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DENR

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[DENR cites biodiversity conservation as great foundation to build back better](#)

MAY 27, 2021, 5:08 PM

Santiago Celario

Writer

The destruction and conversion of natural habitats, including illegal wildlife hunting and trade bring communities into increased contact with wildlife and increases the risk of disease spillover to humans, according to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reiterated its call to protect wildlife habitats and properly manage the country's protected areas as it celebrated the International Day of Biological Diversity (IDBD) last May 21.

"The DENR's marching order is the restoration and protection of wildlife habitats and ecosystems through area-based conservation measures, and the management of the country's protected areas, including caves and wetlands to bring back stability to natural environments," said DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu in his speech, which was read by Undersecretary for Special Concerns and Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) OIC Edilberto Leonardo.

"This includes the strict enforcement of wildlife regulation to ensure that wildlife trade is sustainable, legal, and safe," he added.

Cimatu highlighted the "immense" benefits that humans gain from nature and their responsibility to take part in the solution to address the source of biodiversity loss.

"Biodiversity provides us with ecosystem services which range from basic necessities such as food and water to purifying the air we breathe, pollination, natural protection from natural disasters, recreational activities, natural healing from our ailments, and provision of livelihood," he explained.

He also echoed this year's IDBD theme, "We're part of the solution," highlighting the importance of actions from all sectors of society in addressing the source of biodiversity loss while emphasizing that biodiversity conservation is the answer to several sustainable development challenges.

Amid the global Covid-19 pandemic, the DENR chief also emphasized that the pandemic is "a wake-up call with critical realization of the damage of human activities has done to nature."

Cimatu said that destruction and conversion of natural habitats, including illegal wildlife hunting and trade bring communities into increased contact with wildlife and increases the risk of disease spillover to humans.



Moreover, he emphasized that biodiversity is not limited to rural areas, as cities can also serve as "cradles of biodiversity."

"We need to bring back biodiversity in urban settlements to regain nature and ecosystem services by incorporating green spaces in public and private places, rehabilitating river systems, and adopting green infrastructures," Cimatú said.

(SC)



DENR tinukoy ang biodiversity conservation bilang mainam na saligan “to build back better”



May 27, 2021 @ 5:08 PM 15 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Bilang pagdiriwang ngayong taon ng International Day of Biological Diversity (IDBD) muling nagpaalala ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) noong Biyernes, Mayo 21 na protektahan ang wildlife habitats at ayusin ang pamamahala sa protected areas ng bansa upang maibalik ang biodiversity ng mga ito.

“The DENR’s marching order is the restoration and protection of wildlife habitats and ecosystems through area-based conservation measures, and the management of the country’s protected areas, including caves and wetlands to bring back stability to natural environments,” ayon sa mensahe ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na binasa ni Undersecretary for Special Concerns at Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) OIC Edilberto D. Leonardo.

“This includes the strict enforcement of wildlife regulation to ensure that wildlife trade is sustainable, legal and safe,” dagdag pa nito.

Ayon pa sa DENR chief na napakalawak ng benepisyong nakukuha ng tao sa kalikasan at nararapat lamang na maging responsable para mabigyan ng solusyon ang pagkaubos ng biodiversity.

“Biodiversity provides us with ecosystem services which range from basic necessities such as food and water to purifying the air we breathe, pollination, natural protection from natural disasters, recreational activities, natural healing from our ailments and provision of livelihood,” paliwanag pa ni Cimatu.

Muli nitong binanggit ang IDBD theme na “We’re part of the solution,” na nagpapaalala ng kahalagahan ng aksyon mula sa lahat ng sektor ng lipunan upang mabigyan ng solusyon ang pinagmumulan ng pagkaubos ng biodiversity habang binibigyang halaga na ang biodiversity conservation ang sagot para sa maraming “sustainable development challenges.”

Kaugnay nito habang patuloy rin ang pagkalat ng coronavirus disease sa buong mundo, binigyan-diin ng DENR chief na ang pandemic ay “a wake-up call with critical realization of the damage human activities has done to nature.”

Sinabi pa ni Cimatu, ang pagsira at konbersyon ng natural habitats kabilang na rito ang illegal wildlife hunting at trade ay nagdaragdag contact ng komunidad sa wildlife na maaaring maging dahilan nang pagsalin ng mga sakit sa tao.

Bukod dito, binigyang-diin ng kalihim na ang biodiversity ay hindi lamang limitado sa rural areas dahil maging ang mga lungsod ay maaari ring maging “cradles of biodiversity.”



