

23 MARCH 2022, WEDNESDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# Gov't studying other prospective groundwater sources

By Stephanie Sevillano [March 22, 2022, 7:03 pm](#)



**WATER CHAMPS.** The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recognizes 14 "water champions" in the country during the virtual World Water Day Awards 2022 on March 22, 2022. These water champions showed exemplary performance in protecting, preserving, and sustaining the water resources in the country. *(Screengrab)*

MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday said the government has started studying other prospective locations for groundwater sources amid the challenges posed by climate change.

In a virtual celebration of World Water Day, DENR Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna stressed the need to ensure a sustainable supply of clean water given that 30 percent of freshwater resources is groundwater, extracted and managed to suffice the needs of the global's growing population.

“Groundwater is indeed a crucial resource that requires our management and balancing act between extraction and allowing the recovery and sustainable management of aquifers for long term beneficial use of our people,” Sampulna added.

Among the prospective locations for groundwater sources being studied by the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) are Tagbilaran, Batangas, Cavite, Masbate, Laguna, and Bulacan, the DENR said.

Maynilad president and CEO Ramoncito Fernandez stressed the need to increase discussions on groundwater studies, to ensure an equitable supply of drinking water for future generations.

“With climate change continuing to threaten our water sources, sustainably managing our groundwater sources is critical, we need to make the invisible, visible, by breaking discussions on groundwater protection to the mainstream,” he said.

In the same event, 14 "water champions" in the country were recognized for their exemplary practices in water irrigation, treatment, and urban management.

The DENR said their best practices are vital in combating challenges in increasing demand versus limited supply, poor water quality due to pollution, and climate change, among others.

Besides the World Water Day Awards, the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau–DENR also held its online webinar in line with the celebration.



Senior Science Research Specialist Reg Winlove Bungabong stressed the importance of water treatment management nowadays to ensure access to clean or drinking water.

“Compared siguro noong mga panahon ng ancestor natin, directly kumukuha lang sila ng water from the spring kahit yung iba direktso nang umiinom sa river. Pero ngayon kasi ‘yung mga results ng mga monitoring talaga natin ng mg water systems natin may mga contaminants na talaga sa tubig so hindi na siya pwedeng inumin na hindi natin tini-treat ‘yung tubig natin (Compared to the time of our ancestors where they can easily access drinking water in springs or river. But now, monitoring on our water systems shows there are contaminants in water sources, and we can no longer drink untreated water),” he said.

Ensuring access to clean water and sanitation for all is the sixth among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations, targeted to be achieved by 2030.

According to the SDG Tracker, the Philippines’ share of the population using "safely managed" drinking water is at 47.46 percent as of 2020. **(PNA)**



# 14 water, environment champions recognized

March 22, 2022, 4:05 pm



World Water Day PH Awards 2022 (Screengrab)

**MANILA** – West Zone concessionaire, Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad), together with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), honored on Tuesday the 14 water and environment champions at the virtually held World Water Day PH Awards 2022 (WWD.PH Awards), the culminating event of the country's week-long celebration of World Water Day.

For more than five years now, the WWD.PH Awards has been a platform for honoring champions for water and the environment – individuals, institutions, and programs that have made strides in achieving water and water-environment sustainability in the Philippines.

Each WWD.PH-participating government agency and private company fields their nominees, which are then screened and vetted by a multi-organization committee before being included in the list of awardees.

Maynilad's Water Warrior Awardee for this year was the Parañaque City Environment and Natural Resource Office for actively promoting proper wastewater management through an ordinance establishing a septage management system in the City of Parañaque.

The NWRB's Water Wise Awards went to Coca-Cola Beverage Philippines for its Reduce, Reuse, Replenish program, and the Local Government of Pavia, Iloilo and Pavia National School, which served as the pilot location for the NWRB's Groundwater Management Plan.

The Local Water Utilities Administration's Huwarang Lingkod Tubig Award recipients were Puerto Princesa City Water District in Palawan, Bayawan Water District in Negros Oriental, and San Francisco Water District in Agusan del Sur.

The Damayan Irrigators Association, Inc., PPATTABA Irrigators Association, Inc., and Silway 7 - Klinan 6 Communal Irrigators Association, Inc were named the Most Outstanding Irrigator's Associations by the National Irrigators Association.

Efforts in protecting the Laguna de Bay were also recognized through the Laguna Lake Development Authority's Kampeon ng Lawa Awards, which were given to the local government of Morong, Rizal, the Muntinlupa City Lake Management Office's paddle wheel project, and Rev. Msgr. Jerry Veluz Bitoon, Rector of San Pablo Cathedral, in San Pablo City.



Completing the roster of honorees were Metro Pacific Water's Kampeon ng Kalikasan awardee Metro Iloilo Water District, and Aboitiz InfraCapital's Agos ng Kinabukasan awardee Metro Lipa Water District.

Emphasizing this year's World Water Day theme 'Groundwater – making the invisible, visible,' Maynilad CEO and President Ramoncito S. Fernandez said: "With climate change continuing to threaten our surface water sources, sustainably managing our groundwater sources is critical.

"We need to make the invisible, visible – by bringing discussions on groundwater management and protection to the mainstream," he added.

The event was shot at the El Deposito Museum in San Juan City, which showcased the largest underground water reservoir in the country. It presented the history of the 1882 Carriedo Waterworks, which provided potable water to the residents of Manila, carried from the Marikina and Pasig Rivers, in the 19th century. It could be considered the forerunner of today's Maynilad and Manila Water. **(PR)**



# DENR employees in 'Yolanda'-hit areas finally receive P42.2 million in cash aid

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA MARCH 22, 2022

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to release P42.2 million as relief assistance to the agency's employees affected by Typhoon "Yolanda" (international code name Haiyan) almost a decade ago.

Yolanda struck on November 8, 2013, devastating Central Philippines.

To benefit from the cash assistance are DENR employees affected by the typhoon, particularly those who are living in the areas of Palawan, Eastern Visayas, and Western Visayas when Yolanda struck.

"This check speaks of the DENR's valued commitment to push tirelessly for the welfare and benefits of its hardworking work force, however, long and challenging the waiting has been," DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said in a news statement.

Sampulna also cited the tireless efforts of DENR field officials in securing financial help.

The DENR chief handed over the checks to senior field officials of DENR Regions 8, 6, and 4B worth P34.2 million, P7.2 million, and P760,000, respectively, during the flag-raising ceremony last Monday.

The acting DENR chief expressed his gratitude to President Duterte for the support to the agency's employees despite the government's limited budget and resources due to Covid-19 and global repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Sampulna said the cash assistance make up the second tranche of financial help from the Office of the President following the release of about P11 million in 2012 in response to a request made by DENR-Northern Mindanao officials for monetary aid for workers affected by Typhoon Sendong in December 2011.

DENR-Region 8 Executive Director Tirso Parian said the release of the cash aid "is as good a day as any, particularly for many of our co-workers who are still paying off loans for the reconstruction of their houses that were damaged by Typhoon Yolanda in 2013."

Eastern Visayas DENR Employees Union President Sonia Q. Mejido said 164 workers whose houses were completely damaged by the typhoon will receive P100,000 each, while 594 beneficiaries whose houses were partially damaged will get P30,000 each.

DENR Employees Union-Region 6 president Emma Delima said 156 beneficiaries will receive P30,000 each, while 26 beneficiaries will get P100,000 each.

Likewise, 23 DENR workers in Palawan will receive P30,000 each, while one beneficiary will get P100,000.

Individuals who are no longer employees of the DENR will still receive the financial aid, including those deceased, through their next of kin, Mejido and Delima assured.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/03/22/denr-employees-in-yolanda-hit-areas-finally-receive-p42-2-million-in-cash-aid/>



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### March 22 is World Water Day | New Day

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# CENRO-Bislig leads cleanup drive on World Water Day

By Alexander Lopez March 22, 2022, 5:42 pm



**PROTECTING RIVERS.** Marking the World Water Day 2022, CENRO-Bislig City in Surigao del Sur spearheads cleanup drives in Tabon and Mangagoy Rivers on Tuesday (March 22, 2022). CENRO-Bislig underscores the importance of groundwater and raised awareness on the sustainable management of freshwater resources in the province. *(Photo courtesy of CENRO-Bislig)*

**BUTUAN CITY** – In commemoration of the World Water Day 2022 on Tuesday, the Community Environment and Natural Resources in the Surigao del Sur city of Bislig (CENRO-Bislig) led volunteers from the government and private sectors in raising awareness on the importance of groundwater and its conservation.

