper Marikina, including Manila Bay through regular tree-planting and environmental conservation projects.

Its key aim is to ensure the AMTC is sustained for its five-year duration and beyond.

Launched in 2017 by the MWSS then under the leadership of Chairman and Administrator Reynaldo Velasco, the AMTC was able to plant 5.2 million trees in five years.

## Ambitious target

THE MTFI, which was established

to ensure continuity of the AMTC and headed by Executive Director Melandrew Velasco, now targets to plant 10 million more until 2030 with the help of the private sector.

In his brief message, MTFI's Velasco underscored the role played by the private sector in successfully planting 5.2 million trees—exceeding its 5 million target—by 200,000 trees, saying without the generous donation from the private sector, the challenge could not have been overcome.

On the other hand, he said, planting 10 million trees more is achievable with private sector help and support. "Judging from what we have achieved so far, I am confident that the target of planting 10 million more trees is achievable," he said.

The MWSS recently signed a memorandum of agreement with the MTFI, along with other development partners, to ensure the sustainability of the massive tree planting activities in the seven important watersheds identified by the MTFI proponents.

The MWSS's private water concessionaires—Maynilad Water Services Inc. Manila Water Corporation, and Luzon Clean Water Development Corporation (LCWDC), a subsidiary of San Miguel Corporation (SMC) are among the biggest supporters of MTFI.





Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
**NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES BOARD**  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor NIA Bldg., EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 1100

**BP WATERWORKS, INC.,**  
Applicant. Case No. 22-3260

-----X

**NOTICE OF HEARING**

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Urban Deca Ortigas, Barangay Rosario, Pasig City, Metro Manila, with the following proposed rates:

**PROPOSED TARIFF**

**Residential and Institutional**

| Pipe Size | 0-5 m <sup>3</sup> (min.) | 6-10 m <sup>3</sup> | 11-20 m <sup>3</sup> | 21-30 m <sup>3</sup> | 31-40 m <sup>3</sup> | Over 40 m <sup>3</sup> |
|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1/2"      | ₱ 276.50                  | 60.50               | 65.30                | 85.30                | 95.30                | 105.30                 |

**Commercial and Industrial**

| Pipe Size | 0-15 m <sup>3</sup> (min.) | 16-30 m <sup>3</sup> | 31-500 m <sup>3</sup> | 501-1000 m <sup>3</sup> | Over 1000 m <sup>3</sup> |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1/2"      | ₱ 1579.50                  | 131.60               | 157.90                | 157.90                  | 157.90                   |

This application will be initially heard by the Board on **11 April 2022**. The hearing will start at **9:00 o' clock in the morning** at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

At least **fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled hearing**, applicant shall publish this notice once in a newspaper of general circulation in **Metro Manila** and serve by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of the (i) application and its attachments, and (ii) this notice, to all affected parties appearing on page 2 hereof.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a **waliver of their right to be heard**. The Board will proceed to hear and decide the application based on the evidence submitted.

Likewise, failure by the applicant to appear at the hearing shall amount to **lack of interest on its part** and the instant application shall be dismissed accordingly.

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 21<sup>st</sup> day of February 2022.

By Authority of the Board:  
**Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III**  
Executive Director

**Affected Parties:**

The Secretary  
Sangguniang Panlungsod  
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Barangay Chairman  
Barangay Rosario  
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Homeowners Assn. President  
Urban Deca Ortigas  
Barangay Rosario  
Pasig City, Metro Manila

The Administrator  
Metropolitan Waterworks & Sewerage System  
MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road  
Balara, Quezon City



22 MARCH 2022, TUESDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

## **COVID-19 NEWS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# Daily average Covid-19 cases 13% lower from March 14-20

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor **March 21, 2022, 5:13 pm**



**MANILA** – The Department of Health (DOH) on Monday reported that the daily average Covid-19 cases of 510 from March 14 to 20 is 13 percent lower than the new infections prior to the week in review.

In its latest case bulletin, the DOH said there are 3,572 new cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) for the recent week.

For the same period, only one case was added to the tally of severe and critical infections which went down to 805 from last week's 1,006.

Only 17.8 percent or 619 out of the 3,473 intensive care unit (ICU) beds in the country are used while 16.6 percent of 4,532 non-ICU beds are utilized.

Meanwhile, there were 655 verified deaths recorded during the past week.

About 72.41 percent of the country's target population has been vaccinated against Covid-19.

The DOH also reported 75.31 percent of the senior citizens have been inoculated against the disease.

The elderly group is composed of 8,721,357 individuals while the country's target population for inoculation is 80 percent (90,005,357 individuals) of the country's entire population.

As of March 20, DOH data showed 65,171,415 individuals are fully vaccinated while 11,530,728 people have received their booster shots. **(PNA)**





# Booster shots can prevent another surge of Covid-19 cases

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor **March 21, 2022, 7:28 pm**



(PNA file photo by Joey Razon)

**MANILA** – An infectious disease expert on Monday urged fully vaccinated individuals to get their booster shots to prevent another surge of Covid-19 cases.

In a televised public briefing, Department of Health – Technical Advisory Group member Edsel Salvaña said that the resurgence of infections is a possibility since Covid-19 “showed surprises worldwide”.

"We have tools with which we have turned Covid into almost an endemic virus. *Kung mapapagpatuloy pa natin 'to, wala na pong bagong variant na lumabas, tuloy-tuloy na po 'yan* (If we can continue these, no new variant comes out, these will go on) towards endemicity," he said.

The administration of a fourth dose for the immunocompromised, Salvaña said, is being studied as data are “still very preliminary” worldwide.