“We need to bring back biodiversity in urban settlements to regain nature and ecosystem services by incorporating green spaces in public and private places, rehabilitating river systems and adopting green infrastructures,” saad ni Cimatú.

Kinilala rin ng DENR ang mga nanalo sa BiodiverCity photo contest kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng IDBD noong Biyernes.

Ang patimpalak na ito ay ginawa upang ipagdiwang ang urban biodiversity at ang benepisyo nito sa kapaligiran at komunidad. **Santi Celario**



DENR enhanced ecosystems project gains \$150m fund through USAID

posted May 27, 2021 at 03:16 pm

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is carrying out a \$150 million P7.25 billion) project for enhanced ecosystems through a bilateral assistance fund from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



As the United States government marks this year its 75th year of bilateral relations with the Philippines, it has further committed to a project to help the country in sustainable development.

The bilateral assistance agreement was signed last February by the Philippines National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and USAID.

“The agreement aims to protect ecosystems, promote the sustainable use of natural resources, and build the capacity of people, communities and institutions to withstand, cope and recover from shocks and stresses so that people and ecosystems thrive,” said Sean Callahan, Acting Mission Director of USAID.

Two of the projects covered by the bilateral agreement are SIBOL and Safe Water Project (SWP). SIBOL or Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes is a five-year, P1.1 billion (\$22 million) project.

The project supports DENR in improving natural resource governance, stimulating public and private sector investments in conservation, and reducing environmental crime, leading to greater ecosystem stability and inclusive green growth. The project also includes provision for communities’ access to clean water and sanitation services.

SIBOL works with the Biodiversity Management Bureau, Forest Management Bureau, and DENR’s field offices in Central Luzon (Region 3), Southern Luzon (Region 4B) and the CARAGA Administrative Region (Region 13).

SIBOL’s implementation is led by RTI International, a U.S.-based non-profit organization. It has three decades of experience providing technical assistance, institutional strengthening, programmatic support, and research in a variety of sectors in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, SWP is a five-year worth P870 million (\$18.4 million). It works to improve water security for vulnerable and underserved communities.

Working with both the national and local governments, SWP supports initiatives to increase access to resilient water supply and sanitation services. It aims to improve the sustainable management of water resources that enable long-term water provisioning.

Part of SWP’s mandate is to strengthen the governance and regulation of the water sector.



SWP's implementation is coordinated with NEDA and with multiple sections of the DENR. These include the Forest Management Bureau, DENR field offices in Southern Luzon (Region 4B), Western Visayas (Region 6), and SOCCSKSARGEN. It also works with the National Water Resources Board.

The project is being implemented by the DAI Global LLC which carries a long history of working in the Philippine water sector.

SWP is also coordinated with local organizations, Orient Integrated Development Consultants, Inc. (OIDCI), Lutheran World Relief, Inc. (LWR), CEST, Inc., Geosciences Foundation Inc., and the Manila Observatory.

"The long history of the partnership between DENR and USAID has been fruitful. We have achieved much in creating a more secure environment that sustains both ecological integrity and human development," said Sean Callahan, Acting Mission Director of USAID.

"It has led to the improved management of protected areas and strengthened environmental law enforcement. It has increased public awareness about the challenges of wildlife trafficking and improved water security through integrated watershed management, among others," Callahan said.

"As USAID and the Philippines mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations this year, I am truly optimistic that these memoranda of understanding will help us achieve many more milestones together as we work toward our shared goal of inclusive and resilient growth for all Filipinos," he added.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu looks forward to the partnership.

"We always welcome effective collaboration to continue the advancement and sustainability of how we protect our ecosystem and natural resources," he said.

"USAID has always been a consistent and effective ally for the DENR for the past years. They have supported us for years in creating sustainable models which guided us in increasing and strengthening our policies for the management of our ecosystems. That is why we are looking forward to more meaningful years with USAID in advancing our shared goals of environmental sustainability and improving the lives of the Filipino communities."

Since 2014, USAID has provided more than P5 billion (\$100 million) in assistance to the Philippine government in conserving the country's biodiversity and protecting its landscapes and seascapes.



DENR gets 'Oscar nomination' for anti-lead policy on paints

Published May 27, 2021, 7:07 PM

by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has just received the equivalent of an “Oscar nomination” when it comes to environmental sustainability policies.



(Photo from the EcoWaste Coalition)

This, after one of the agency’s policies was shortlisted from a total of 55 nominated policies from 36 countries by the World Future Council (WFC) for its Future Policy Award 2021 (FPA 2021).