CENRO-Bislig personnel and partners conducted the "River Clean Up Drive" activities in two major rivers in Bislig City as the highlights of this year's World Water Day celebration.

The cleanup drives covering Tabon and Mangagoy Rivers were joined by nearly a hundred individuals from different sectors both in the government and private agencies.

"The World Water Day highlights the importance of freshwater. The observance also includes advocacy for the sustainable management of freshwater resources," CENRO-Bislig said in a statement.

This year's commemoration carries the theme: "Groundwater: Making the Invisible, Visible."

As the climate change phenomenon gets worse, CENRO-Bislig noted that the world's groundwater is becoming more critical.

"We need to work together to sustainably manage this precious resource," the agency said.

Moreover, CENRO-Bislig also led bamboo and tree planting activities on Monday in Sitio Sanyata, Barangay San Roque, on the same day.

The activity marked the International Day of Forests that carried the theme "Forests and Sustainable Consumption and Production". **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1170358>





## Barmm marks International Day of Forests with tree planting



ZAMBOANGA. Over a thousand tree seedlings and mangrove propagules were planted in a simultaneous tree planting activity Monday, March 21, across the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in line with the celebration of the International Day of Forest. (SunStar Zamboanga)

March 22, 2022

OVER a thousand tree seedlings and mangrove propagules were planted in a simultaneous tree planting activity Monday, March 21, across the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Barmm).

Minister Akmad Brahim of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (Menre) in Barmm said the simultaneous tree planting activity is in line with the celebration of the International Day of Forests (IDF).

Planted were 550 mahogany seedlings in Sitio Lomboy, Awang village, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao; 200 seedlings in Udalo village, Piagapo, Lanao del Sur; 250 yakal seedlings in Sitio Pilar, Switch Yakal village, Lantawan, Basilan; and 50 mangrove propagules in Pahut village, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.

The tree planting activity in Sulu was held earlier on March 17 during the visit of Brahim to the province.

"In protecting our forests, as one of the mandates of the Menre, we also help in preserving wildlife habitats, biodiversity, and conserving forest resources for communities and families whose livelihood and sources of income are forest-dependent," Brahim said.

Meanwhile, Menre Director-General Badr Salendab said the celebration reminded the public regarding the importance of reforestation against climate change.

"Conserving and protecting the environment is part of everyone's responsibility not only for their own well-being but also for future generations," Salendab added.

IDF is a global observance held annually every March 21 to raise awareness on the importance of forests to people, and their role in poverty eradication, environmental sustainability, and food security.

This year's celebration is anchored on the theme is "Forests and sustainable production and consumption." (**SunStar Zamboanga**)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1924370/zamboanga/local-news/barmm-marks-international-day-of-forests-with-tree-planting>



# DOE to enhance development of biomass waste-to-power facilities

By [Angelica Y. Yang](#)(Philstar.com) - March 22, 2022 - 5:50pm



This 2018 file photo shows the Inawayan dump site in Cebu City

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Energy has committed to enhance the development of biomass waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities across the country, which it believes can provide always-on power to the national grids, according to a department circular.

Biomass WTE facilities produce power from organic matter.

In a circular posted by the agency on its website Tuesday, DOE said that it will "prescribe policies and programs to enhance the electric power industry in the development of biomass WTE facilities."

"The DOE deems it necessary to further support as well as address issues and concerns in the development of biomass WTE projects in the Philippines," the circular read.

DOE also said it will promote biomass waste-to-power facilities as a type of baseload renewable energy (RE) which can contribute to solid waste management efforts and provide additional power to the grid.

Baseload units are deemed as reliable plants which can provide power to the grid 24/7.

The agency added that it considers WTE as a "relevant intervention" that can help cut methane emissions.

The DOE circular says that biomass WTE units which comply with the law are entitled to renewable energy certificates that can be traded on the country's Renewable Energy Market.

Last year, environment groups and advocates criticized the government's guidelines on constructing WTE facilities, saying that their implementation will bring harm to human health and the environment. In July 2021, green groups [filed a petition before the Supreme Court](#) to nullify an existing environment department order which allows the use of WTE facilities.

Contrary to the DOE's claims in its recent circular, local think tank Center for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technology (CREST) president Riedo Panaligan said incinerator plants actually emit more carbon dioxide per megawatt-hour than coal or oil plants.

"This is especially dangerous for Asia, where many countries produce waste with high moisture content that will not burn efficiently. To be able to operate effectively, incinerators in most Asian countries must be fed constantly with huge volumes of plastic waste, a petroleum-based product," Panaligan [explained in an op-ed](#) posted by German non-profit foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung on May 26, 2021.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/03/22/2169144/doe-enhance-development-biomass-waste-power-facilities/amp/>



## EcoWaste sa Comelec: Depektibong balota ‘wag sunugin, i-recycle



March 23, 2022 @ 7:19 AM

MANILA, Philippines – Umapela ang pro-environmental group na EcoWaste Coalition (EWC) sa Commission on Elections (Comelec) na i-recycle at huwag sunugin ang mga sira o depektibong naimprentang balota para sa eleksyon sa Mayo 9.

Ang panawagan ng EWC ay matapos sabihin ng Comelec sa House committee on suffrage and electoral reforms na ang 105,853 na mga depektong balota ay “will be presented to the public, accounted for individually with proper data and burned in front of all the political parties, the candidates and their representatives.”

“We appeal to our poll authorities to reconsider their plan to burn the defective ballots, which can be safely recycled instead,” sabi ni EWC Zero Waste Campaigner Jove Benosa noong Martes, Marso 22.

Idinagdag ni Benosa na ang pagsunog sa mga depektong balota ay hindi lamang gagawing abo ang recyclable na papel at bubuo pa ng mga pollutant na nakakapinsala sa kalusugan.

Kung ang mga substandard na balota ay sinusunog sa bukas o isang incinerator, ang EWC ay nagbabala na ang paglipat ay maaaring magresulta sa paglabas ng mga pollutant, kabilang ang mga greenhouse gases tulad ng carbon dioxide at persistent organic pollutants (POPs) tulad ng dioxins.

“The Comelec can borrow shredding machines from government offices and pay a team of informal waste workers for the job of cutting the defective ballots into strips. Alternatively, it can store the defective ballots in a secure warehouse, lock them up and have them collected for recycling after the polls,” suhestyon naman ni Benosa.

Pinaalalahanan niya ang ahensya na ang Republic Act (RA) 9003, o ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, ay nagbabawal sa open burning. Bukod dito, ang RA 8749, o ang Clean Air Act, ay nagbabawal sa municipal, biomedical, at hazardous waste incineration, na maaaring magresulta sa pagbuga ng lason at nakakalason na usok.

“Election stakeholders will surely support a non-polluting way of dealing with the faulty ballots while conserving paper, a valuable resource that comes from trees. Burning paper waste when the same can be recycled is not an environmentally sound option at all in the face of the global climate crisis,” ani Benosa. **RNT**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/ecowaste-sa-comelec-depektibong-balota-wag-sunugin-i-recycle/>



## Recycling line turns plastic sachets into eco-boards

March 21, 2022 | 4:38 pm



*The Plastic Flamingo's eco-boards are made from upcycled single-use sachets.*

By **Brontë H. Lacsamana**, Reporter

The Plastic Flamingo (The Plaf) — a social enterprise that collects plastics from companies, restaurants, and junk shops and turns them into eco-boards — launched on Friday a new recycling line that upcycles single-use sachets into plywood-like panels called eco-boards.

“The new recycling line translates into value for waste pickers to collect the plastic wrappers to be recycled at our factory in Muntinlupa. We shall also involve our network of collection points and volunteers in collecting plastic sachets along with other recyclable plastics,” said François Lesage, chief executive officer of The Plaf.

The technology will help mitigate the worsening levels of marine plastic pollution in a country that, according to the [World Bank](#), consumes around 163 million sachets each day.

“What was considered hard-to-recycle plastic can now be turned into panels the exact dimensions of plywood, used to build shelters,” Mr. Lesage said at the launch.

He added that the recycling line is the first of its kind in the Philippines and can set an example for incentivizing plastic collection.