To date, 65,171,415 Filipinos are fully vaccinated while 11,530,728 of them have booster shots.

The vaccination for the pediatric sector also continues to gain momentum, with some 11 million aged 5 to 17 receiving at least one dose.

This number is expected to increase following the Food and Drug Administration’s approval of the use of the Sinovac vaccine for minors, pending the release of the final guidelines.

Salvaña explained that vaccination even after contracting Covid-19 will lead to hybrid immunity, which is the most durable and effective kind of protection. **(PNA)**



# #OneDENR

Covid-19  
Situation and Response





# National COVID-19 Case Bulletin

## March 21, 2022

Official DOHgov  
@DOHgovph

### Healthcare Utilization

(as of March 20, 2022)

**16.6%**  
Non-ICU Bed Utilization  
4,532 out of 27,376 non-ICU beds used

**17.8%**  
ICU Bed Utilization  
619 out of 3,473 ICU beds used

**805**  
Severe and Critical Admissions  
12.3% of total COVID-19 admissions

### Vaccination Accomplishment

(as of March 20, 2022)

**72.41%**  
% Coverage of Target Population\*

**75.31%**  
% Coverage of Target A2 Population\*\*

Fully Vaccinated Individuals  
**65,171,415**  
+630,575 vaccinated on Mar 14 to Mar 20

Individuals with Booster/Additional Dose  
**11,530,728**  
+370,191 vaccinated on Mar 14 to Mar 20

(added on Mar 14 to Mar 20)



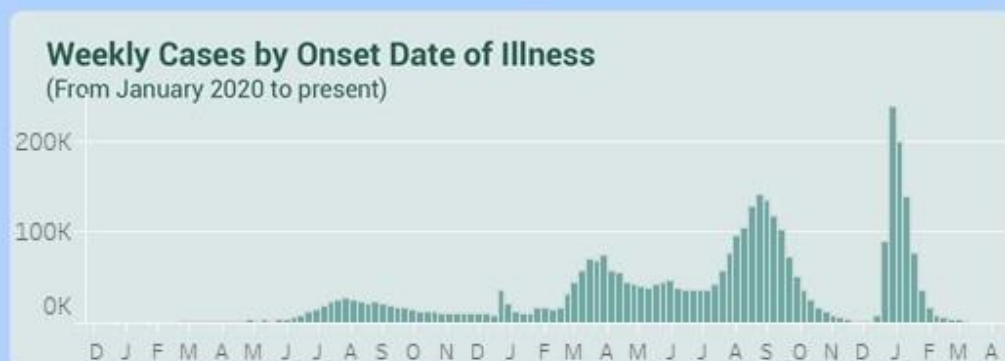
### COVID-19 Cases

(as of March 20, 2022)

**New Cases**  
**+3,572**  
Daily Average Cases = 510  
(13% lower than cases on Mar 7 to Mar 13)

New Severe and Critical Cases  
**+1**  
(0.03% of new cases)

Deaths Verified During The Past Week  
**+655**



\*Target population refers to 80% of the total population (90,005,357 individuals)  
\*\*Target A2 population refers to 85% of the total Senior Citizen population (8,721,357 individuals)

#### DOH HOSPITAL HOTLINES

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

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

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

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

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

#### DOH TELEMEDICINE CONTACT DETAILS

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22 MARCH 2022, TUESDAY



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
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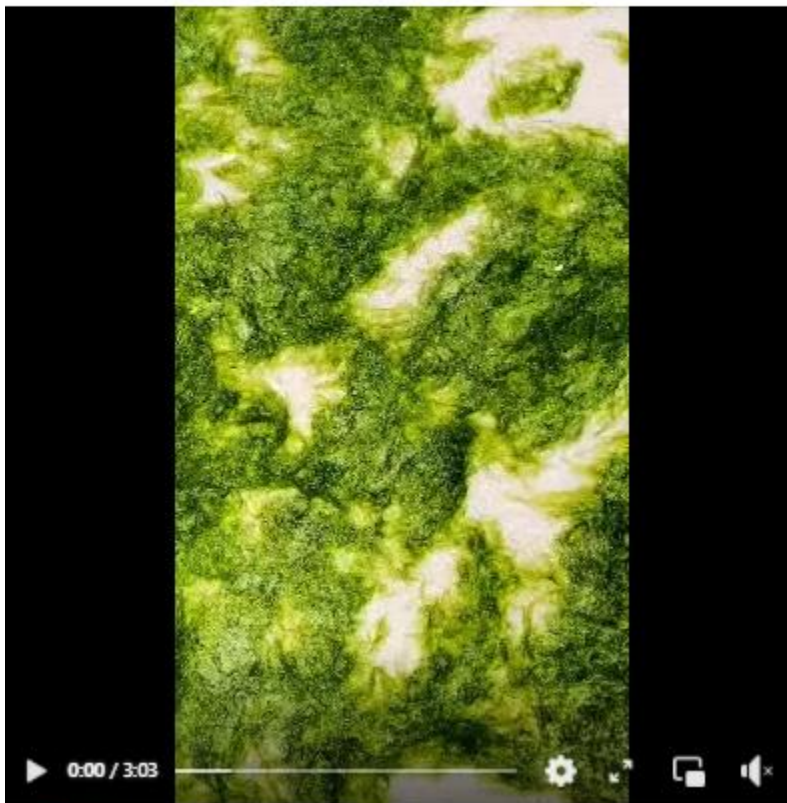
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Natural o may dahilan?

DENR Acting Sec. Jim Sampulna nagbigay ng pahayag tungkol sa makapal ng lumot sa Boracay.

See Translation



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