Dubbed as the “Oscar on best policies,” the FPA is the first and only award that celebrates policies for the benefit of present and future generations on an international level. This year’s FPA puts the spotlight on the most effective policy solutions that minimize the adverse effects of exposure to chemicals on human health and the environment.

Among the shortlisted policies is DENR Administrative Order 2013-24, also known as the Chemical Control Order for Lead and Lead Compounds (CCO), which bans the use of lead in the production of paints and other processes, including the manufacture of toys, school supplies, cosmetics, and food contact packaging materials.

The CCO imposes a total maximum lead content of 90 parts per million (ppm) for all paints and sets a phase out period for lead-containing architectural, household and decorative paints (2013 to 2016) and lead-containing industrial paints (2013 to 2019).

“We are deeply honored to have been nominated and subsequently shortlisted for the FPA 2021 as the global award recognizes a groundbreaking policy that our government had promulgated with vigorous support from our paint industry and civil society partners to protect vulnerable populations, particularly children, women and workers, from the harmful effects of lead exposure,” said Juan Miguel Cuna, DENR Undersecretary for Field Operations and Environment.

Cuna was the director of the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) when the CCO was being deliberated on. There are only 11 other policies on the WFC short list for FPA 2021.

“With the CCO, the Philippines became the first Southeast Asian country to successfully implement legislation towards lead-safe paint. The policy’s objective is to increase awareness of the toxicity of lead exposure and to provide safer alternatives to protect the health of the population and the environment,” the WFC said.



“While globally only a few countries have enacted comprehensive bans on the use of lead additives in all paints, the Philippines demonstrate that it is entirely possible to restrict the use of lead in all paints to the maximum limit of 90 ppm, including in industrial paints, which generally have lead concentrations that are up to 10 times higher,” it added.

“By 2020, the local industry had beaten the phase-out deadline for lead paints with a total of 1,395 paint products certified through the new Lead Safe Paint® Certification programme,” the council further said.

For his part, Derrick Tan, president of the Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers (PAPM) described the COO’s shortlisting “as a high point in the industry-wide transition to lead-safe paint production made possible by the promulgation of a mandatory policy that was developed with the participation of paint manufacturers, raw materials suppliers, environmental health activists and government regulators”.

He said local paint makers have now switched to non-lead ingredients for pigments, driers and rust inhibitors, indicating the doability and viability of making the shift.

The winning policies will be revealed in a virtual award ceremony on July 6, 2021.



19K solid wastes from rivers collected

The trash-trapping initiative reduced the volume of plastic wastes going into rivers and as it prevented single-used plastics, candy wrappers, containers and other pollutants from entering waterways.

BY MAR T. SUPNAD

BATAAN – The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) here collected 19,000 sacks of wastes along the rivers here as it continues its coastal clean-up program.

PENRO-Bataan's Raul H. Mamac said that the collected wastes – weighing more than four tons – were collected by their personnel from January to 13 May 2021.

Meantime, a total 124 tons of solid wastes were also collected from 125 floating trash traps installed in critical water bodies in Bataan, Bulacan and Pampanga by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The DENR regional office said that these floating trashes were strategically installed in rivers and streams to reduce the volume of solid wastes directly flowing to the greater portion of the Manila Bay.

DENR Regional executive director Paquito Moreno Jr. said that the agency has also installed the recyclable trash traps which reduced the volume of plastic wastes going into rivers and as it prevented single-used plastics, candy wrappers, containers and other pollutants from entering waterways.

The DENR has also assured the public that waste management efforts of putting up trash traps in local waterways will not hamper the movement of fishes and other aquatic species and instead protect physical habitats and coastal and marine ecosystems from being polluted.

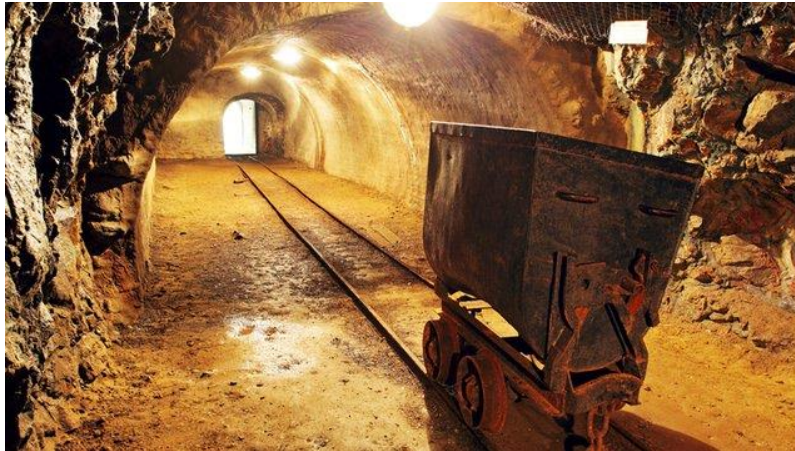
Since the Manila Bay rehabilitation program started on January 2019, more than 4,300 tons of biodegradable, residual, recyclable and hazardous wastes have been collected in Central Luzon.