The Plaf chief operating officer Erica Reyes shared with *BusinessWorld* that their extrusion machine is able to heat and pressurize these plastics into blocks, eco-boards, chairs, coasters, and other materials. These are sold directly to companies.

They are now looking into rolling out more products to “stimulate a market for recycled plastic products and enhance the circular plastic economy.”

### THE PLASTIC PROBLEM

Shipping logistics firm CMA CGM, which is funding the machinery and the employment of 12 factory staff, is partnering with The Plaf to curb the entry of 120 tons of plastic into the ocean. As of September 2021, 75 tons have been collected in Metro Manila.

Because the Philippines is one of the biggest plastic polluters in the world, [initiatives](#) aside from The Plaf have emerged to address the problem.



Yeya Berjaoui, general manager of CMA CGM Philippines, emphasized the importance of everyone working together to protect the environment.

“This June, we shall stop transporting plastic waste to curb their flows to destinations where sorting and recycling are not guaranteed,” he said.

On a global scale, resolutions to end plastic pollution via a legally binding instrument **have been adopted**, during the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, that took place on March 2.

In the meantime, the Philippines must work on **its own roadmap** for reducing plastic waste, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which urged the national and local governments to align with the plastic ban.

House Bill No. 9147 or the Single-Use Plastic Products Regulation Act that the House of Representatives approved last year should stop the production of single-use plastics. The Senate counterpart measure is currently pending.

Source: [https://www.bworldonline.com/recycling-line-turns-plastic-sachets-into-eco-boards/?fbclid=IwAR0szYAUq0hFsnt7cH2GBL4FMRNuSx71L3SCn409c2CiWa8Z1t7xc\\_F3e5A](https://www.bworldonline.com/recycling-line-turns-plastic-sachets-into-eco-boards/?fbclid=IwAR0szYAUq0hFsnt7cH2GBL4FMRNuSx71L3SCn409c2CiWa8Z1t7xc_F3e5A)



## 'Do good' for you and the planet

[OOH LA LAI](#) - [Lai S. Reyes](#) - The Philippine Star March 22, 2022 | 12:00am



Plastic products kill the oceans and worsen global warming.

Pexels

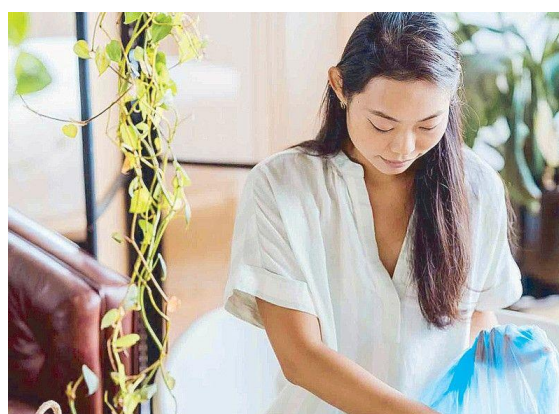
Heavy rains, flash floods, and wildfires. The extreme weather conditions we are experiencing right now is proof that the danger of climate change is upon us. The clock is ticking. And if we don't do anything about it, no one can protect us from environmental catastrophes. We'll be knocked out for real.

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 Anna 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.



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

### **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.

“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.”



Watsons Philippines' Patrick Yu.

### **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 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!’”

## BOC Cebu-Subport Mactan seizes flower seeds ‘smuggled’ from Indonesia

By: Doris C. Bongcac - Editor/CDN Digital|March 22,2022 - 11:50 AM



Photo from BOC Port of Cebu

MANDAUE CITY, Cebu — Various flowers seeds that were believed to have been smuggled from Indonesia were confiscated by personnel of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) Cebu-Subport of Mactan because of lack of sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance from the Bureau of Plant Industry.

A total of 41 sachets of seeds weighing 1.5 kilograms were kept hidden in a pair of sports shoes, but these were detected during the inspection bureau’s X-Ray Inspection Project (XIP) Team.

In an advisory, BOC Port of Cebu said the package arrived in Cebu last March 17. “The package, declared to only contain sport shoes, was flagged down by the X-Ray Inspection Project (XIP) Team after non-intrusive inspection yielded suspicious scanning images,” the BOC said.



Photo from BOC Port of Cebu

District Collector Charlito Martin Mendoza issued a Warrant of Seizure and Detention after finding probable cause for the deliberate misdeclaration of the flower seeds, a violation of Section 1113 (F), (I), and (L-3, 4, and 5) in relation to Section 1400 of the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act and BPI Quarantine Administrative Order No. 2, series of 2008.



For his part, Mactan Port Collector Gerardo Campo is reminding the public that the importation of plants and plant products is only allowed “if covered with import clearance from the Bureau of Plant Industry.”

“Do not resort to misdeclaration and concealment to effect the release of your importation,” he warned.

BOC said the seizure of the flower seeds was in line with the directive of Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero “to continuously boost surveillance and monitoring efforts against the proliferation of illegal trade of wildlife species to protect the environment and preserve biodiversity.”

Source: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/431042/boc-cebu-subport-mactan-seizes-flower-seeds-smuggled-from-indonesia?fbclid=IwAR0xkTeHRLCvLA5fRvPFiYwFhILb47ryzECtWWTtxurOcSusSWUGhvZEwl4#ixzz7OETsQ3v8>



# Mothers of Manicani cry for jobs, vow to protect the island

March 23, 2022



WOMEN from the villages near the Manicani mines in Guiuan, Eastern Samar gathered on March 2 to stage a protest rally seeking the resumption of mining in the island. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

IN time for the celebration of International Women's Month, a group of mothers, representing the four villages of the island of Manicani — Banaag, Buenavista, Hamorawon, San Jose in Manicani Island, Guiuan, Eastern Samar — gather together to draw attention to the economic condition in their communities, committing to protecting Manicani as they await the resumption of jobs on the island.

On March 2, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announces the resumption of the operations of Hinatuan Mining Corp. (HMC) after years of deliberation, including the release of the result of the investigation conducted by the Agency's "special team," attesting to the feasibility and viability of mining on the island.

Julie Morante, a mother of five children, and Mary-Ann Samares, a 40-year-old wife and mother from Barangay Hamorawon, are among the most vocal in the group of mothers in Manicani who gathered recently to talk about the economic condition in the island as news of the resumption of HMC-MNP's operations quickly spreads.

Julie is excited for Manicani and for the future of her whole family, but she says she will remain vigilant just like her sister.

"We have been paying attention; we have been watchers of the pros and cons of mining. We are pleased that it is Nickel Asia (NAC) that is handling the contract in Manicani, a company with a good track record. We trust NAC but we will be its watchdogs from the communities," said Julie.

HMC and CMC are subsidiaries of NAC. From their own data gathered from the communities, HMC-MNP's Engr. Manolito Javar, project manager, said the company has at least 89 percent trust rating and with the same percentage of residents supporting mining on the island.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/03/23/public-square/mothers-of-manicani-cry-for-jobs-vow-to-protect-the-island/1837242>



## Migration's role in mitigating the impacts of climate change

MARCH 22, 2022

Typhoon Odette (international name Rai) 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 Yolanda (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, 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 even national officials, the desire to recover and help one another in times of 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 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, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is working closely with the Philippine 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 Response 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 (OFWs) have been hailed



as *bagong bayani* (modern-day heroes). In 2019, remittances from OFWs reached a record high of \$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.

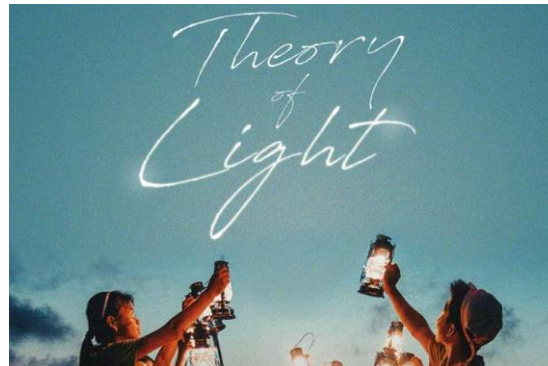
As the cost of the climate crisis is reaching irreversible heights, I depart the Philippines reflecting on the devastating impacts of Typhoon Odette and the future of the communities in the Philippines. While the “bayanihan” spirit gives me hope, we now need bold collective action to build the resilience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

*The author is the Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration.*



# Liter of Light Premieres Pioneering Filipino Global Environmental Film at EXPO2020

Monday, March 21, 2022 Journal Online



**DUBAI – *Liter of Light***, a Filipino-born global grassroots solar lighting movement, will premiere a pioneering environmental film at Expo 2020 during the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Climate Week. The documentary seeks to put a spotlight on the need to address social inequalities and for a call for more urgent and united action “to protect our people and future generations”; specially developing countries already experiencing adverse effects of the environment. The “**Theory of Light**” will receive its first public presentation at the world’s biggest show on March 27, in front of over 100 dignitaries and guests at the Opportunity Forum at the Expo 2020 Dubai.