Phl cockatoos spark calls for mining activity halt

Published 5 hours ago on May 28, 2021 02:30 AM

By [ElmerReuerdo](#)



TACLOBAN CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Eastern Visayas confirmed the sighting of an endangered bird in the island of Homonhon in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, which renewed calls to stop mining activities in the historic island.

Forester Virginio Cugtas, head of DENR-8 Conservation and Development Division, validated the presence of the Philippine cockatoo in Homonhon Island, a 105.2 square kilometer island of Guiuan where it was believed to be the place where explorer Ferdinand Magellan landed in March 1521.

Cugtas led the team of DENR personnel that monitored and verified the presence of the Philippine Cockatoo — locally known as Abucay — in the island.

“The sighting of the critically endangered Philippine cockatoo in the Island of Homonhon underscores the need to protect its natural habitat from further destruction as its presence in the island is only the third confirmed location in the country aside from Palawan and Mindoro,” Cugtas said.

Meantime, Fr. Christian Ofilan, the parish priest at St. John the Baptist Church, said the confirmation of the presence of an endangered bird in Homonhon is enough reason to stop mining activities in the island.

“This makes our calls to protect our island from mining operations even more relevant and urgent in order to save and preserve this endangered species on our historic island,” Ofilan said.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classified the Philippine cockatoo or the red-vented cockatoo (*Cacatua haematuropygia*) as critically endangered because of its population decline between 60 to 80 percent from 1980 up to present as a result of destructive human activities.

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2021/05/28/phl-cockatoos-spark-calls-for-mining-activity-halt/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=phl-cockatoos-spark-calls-for-mining-activity-halt



Green group supports ban on open-pit mining, protection of 'no mining zones'

By [Gaea Katreena Cabico](#)(Philstar.com) - May 27, 2021 - 8:18am



Undated stock photo shows a mine.

[Philstar.com/stock](#)

MANILA, Philippines — An environmental activist group voiced its support for proposed measures declaring areas “no mining zones” and banning the open pit method of mining in the Philippines, a country rich in precious minerals.

In a position paper read at a hearing of a panel of the House of Representatives Wednesday, Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment called for the urgent passage of House Bill 253 and House Bill 6450 which seek to limit mining in the Philippines.

House Bill 253, or the No Mining Zones bill, seeks to close all areas declared as “no mining zones” to mining applications. Meanwhile, House Bill 6450, or the Open Pit Mining Ban bill, aims to impose a moratorium on the open pit method of mining for copper, gold, silver and complex ores in the country.

Both bills were introduced by lawmakers from the Makabayan bloc.

“Local 'no mining zones' and a legislated prohibition of the destructive open pit method will allow us to conserve our mineral resources until such time a genuine national industrialization plan and a more robust environmental safety policy regime is in place to rationalize the management of our mineral resources,” Kalikasan PNE said.

Mining moratorium lifted

Last month, President Rodrigo Duterte lifted a nine-year moratorium on new mining agreements to allow in investments and boost government revenues.

But environmental groups said the move was one of the biggest blows to efforts to preserve natural resources in the country.

It was also seen to escalate threats against communities opposing mining projects. In 2019, the Philippines topped the list of nations with the most mining-related deaths among environmental defenders.

Executive Order 130 cites new fiscal regulations and environmental safeguards but Kalikasan PNE said the regulatory framework “remains fundamentally prone to environmental destruction, climate disruption, and human rights violations.”



"We also believe that we still lack rigorous economic plans for national industrialization, agrarian reform and rural development, and genuine sustainable development in order to translate mining into a truly just and green economic recovery," it added.

The group cited the large-scale mining operations of Australian-Canadian firm OceanaGold in Nueva Vizcaya, which resulted in the decimation of the biodiversity-rich Dinkidi Hill and contributed to the decline of water resources in the area. In 2019, the firm's permit lapsed.