The film premiere will be at the Opportunity Forum on **March 27, 2022 at 7:00pm**. It is a unique opportunity to share the impact of a Philippine innovation in building resilient communities with a broad audience that has convened in Dubai because of their commitment to sustainability. This project is supported by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) where the [Liter of Light](https://tinyurl.com/mryxvzec) is a Momentum for Change awardee (<https://tinyurl.com/mryxvzec>) and will feature interviews of Niclas Svenningsen, Manager, UN Global Climate Action.

Part historical chronicle, part environmental lesson, “**Theory of Light**” shows how *Liter of Light* is reinvigorating efforts to take action because of the increasing impact of climate change and inspiring new generations of innovators from the Global South to come up with ideas that will change the world.

The Philippines is one of the most climate vulnerable countries in the world. As part of the typhoon belt, the country expects 20 storms each year, but with the increase in global warming, 25% of these yearly storms are now classified as catastrophic. Just last December, a new Category 5 storm, Super Typhoon Rai, tore through the Philippines, killing more than 400 people and destroying hundreds of thousands of homes. It is only the latest in a series of super storms that pose an existential threat to the island nation’s heritage and way of life.

*“Most media coverage to date focuses on the receiving effects of the climate crisis,”* says Illac Diaz, Founder and Executive Director of Liter of Light. *“Filipinos are admired for our resilience, but rarely do stories focus on the innovative solutions that communities themselves have developed to take dramatic action. In fact, only 1% of all global expenses for filmmaking are spent on the environment, especially in the Philippines. With this documentary, we want to flip the script, and share stories of hope that inspire others to make a commitment to the planet.”*

In 2018, Liter of Light has been selected as one of the Global Innovators under [Expo Live](#), Expo 2020’s global innovation and partnership programme, and received funding for its grassroots work in the Philippines. The results of the Expo Live funded projects were recorded in a



documentary. This documentary would like to advance bold storytelling that centers the climate emergency through a climate justice lens. With a commitment to uplift perspectives of black, brown and indigenous communities, whose lives are already being impacted by climate change. But also to represent those who feel excluded for the climate movement and whose voices have not been represented in traditional climate storytelling.

The feature-length film is produced and distributed by TBA Studios (<https://www.tba.ph/film-catalogue/>), the two-time Philippine representative to the Academy Awards. Known for its critically-acclaimed and groundbreaking films, TBA Studios cemented their status as one of the top production companies in the Philippines with its big budget epics and major box office hits such as “General Luna” and “Goyo: The Boy General”.

*“TBA Studios has always been committed to bringing to life stories that inspire, educate, and entertain. ‘Theory of Light’ is the first Filipino global environmental film with a local narrative about the harsh realities of climate change. We hope that this project will touch people’s lives—the way it did ours—and continue to influence decision-makers around the world to create more sustainable and tangible solutions for all,”* shares TBA Studios CEO E. A. Rocha.

*“I believe in the power of collaboration and partnerships to elevate global sustainability. For our children’s children, the present generation must come together and adapt to the challenges of climate change. “Theory of Light” shows us that even the simplest folk can do their part and be an excellent example of resilience and disaster preparedness. We find shining beacons of light amid natural disasters,”* says Mr. Hans T. Sy, Chairman of the Executive Committee for SM Prime Holdings.

Development of “Theory of Light” was supported by a grant from SM Prime Holdings, Inc, one of the leading integrated property developers in Southeast Asia. Sustainability and Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience form part of SM Prime’s core business strategies, committed to its role as a catalyst for economic growth, delivering innovative and sustainable lifestyle cities. Filmmaker J.P. Gopez, whose works include documentaries for National Geographic and TBA Studios’ legacy docu-series “Habambuhay: Remembering 100 Years of Philippine Cinema”, helmed the project. It is also executive produced by Liter of Light founder Illac Diaz, SM Prime President Hans Sy, TBA Studios CEOs E.A. Rocha and Fernando Ortigas with TBA’s Executive Vice-President and General Manager Daphne Chiu and Film Development Manager Margie Navarro co-producing.



Source: <https://journal.com.ph/liter-of-light-premieres-pioneering-filipino-global-environmental-film-at-expo2020/>





# These were the best and worst places for air quality in 2021, new report shows

By Rachel Ramirez, CNN

Published Mar 23, 2022 12:59:49 AM



*Courtesy: Amal KS/Hindustan Times via Getty Images*

**(CNN)** — Air pollution spiked to unhealthy levels around the world in 2021, according to a new report.

The report by IQAir, a company that tracks global air quality, found that average annual air pollution in every country — and 97% of cities — exceeded the World Health Organization's air quality guidelines, which were designed to help governments craft regulations to protect public health.

Only 222 cities of the 6,475 analyzed had average air quality that met WHO's standard. Three territories were found to have met WHO guidelines: the French territory of New Caledonia and the United States territories of Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were among the countries with the worst air pollution, exceeding the guidelines by at least 10 times.

The Scandinavian countries, Australia, Canada, Japan and United Kingdom ranked among the best countries for air quality, with average levels that exceeded the guidelines by 1 to 2 times.

In the United States, IQAir found air pollution exceeded WHO guidelines by 2 to 3 times in 2021.

"This report underscores the need for governments around the world to help reduce global air pollution," Glory Dolphin Hammes, CEO of IQAir North America, told CNN. "(Fine particulate matter) kills far too many people every year and governments need to set more stringent air quality national standards and explore better foreign policies that promote better air quality."

Above: IQAir analyzed average annual air quality for more than 6,000 cities and categorized them from best air quality, in blue (Meets WHO PM2.5 guideline) to worst, in purple (Exceeds WHO PM2.5 guideline by over 10 times). An interactive map is available from IQAir.

It's the first major global air quality report based on WHO's new annual air pollution guidelines, which were updated in September 2021. The new guidelines halved the acceptable concentration of fine particulate matter — or PM 2.5 — from 10 down to 5 micrograms per cubic meter.



PM 2.5 is the tiniest pollutant yet also among the most dangerous. When inhaled, it travels deep into lung tissue where it can enter the bloodstream. It comes from sources like the burning of fossil fuels, dust storms and wildfires, and has been linked to a number of health threats including asthma, heart disease and other respiratory illnesses.

Millions of people die each year from air quality issues. In 2016, around 4.2 million premature deaths were associated with fine particulate matter, according to WHO. If the 2021 guidelines had been applied that year, WHO found there could have been nearly 3.3 million fewer pollution-related deaths.

IQAir analyzed pollution-monitoring stations in 6,475 cities across 117 countries, regions and territories.

In the US, air pollution spiked in 2021 compared to 2020. Out of the more than 2,400 US cities analyzed, Los Angeles air remained the most polluted, despite seeing a 6% decrease compared to 2020. Atlanta and Minneapolis saw significant increases in pollution, the report showed.

"The (United States') reliance on fossil fuels, increasing severity of wildfires as well as varying enforcement of the Clean Air Act from administration to administration have all added to U.S. air pollution," the authors wrote.

Researchers say the main sources of pollution in the US were fossil fuel-powered transportation, energy production and wildfires, which wreak havoc on the country's most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

"We are heavily dependent on fossil fuels, especially in terms of transportation," said Hammes, who lives a few miles from Los Angeles. "We can act smartly on this with zero emissions, but we're still not doing it. And this is having a devastating impact on the air pollution that we're seeing in major cities."

Climate change-fueled wildfires played a significant role in reducing air quality in the US in 2021. The authors pointed to a number of fires that led to hazardous air pollution — including the Caldor and Dixie fires in California, as well as the Bootleg Fire in Oregon, which wafted smoke all the way to the East Coast in July.

China — which is among the countries with the worst air pollution — showed improved air quality in 2021. More than half of the Chinese cities analyzed in the report saw lower levels of air pollution compared to the previous year. The capital city of Beijing continued a five-year trend of improved air quality, according to the report, due to a policy-driven drawdown of polluting industries in the city.

The report also found that the Amazon Rainforest, which had acted as the world's major defender against the climate crisis, emitted more carbon dioxide than it absorbed last year. Deforestation and wildfires have threatened the critical ecosystem, polluted the air and contributed to climate change.

"This is all a part of the formula that will lead to or is leading to global warming." Hammes said.

The report also unveiled some inequalities: Monitoring stations remain scant in some developing countries in Africa, South America and the Middle East, resulting in a dearth of air quality data in those regions.



"When you don't have that data, you're really in the dark," Hammes said.

Hammes noted the African country of Chad was included in the report for the first time, due to an improvement in its monitoring network. IQAir found the country's air pollution was the second-highest in the world last year, behind Bangladesh.

Tarik Benmarhnia, a climate change epidemiologist at Scripps Institution of Oceanography who has studied the health impact of wildfire smoke, also noted that relying only on monitoring stations can lead to blind spots in these reports.

"I think it is great that they relied on different networks and not only governmental sources," Benmarhnia, who was not involved in this report, told CNN. "However, many regions do not have enough stations and alternative techniques exist."

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded in its 2021 report that, in addition to slowing the speed of global warming, curbing the use of fossil fuels would have the added benefit of improving air quality and public health.

Hammes said the IQAir report is even more reason for the world to wean off fossil fuel.

"We've got the report, we can read it, we can internalize it and really devote ourselves to taking action," she said. "There needs to be a major move towards renewable energy. We need to take drastic action in order to reverse the tide of global warming; otherwise, the impact and the train that we're on (would be) irreversible."

*This story was first published on CNN.com, ["These were the best and worst places for air quality in 2021, new report shows."](#)*



# No country met WHO air quality standards in 2021 —data

By **Reuters** - March 22, 2022 - 12:22 PM



People play cricket on the floodplains of the Yamuna river on a smoggy morning in New Delhi, India, November 17, 2021.  
(Reuters/Anushree Fadnavis/File Photo)

SHANGHAI— Not a single country managed to meet the World Health Organization’s (WHO) air quality standard in 2021, a survey of pollution data in 6,475 cities showed on Tuesday, and smog even rebounded in some regions after a COVID-related dip.

The WHO recommends that average annual readings of small and hazardous airborne particles known as PM2.5 should be no more than 5 micrograms per cubic meter after changing its guidelines last year, saying that even low concentrations caused significant health risks.

But only 3.4% of the surveyed cities met the standard in 2021, according to [data](#) compiled by IQAir, a Swiss pollution technology company that monitors air quality. As many as 93 cities saw PM2.5 levels at 10 times the recommended level.

“There are a lot of countries that are making big strides in reduction,” said Christi Schroeder, air quality science manager with IQAir. “China started with some very big numbers and they are continuing to decrease over time. But there are also places in the world where it is getting significantly worse.”

India’s overall pollution levels worsened in 2021 and New Delhi remained the world’s most polluted capital, the data showed. Bangladesh was the most polluted country, also unchanged from the previous year, while Chad ranked second after the African country’s data was included for the first time.

China, which has been waging war on pollution since 2014, fell to 22nd in the PM2.5 rankings in 2021, down from 14th place a year earlier, with average readings improving slightly over the year to 32.6 micrograms, IQAir said.

Hotan in the northwestern region of Xinjiang was China’s worst performing city, with average PM2.5 readings of more than 100 micrograms, largely caused by sandstorms.

It fell to third on the list of the world’s most polluted cities after being overtaken by Bhiwadi and Ghaziabad, both in India.

—Reporting by David Stanway; Editing by Christian Schmollinger

Source: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/politics-issues/2022/03/22/213333/no-country-met-who-air-quality-standards-in-2021-data/>

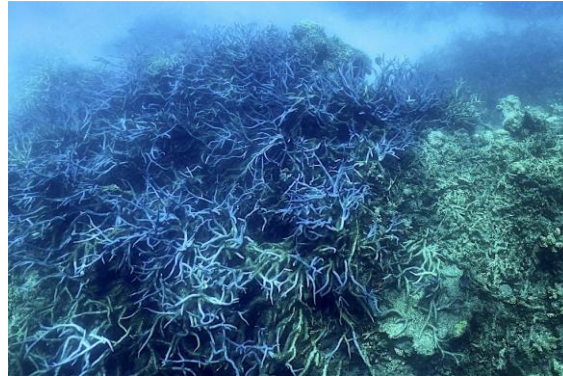


# UN weighs listing Great Barrier Reef as 'in danger'

Published March 22, 2022, 6:30 AM

by [Agence-France-Presse](#)

SYDNEY, Australia — 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.



This picture taken on March 7, 2022 shows the current condition of the coral on the Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of the Australian state of Queensland. The Great Barrier Reef has again been hit with “widespread” bleaching, authorities said on March 18, 2022, as higher-than-average ocean temperatures off Australia’s northeast threaten the already struggling World Heritage site. Glenn NICHOLLS / AFP

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://mb.com.ph/2022/03/22/un-weighs-listing-great-barrier-reef-as-in-danger/>

23 MARCH 2022, WEDNESDAY



# NEWS ALERTS

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



## DENR employees in 'Yolanda'-hit areas finally receive ₱42.2 million in cash aid

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jonlmayuga](#)

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to release ₱42.2 million as relief assistance to the agency's employees affected by Typhoon "Yolanda" (international code name Haiyan) almost a decade ago.

Yolanda struck on November 8, 2013, devastating Central Philippines.

To benefit from the cash assistance are DENR employees affected by the typhoon, particularly those who are living in the areas of Palawan, Eastern Visayas, and Western Visayas when Yolanda struck.

"This check speaks of the DENR's valued commitment to push tirelessly for the welfare and benefits of its hardworking workforce, however, long and challenging the waiting has been," DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna said in a news statement.

Sampulna also cited the tireless efforts of DENR field officials in securing financial help.

The DENR chief handed over the checks to senior field officials of DENR Regions 8, 6, and 4B worth ₱34.2 million, ₱7.2 million, and ₱760,000, respectively, during the flag-raising ceremony last Monday.

The acting DENR chief expressed his gratitude to President Duterte for the support to the agency's employees despite the government's limited budget and resources due to Covid-19 and global repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Sampulna said the cash assistance make up the second tranche of financial help from the Office of the President following the release of about ₱11 million in 2012 in response to a request made by DENR-Northern Mindanao officials for monetary aid for workers affected by Typhoon Sendong in December 2011.

DENR-Region 8 Executive Director Tirso Parian said the release of the cash aid "is as good a day as any, particularly for many of our co-workers who are still paying off loans for the reconstruction of their houses that were damaged by Typhoon Yolanda in 2013."

Eastern Visayas DENR Employees Union President Sonia Q. Mejido said 164 workers whose houses were completely damaged by the typhoon will receive ₱100,000 each, while 594 beneficiaries whose houses were partially damaged will get ₱30,000 each. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



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**ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMP** – Senator Cynthia Villar (center) receives a plaque of recognition as Environmental Champion from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) during the awarding ceremony of 'Gawad Taga-Ilog 2.0: Search for the most improved estero in Metro Manila' at the Park Inn Hotel in Quezon City on Tuesday, March 22, 2022. The affair coincided with the celebration of World Water Day. With Villar during the awarding ceremony are (from left) director Al Orolfo, Assistant Secretary Gilbert Gonzales, regional director Jacqueline Caangcan, Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna, provincial director Ignacio Almira Jr., and Undersecretary Benito Antonio De Leon. (Noel B. Pabalate)





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# Pagasa: Start conserving water now

By **Jordeene B. Lagare**  
and **Frances Mangosing**  
@Team\_Inquirer

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) will decide next week on the water allocation for Metro Manila, amid warnings by the state weather bureau of a possible water shortage in the next few months.

"The [NWRB] will finalize the allocation for April next week," the board's Executive Director Seville David Jr. told the Inquirer in a text message.

He said they were closely monitoring the water supply situation and will inform the public of any changes.

For now, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) continues to get 48 cubic meters per second, David said. The MWSS then distributes the water to its concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co.

David said this allocation varies according to the supply in Angat Dam, where Metro Manila and its nearby provinces get their water.

## Far from normal

But the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) on Tuesday warned that the water level at Angat Dam has been dropping.