"That OceanaGold was able to easily reverse its suspension and is now enjoying the railroading of its Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) renewal puts to question our existing regulatory frameworks and supposed technical reviews by the executive branch of government," Kalikasan PNE said.



US, Korea partnering on joint dev't projects to boost PH climate resilience

Published May 27, 2021, 6:32 PM

by [Roy Mabasa](#)

The United States and South Korea, two of the largest bilateral donors in the Philippines, have formed a partnership to pursue joint development projects to boost the country's climate resilience and address ocean plastic pollution.

In a statement, the US Embassy in Manila said the partnership is a result of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) on April 7, 2021 to explore potential collaboration in several sectors, including poverty reduction in rural areas, empowerment of women and girls, water resource management, community rehabilitation in Marawi, and climate resilience.



United States Embassy Charge d'Affaires John Law (US Embassy Manila)

In the memorandum, the US and Korea have agreed to jointly pursue a "Climate Resilient Cities" project to strengthen the resilience of Philippine cities against growing climate threats and vulnerability, and Marine Litter Management initiatives to mitigate the impacts of ocean plastic pollution.

On May 21, 2021, Korea and the US conducted a Summit in Washington, D.C. where they discussed the expansion of their partnership in Southeast Asia, including in the Philippines. "For the past 75 years, the United States has been a strong friend, partner and ally of the Philippine government in achieving its long-term vision of sustainable and inclusive growth for the Filipino people," US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires John Law said.

Law added that the US work with like-minded partners like Korea will further advance their shared development objectives in supporting the Philippines' "journey to self-reliance".



Korean Ambassador to the Philippines Inchul Kim (Embassy of Korea)

Korean Ambassador to Manila Inchul Kim said they will continue to work closely together in the Philippines to promote sustainable development in the Bayanihan spirit, particularly in addressing challenges faced by Philippine cities and vulnerable communities amid rising climate change concerns, among others.



“Korea is glad to strengthen its partnership with the US in the areas of development cooperation in the Philippines as reflected in the MOU last month and highlighted in last week’s Korea-U.S. Summit,” he said.

As one of the largest bilateral donors along with the US over the past three decades, Korea has expanded its development assistance in both grants and budgetary support and is the second-largest development assistance country donor in the Philippines.



Pena: A long-term solution to the plastic problem

[ROX PENA](#)

May 27, 2021

Last May 25 was 'International Plastic Free Day'. The organizers of the movement said that if every person in the world stopped using one single-use piece of plastic for one day, we'd avoid over 7.6 billion items of plastic on that single day. The action is laudable. Solving the plastic problem needs the cooperation of all. However, the lasting solution to this problem is to 'nip it in the bud'. That is to target the source - the plastic producers.

This is the direction that the United States (US) wants to take. This is good because they are a major plastic producer. More than 350 million metric tons of plastic are produced in the US each year, of which 91 percent is not recycled. The U.S. generates the most plastic waste per capita of any country and exports 225 shipping containers of plastic waste per day to countries with limited or nonexistent waste management systems, where plastic may be crudely processed in unsafe facilities and incinerated in open areas, creating additional pollution and health problems.

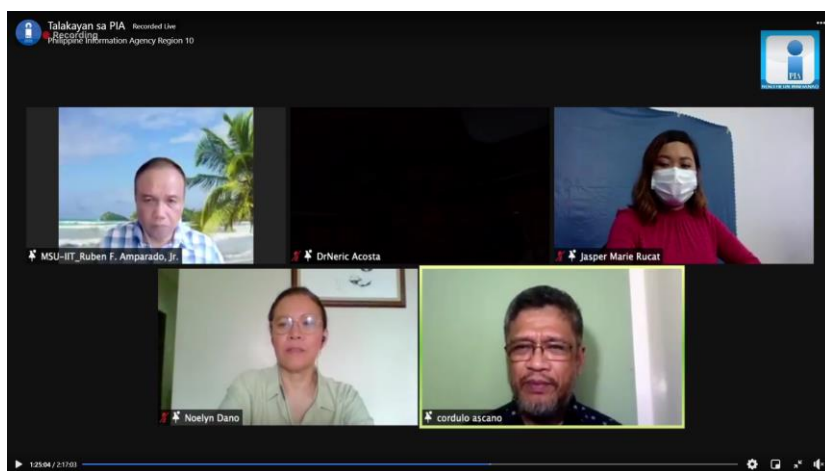
Two legislators from the United States, Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), reintroduced a bill called 'Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act'. It is by far the most comprehensive bill to address the plastic pollution crisis ever introduced in the US congress. It is an improved version of a similar bill filed before. The new version shifts the financial burden of waste management off of municipalities and taxpayers to the producers of plastic waste.