In an online climate outlook forum, Pagasa hydrologist Richard Orendain said the water could decrease to less than the minimum operating standard of 180 meters above sea level (masl) by mid-May.

He said this was far from the "normal high water level" of 212 masl.

By the end of April, the supply could dip to 182 masl before it further drops to 173 to 175 masl, Orendain said.

He noted that there may not be enough rainfall to fill the dam by July, when the rainy season is supposed to have begun.

"There is a possibility of [a] water shortage. Angat supposedly recovers by July, while the southwest monsoon or rainy season is underway. But based on the forecast, below normal rainfall conditions are seen within the Angat watershed by then," Orendain said.

On Tuesday, the water was recorded at 192.94 masl, lower than 193.27 masl the previous day.

According to Orendain, "This is quite a huge drop. For the past few days it was an average of .15 to .20 centimeters a day, but today it was .33 centimeters."

## 'Start conserving'

Pagasa Administrator Vicente Malano also confirmed that "the water level [in Angat] is decreasing."

"Maybe we will notice less water pressure from our faucets. We need to start conserving water at this time," he suggested at the forum.

Malano said cloud seeding operations have been conducted in the Angat river basin area since Monday.

"This is one of our planned activities to reduce the declining water level," he added.

Angat Dam also provides the allocation for irrigation in farmlands in the provinces of Pampanga and Bulacan, where the dam is located.

## Responsible use

But irrigation is cut off when the supply falls below the minimum operating level.

Meanwhile, the two concessionaires as well as the NWRB have appealed to the public for its responsible use of water during the dry season.

Maynilad's corporate communications chief Jennifer Rufo said the company has "implemented supply augmentation projects to mitigate any shortage from [its] main source, including the activation of deep wells and construction of modular treatment plants..."

"In partnership with NWRB and MWSS, we are optimizing the available water supply so that we can still meet the needs of our customers while, at the same time, preserve the stored water in Angat Dam so it will last throughout summer," she added.

Jeric Sevilla Jr., head of Manila Water's Corporate Communication Affairs, said: "We continue to coordinate closely with MWSS and NWRB to ensure continuous supply during these summer months, and we are grateful to them for allowing us to implement additional/augmentation water sources such as the Cardona Water Treatment Plant, deep wells and Marikina Portable Water Treatment Plant." INQ



WEDNESDAY March 23, 2022

# Entertainment & Lifestyle

www.manilatimes.net



A rare sighting of an oceanic manta ray in Antique — a creature known to visit nutrient-rich waters that provide zooplankton — is the subject of the new documentary "Antique: Where the Mountains Meet the Sea." CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

## Antique's underwater beauty preems on Discovery Channel

BY CHRISTINA ALPAD

ANTIQUE may not be the first province that comes to mind when one thinks of Western Visayas. With the world-famous Boracay Island in Aklan, culinary hotspot Iloilo and the Mango Capital of the Philippines, Guimaras, among its nearest and more popular neighbors, Antique is often and mistakenly overlooked as a worthwhile destination for local and international tourists.

In truth, this underrated province has so much more to offer, which a new documentary set to premiere tonight on Discovery Channel hopes to prove. Brace yourselves and be awed by one of Antique's natural charms — its rich marine biodiversity. "Antique is a paradise where the mountains meet the sea. It is a province that may have been in the doldrums for three decades but is now experiencing [its] Golden Age," said Loren Legarda, Deputy Speaker and Representative of the Lone District of Antique.

One of the testaments of the province's rich biodiversity is the inclusion of two legislated protect-

ed areas in the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) — a landmark marine protection and conservation law that Legarda authored — namely, Northwest Panay Peninsula Natural Park and Sibalom Natural Park.

Harnessing this treasure, Legarda put efforts in discovering, documenting and protecting Antique's rich marine biodiversity.

Besides authoring bills for the province's marine protection — such as the establishment of a multi-species marine hatchery in Tibiao and the Northern Antique Protected Seascape and Landscape — Legarda also allocated budget



Antique Representative Loren Legarda hopes that in highlighting the province's rich marine biodiversity, the documentary will attract more local and international tourists to come and visit.

under the Department of Tourism (DOT) that was implemented by the local government of Antique and the DOT regional office.

With this initiative, the documentary "Antique: Where the Mountains Meet the Sea" was born.

In early 2021, Studio H2O organized an expedition team composed of marine researchers, scientists, and underwater cinema-

toographers. Aside from conducting a scientific survey of the reefs in Antique — particularly around the coastal areas of Pandan Bay and Libertad — the project also held a free diving workshop for fisherfolk with the intention of teaching them how to survey, protect and do an inventory of their own marine areas.

"Part of the survey is to have

the local people learn the method so they can continue on with the monitoring, or at least be interested in learning more about it," shared Tara Abrina, one of the team's researchers and free diving instructors. "The objective of the project was really for tourism, to see where people can go to dive, where guests can stay, and what might be interesting underwater."

And interesting they indeed found. During the survey, the team had a rare sighting of an oceanic manta ray, a creature known to visit nutrient-rich waters that provide zooplankton. The oceanic manta ray is famous for its majestic form that could reach up to twenty-three feet across.

"The discovery and sighting of the existence of the manta ray in our waters is so important because it shows they thrive in a healthy marine ecosystem," Legarda proudly noted.

"And the manta ray, of course, must be protected at all costs, especially because it is identified as possibly threatened for extinction," Legarda said, adding that the oceanic manta ray sighting can draw in more visitors and

open up more possibilities for the province's ecotourism.

The rare sighting affirmed Legarda's belief that the tedious task of survey and documentation is crucial in educating the public about the all-important work of protecting the environment.

"How can we protect something we don't know exists and so documenting all of this — taking photos and video without destroying their habitats — is very important," Legarda ended.

The underwater beauty of the province, as well as the true heart of the Antiqueños, are all captured in "Antique: Where the Mountains Meet the Sea," which is produced by Studio H2O through the Office of Deputy Speaker Legarda, the Department of Tourism in partnership with the Province of Antique.

The 20-minute documentary will air on Discovery Channel tonight, March 23, 6:15 p.m. with replays on March 24 at 8:15 a.m. and 11:25 a.m. Discovery Channel is available in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and India.



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## ANAK NG TETENG! NI BONG REVILLA

## PROBLEMA SA MGA PLASTIK MULA NOON HANGGANG NGAYON

NOONG nakaraang Miyerkules ay muling itinuloy ang ikalimang session ng United Nations (UN) Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) na dinaluhan ng mga delegado na sama-samang nagbuuo ng isang global treaty upang tuluyan nang wakasan ang plastic pollution sa taong 2024 sa buong mundo.

Mahigit sa 3,400 katao ang dumalo at nasa 1,500 naman ang virtual participants mula sa 175 UN member states sa isinagawang global environment forum sa loob ng magkakasunod na tatlong araw upang pandayin kung paano masusugpo ang problema pa rin sa paggamit ng plastic.

Sa ating bansa ay umiiral na ang Single-use Plastic Products Regulation Act kung saan ay napaulat na ang Philippine House of Representatives ay unanimous ang boto noong Hulyo 28, 2021 na nagbabawal na sa production, import at pagbebenta ng single-use food packaging products.

At halos lahat ng siyudad at munisipalidad sa bansa ay nagpasa na rin ng kani-kaniyang ordinansa hinggil sa pagbabawal na nang paggamit ng plastic bag at iba pang plastic product ngunit hanggang ngayon ay hindi pa rin ito siyento porsiyentong naipatutupad.

May mga kilalang shopping mall at iba pang malalaking pamilihan ang hindi na talaga gumagamit ng plastic bag at ang iba ay nag-aalok pa ng eco-bag ngunit marami pa rin ang hanggang ngayon ay plastic bag pa rin ang ginagamit.

May ilan namang pamilihan na kapag nag-request ka ng plastic bag ay pababayaran ito dahil ang kita umano rito ay napupunta sa karagdang panggastos sa paglilinis ng mga baradong kanal dulot ng plastic ngunit marami rin naman ang papel na supot na talaga ang ginagamit.

Ngunit sa mga palengke ay lantaran pa rin ang paggamit ng plastic at hindi alintana ng marami sa ating kababayan ang umiiral na batas hinggil dito dahil tila napakahirap nang baguhin ang nakasanayang paggamit ng plastic sa pagbili ng isda, karne o kahit gulay.

Ang resulta, bagama't naibsan nang bahagya ang tone-toneladang basura ng plastic na nahahakot sa mga imburnal ay hindi pa rin maitatangi na gabundok pa ring basura mula sa itinapong plastic bag at iba pang plastic product ang nagiging sanhi ng pagbaha.

Matinding problema pa rin sa kasalukuyan ang plastic management para sa single-use plastic dahil sa hindi ito nabubulok o kusang natutunaw na labis na nakaaapekto sa ating ecosystems.

Hanggang ngayon, ang Pilipinas ay nakakaipon ng

1.01 milyong metric tons ng mismanaged na plastic kada taon at ang mga plastic na gawa sa fossil fuels ay naglalabas ng greenhouse gases mula sa produksiyon hanggang sa disposal.

Napakadali kasing sabihin na ipagbawal pero wala naman tayong alternatibong paraan kung paano bibigyan ng solusyon ang problema ng mga namimili sa palengke at sa mga nagtitinda o kung meron mang naisip tulad ng pagdadala ng bayong o basket ay dapat na paigtingin ang pagpapatupad.

Sabagay ang Pilipinas ay hindi na ang ikatlong pinakamalaking contributor ng marine plastics sa buong mundo dahil nasa panglimang spot na tayo kasunod ng mga bansang Indonesia, India, United States, Thailand at Brazil.

Ibig sabihin, sa kabila ng umiiral na batas at kabilang paalala ay hindi tayo nawawala sa Top 10 list na nagbibigay perhuwisyo sa milyun-milyong tonelada ng mismanaged plastics na nagkalat na hanggang sa iba't ibang bahagi na ng karagatan.

Dalawampung porsyento ng plastics sa marine environment ay nanggagaling sa mga barko tulad ng tourism cruise lines at fishing vessels ngunit 80 porsyento ay nanggagaling mismo sa iba't ibang bahagi ng malawak na lupain ng bansa.

Nasa 65 porsyento sa mga basurang ito ay mula sa mga illegal dumpsites at ang natitirang 35 porsyento ay mula sa mga sanitary landfills, hindi pa kabilang dito ang tinatawag na mismanaged plastics.

Ang nakapagtataka, ang paggamit ng single-use plastic ay patuloy pa rin ang pagtaas sa kabila ng pagpapatupad ng plastic ban ng mga lokal na pamahalaan at hindi 'yan maitatangi ng tone-toneladang plastic na patuloy din sa pagdami hanggang ngayon.

Wala akong tutukuying lugar kung sino ang mas marami ang kontribusyon sa pagkakat ng plastic, pero may inilabas na listahan hinggil dito ngunit nais kong bigyang pansin na halos lahat naman ay nagpabaya maliban lamang sa ibang lugar na hindi gaano ngunit nagpabaya pa rin.

Sa mga bahagi ng karagatan na marami pa ang mangroves ay malaking bagay ito dahil nagsisilbi itong natural filtering mechanism para pigilan ang pagkalat ng itinapong plastic patungo sa gitna ng karagatan.

Marami ng karagatan sa bansa ang nagsilayo na ang mga isda na labis na nagpapahirap sa mga mangingisda dahil wala na silang mahuli dahil sa labis nating pagkakat ng plastic at maging ang mga ibon ay nangamamatay na rin.

Kaya sa kapaligiran man o sa pag-uugali ay bawal dapat ang plastic!

**Anak Ng Teteng!**



## Recycle defective ballots – EcoWaste

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

**DO not burn the defective ballots, instead recycle them.**

This was the appeal of the waste and pollution watchdog group EcoWaste Coalition to the Commission on Elections (Comelec) saying that burning the 105,853 defective ballots for the May 9 polls will only add to air pollution.

The group through its zero waste campaigner Jove Benosa appealed after the Comelec through Commissioner George Garcia told the House Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms on Monday that "these defective ballots will be presented to the public, accounted for individually with proper data, and burned in front of all the political parties, the candidates and their representatives."

"We appeal to our poll authorities to reconsider their plan to burn the defec-

tive ballots, which can be safely recycled instead," Benosa said.

Instead of burning the flawed ballots, the group requested the Comelec to have them shredded or simply kept in a secure place for recycling after the polls.

"The Comelec can borrow shredding machines from government offices and pay a team of informal waste workers for the job of cutting the defective ballots into strips," Benosa suggested.

"Alternatively, Comelec can store the defective ballots in a secure warehouse, lock them up and have them collected for recycling after the polls," he said.

Benosa explained that the election stakeholders will surely support a non-polluting way of dealing with the faulty ballots while conserving paper, a valuable resource that comes from trees.

He further stressed that burning the flawed ballots will not only turn recyclable paper into ash but also gen-

erate health-damaging pollutants.

Benosa warned that regardless of the method used – whether the substandard ballots are burned in the open or an incinerator – burning paper will produce smoke and ash, create fine particles, and emit numerous pollutants of concern, including greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) like dioxins.

Open burning is banned under Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, while incineration of municipal, biomedical and hazardous waste, which process emits poisonous and toxic fumes, is prohibited under Republic Act 8749, or the Clean Air Act (paper waste is classified as municipal waste).

"Burning paper waste when the same can be recycled is not an environmentally sound option at all in the face of the global climate crisis," Benosa added.



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# PCG's 'SCUBAsurero' keeps ocean clean

By **DENNIS  
ABRINA**

**CAVITE CITY** – Elements of Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) conducts an underwater clean-up drive, Saturday, March 19, 2022, in the vicinity of the historic Corregidor Island here.

A total of 85 sacks of garbage were collected during the underwater clean-up drive dubbed as "SCU-

BA surero" at the vicinity waters of Corregidor.

The Corregidor Island administrators facilitated the proper disposal of the collected underwater waste materials.

Other units that supported the said marine environmental protection initiative are Coast Guard District NCR-Central Luzon, Coast Guard Special Operation Unit-Cavite, Coast Guard Special Oper-

ation Unit-Malacañang, Coast Guard Special Operation Unit-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.

Moreover, the 107th, 108th, 110th, and 125th PCG Auxiliary Squadrons participated in the said



Photo courtesy of  
Philippine Coast Guard

community service initiative.



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## PCG conducts 'SCUBAsurero' drive in Corregidor island

CAVITE CITY – Members of the Philippine Coast Guard on Saturday conducted an underwater clean-up drive at the vicinity of Corregidor Island in this city.

A total of 85 sacks of garbage were collected during the underwater clean-up drive dubbed "SCUBAsurero."

The Corregidor Island administrator facilitated the proper disposal of the collected waste materials.

Other units that supported the marine environmental protection initiative included Coast Guard District NCR-Central Luzon, Coast Guard Special Operation Unit-Cavite, Coast Guard Special Operation Unit-Malacañang, Coast Guard Special Operation Unit-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 said community service initiative.

Dennis Abrina



SCUBASURERO. A Philippine Coast Guard member removes the trash from the ocean's bed in Corregidor Island.

Photo courtesy of PCG



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## Migration's role in mitigating the impacts of climate change

By AMY E. POPE

**T**YPHOON Odette (international name Rai) 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 Yolanda (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, 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 even national officials, the desire to recover and help one another in times of 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 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 fail-

ure 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, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is working closely with the Philip-

pine 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 Response 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

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.

*The author is the Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration.*

### Migration...

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Filipino workers (OFWs) have been hailed as *bagong bayani* (modern-day heroes). In 2019, remittances from OFWs reached a record high of \$33.9 billion, equivalent to nearly 10 per-

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 Odette and the future of the communities in the Philippines. While the "bayanihan" spirit gives

SEE "MIGRATION," A11



## Women and man-made disasters

Last semester, at a human science college I'm now running, I instituted a course called "Climate Justice and Gender Equity," looking at how the climate emergency has more adverse effects on women than on men.

Formulating the course and listening to my fellow faculty in the teaching team has made me alert to getting information about the inequities. Just yesterday, I got some data that was so disturbing:

An article in The Economist's climate newsletter (3/21/22) said there were 40 percent more females who died than males in Tacloban City due to Supertyphoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan) in 2013. Another report, from the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, said that of the 6,300 total deaths in Samar and Leyte, 64 percent were female.



**PINOY KASI**

MICHAEL L. TAN

Across all human societies, females live longer than males. It seems nature "favors" females, ensuring greater chances of survival through physical (e.g., more fat reserves in the body), as well as physiological advantages, with the "female" hormone estrogen playing an important role. (The quotation marks are there because men do produce estrogen, too, but at far lower levels than women.) Besides regulating reproduction, estrogen has a protective antioxidant role, ensuring healthy cell function.

But why this favoritism?

In a Time article in 2019, neuropsychiatrist Dr. Perminder Sachdev of the University of New South Wales in Australia, brutally comments: "Once children are born, men are disposable. But the robust body of the mother is important for the survival of the offspring" (read humanity).

Among humans, higher male mortality comes from social behavior as well, men tending to have unhealthier lifestyles—eating too much, drinking too much, not adhering to medical advice, and engaging more in risky activities from smoking to getting into fights ... and wars.

We know of the terrible toll of war, more men sent off to kill and be killed, but the women left behind face risks too as they defend home and hearth, caring for the elderly, the children, the disabled.

We see how the natural advantage women have over men can be so easily upset by "man-made" factors in disasters, whether "natural" or "human."

Let's return to The Economist article, which notes that in many Asian cultures, women are not taught to swim and are therefore less likely to survive a flood or storm surge.

I agree with that observation, having seen students, including those who live in coastal areas or by riverbanks, who have never been taught how to swim. The rural poor seem less likely to get swimming lessons. That includes males, but females are even less likely to be taught for several reasons, including male chauvinist norms, from beliefs that women shouldn't even go out to the sea because they bring misfortune to fishing vessels, to our puritan standards about women in bathing suits, notwithstanding all those beauty pageants.





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PHILIPPINE DAILY  
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Other reports on gender inequity and disasters note that women will sacrifice themselves, in favor of husbands and sons, for scarce food supplies. Another aspect of gender inequity is the relief centers being perceived as unfriendly for women, where they are more prone to sexual harassment and even rape. The deterrent measures are simple: provide separate facilities for women and girls only, the entire residential spaces if possible and, if not, at least some of the toilets.

The climate emergency (the preferred term now, rather than just climate change or climate warming, with other media outlets now even using "climate catastrophe") will mean many more "natural" disasters. This makes it more urgent to find ways to mitigate the disasters' impact, including being aware of the disadvantages faced by women and girls, even for something that seems to be as trivial as swimming lessons.

As for the truly man-made disasters like war, let's think again about which men create the disasters. All too often, the men sent out to the frontlines as cannon fodder do so unwillingly deployed by their largely male war freak leaders, far away from harm's way.

For each male killed, there will be many more women—mothers, caregivers, health care frontliners, and community leaders—who will have to grieve and comfort even as they take up more burdens to keep families and societies afloat, new man-made disasters looming in the horizon.

[mtan@inquirer.com.ph](mailto:mtan@inquirer.com.ph)



## Migration must be built into climate change mitigation measures

BY AMY E. POPE

**T**YPHOON "Rai," locally known as "Odette," smashed into 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" ("Yolanda") 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 were 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 a time of crisis was 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 to climate change despite being one of the smallest contributors to CO2 emissions. More than 60 percent of the Philippine population reside in coastal areas and will be forced to move with a 1-meter sea-level 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 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 Philippine government and communities on planned relocation and transitional sites in typhoon affected areas. Through the generous support from donors such as the USAid, Australia, Japan, Canada, the 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 \$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 homes 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.

*Amy E. Pope is the deputy director general of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).*



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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

FILINVEST LAND, INC.,  
Applicant.

Case No. 22-3239

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**SECOND NOTICE OF HEARING**

Applicant, an authorized operator of the waterworks system within Park Springs, The Glens at Park Spring and Summerfield Subdivisions, Barangay San Antonio, city of San Pedro, province of Laguna, applies for the renewal of Certificate of Public Convenience.

Notice is hereby given that this application will be initially heard by the Board on **25 April 2022**, 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 the province of **Laguna** and send by personal delivery or registered mail a copy of (i) the 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 affected party to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a waiver of their right to be heard and 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 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March 2022.

By Authority of the Board:

  
**Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, JR. CESO III**  
Executive Director

23 MARCH 2022, WEDNESDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **COVID-19 NEWS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# COVID-19 positivity rate sa Pilipinas, bahagyang tumaas – OCTA

By Angellic Jordan March 22, 2022 - 03:39 PM



## Philippines Positivity Rate Up Slightly to 2.5%



The Philippines had a 7-day average of 491 new cases from March 15 to 21, 2022, a decrease of 14% compared to the previous week's 7-day average of 569. Meanwhile, the positivity rate as of March 20 increased slightly to 2.5%, from 2.4% the previous week. The reproduction number as of March 18 was 0.29, up slightly from 0.23 on March 11. Other sources of analytics indicate a reproduction number of 1.2 in the Philippines. However, the figure on new cases (see above) shows a flat, slightly downward trend but not an increasing one. Overall, the Philippines remained under VERY LOW RISK but we will continue to monitor possible changes in the trends. Let us continue to follow minimum health protocols. Dr Guido David [Twitter: iamguidodavid].

Bahagyang tumaas ang COVID-19 positivity rate sa Pilipinas, ayon sa OCTA Research.

Ayon kay OCTA Research fellow Dr. Guido David, nasa 2.5 porsyento ang positivity rate sa bansa hanggang March 20.

Mas mataas kumpara sa 2.4 porsyentong positivity rate noong nakaraang linggo.

Mula sa 0.23 noong March 11, tumaas din sa 0.29 ang reproduction number hanggang March 18.

“However, the figure on new cases shows a flat, slightly downward trend but not an increasing one,” ani David.

Nananatili pa rin ang Pilipinas sa ‘very low risk’ classification sa nakahahawang sakit, at ipagpapatuloy pa rin aniya ang pagtutok sa posibleng pagbabago sa trends.

Payo ni David, ituloy pa rin ang pagtalima sa minimum health protocols.



# DOH seeks FDA approval for 4th COVID-19 shot for elderly, immunocompromised

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) - Philstar.com March 22, 2022 | 5:31pm



A senior citizen receives a COVID-19 jab at Pinyahan Elementary School in Quezon city during the continuation of inoculation of Sinovac vaccine on April 14, 2021. The

The STAR / Michael Varcas

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health has filed for Food and Drug Administration clearance of a fourth COVID-19 vaccine dose for the elderly and immunocompromised, an official said Tuesday.

“The DOH has already submitted an application to the FDA for the amendment of emergency use authorization [of COVID-19 vaccines to allow] fourth doses,” Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said partly in Filipino during a briefing.

“So we will wait for the decision of FDA on this and after that, we will discuss for the possible implementation,” she added.

The government’s vaccine expert panel earlier recommended giving a second COVID-19 booster shot to senior citizens and immunocompromised individuals. The elderly and people with comorbidities are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Currently, the EUA of COVID-19 jabs in the country allows only the administration of primary shots and booster doses.

Over 65.2 million Filipinos have completed vaccination against COVID-19. Meanwhile, more than 11.6 million people have received boosters.



# Pagsuot ng face mask tuloy pa rin - Duterte

[Gemma Garcia](#) - Pang-masa March 23, 2022 | 12:00am



Ito ang sinabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa Talk of the People, dahil sa matagal pa ang pandemic at may mga ulat na may bagong COVID-19 variant sa Israel kaya posibleng makapasok din ito sa bansa.

The STAR / Edd Gumban, file

MANILA, Philippines — Sa kabila ng patuloy na pagbaba ng COVID-19 case sa bansa ay mananatili pa rin ng pagsusuot ng facemask.

Ito ang sinabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa Talk of the People, dahil sa matagal pa ang pandemic at may mga ulat na may bagong COVID-19 variant sa Israel kaya posibleng makapasok din ito sa bansa.

Kaya't nakikiusap si Duterte na huwag munang galawin ang Bayanihan law dahil nakalaan ito para tugunan ang nakaambang COVID-19 surges.

Nilinaw pa ng Pangulo na hindi pa siya handa na bawiin ang pagsusuot ng face masks lalo na sa mga saradong pampublikong lugar.

Bagama't mas mababa na ang bilang ng kaso ngayon ng nasabing virus sa buong bansa dahil nakakatulong umano ang pagsusuot ng face mask para mapigilan ang hawahan.

Nauna nang sinabi ng Department of Health (DOH) na kabilang sa health measures na itinakda ng gobyerno para pigilan ang pagkalat ng virus ay ang paggamit ng face mask.

23 MARCH 2022, WEDNESDAY



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# **NEWS ALERTS**

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Please click this link:

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
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
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