The 'Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act' will address environmental justice concerns directly by holding corporations accountable for their pollution, and requiring producers of plastic products to design, manage, and finance waste and recycling programs, pressing pause on new and expanding plastic facilities until critical environment and health protections are put in place. The legislation applies the 'polluter pays principle'.

The bill also gives incentives to businesses to make reusable products that can actually be recycled. It will also reduce and ban certain single-use plastic products that are not recyclable. It aims to create a nationwide beverage container refund program and establish minimum recycled content requirements for containers, packaging, and food-service products.

Here in the Philippines, there are several bills filed in both houses of Congress which seek to address the plastic waste problem. One of those is House Bill No. 9147 or the "Single-Use Plastic Products Regulation Act". I did not find a bill similar to this Break Free from Plastic Bill. It will surely meet a lot of opposition from business groups.

So far there is no national law that regulates the use of plastic except for a provision in RA 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, which bans 'non-environmentally acceptable products'. Under this provision, plastic stirrers and plastic straws have been declared as such, paving the way for their eventual removal from the market. In the absence of national law, local government units have taken upon themselves the task of regulating plastic products in their areas through ordinances.



Academe Engagement. Dr. Ruben Amparado from the Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) together with Dr. Maria Noelyn Dano and Dr. Codulo Ascaño of the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP) – Cagayan de Oro served as reactors to Dr. Nereus Acosta, presenting feedback and positions of the academe. (PIA10)

CDORBMC taps academe for key environmental policies

By Vincent Philip S. Bautista Published on May 27, 2021

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY, May 27 (PIA)--To promote environmental awareness and ecological best practices in the country, the Cagayan de Oro River Basin Management Council (CDORBMC) and Macajalar Bay Development Alliance (MBDA) held a webinar cum "Talakayan" to discuss the policies governing clean air, clean water, solid waste management, and biodiversity protection.

"This is a concrete response for the call of caring for our common home especially at this time of the pandemic. The outbreak of COVID-19 reflects how we have treated our environment and natural habitats which affect all aspects of our lives today," said Archbishop Jose Cabantan, CDORBMC lead chairman in his opening message.



Presidential Adviser on Environmental Protection, Dr. Juan Romeo Nereus "Neric" Acosta shares an overview and insights on the importance of sustainability and the enactment of legislations in ensuring the longevity of natural resources for future generations. (PIA10)

Dubbed "Acts of Nereus: A Conversation of the Groundbreaking Environmental Acts of Dr. Neric Acosta," Presidential Adviser on Environmental Protection, Dr. Juan Romeo Nereus "Neric" Acosta underscored the importance of sustainability and the enactment of legislations in ensuring the longevity of natural resources for future generations.

Virtually attended by various stakeholders from the academe, private and public organizations, CDORBMC and MBDA executive director, Dr. Hilly Ann Roa-Quiaoit, emphasized the strengthened engagement of the academic sector and its students on ecosystem-based approach management as an important step to the success of an environment-friendly nation.



Meanwhile, Dr. Ruben Amparado of the Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) together with Dr. Maria Noelyn Dano and Dr. Codulo Ascaño of the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP)– Cagayan de Oro served as reactors to Acosta, presenting feedback and positions of the academe.

Acosta gave a brief recapitulation of four key legislations which he considers as pillars for a greener nation, namely, the Republic Act (RA) No. 8749, otherwise known as the Philippine Clean Air Act, RA No. 9003 or the “Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000”, RA 9147 or “Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act” and lastly RA No. 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, which aims to protect the country's water bodies from pollution.

He noted, however, the limitations of the law and the importance of cultivating a philosophy of environmental stewardship and conscious-based approach in day-to-day living if the country will ever move forward to the age of sustainability.

“This is about a philosophy. Everything we do in environmental science has something to do with a driving force or underpinning set of principles. All laws emanate from a philosophy, which is driven by an understanding of the interconnectedness of life, distilled from a specific course of action or a policy,” he said.

For his part, Laguindingan mayor and MBDA chairman, Diosdado Obsioma, echoed Acosta's thoughts and called for the cooperation of everyone, underscoring the significance of empowering communities and all sectors to a sustainable and eco-friendly country. (VPSBautista/PIA10)



Gonzaga: Looming eco-disasters

[VIOLETA LOPEZ GONZAGA](#)

May 28, 2021

THE blatant, massive clearing of mangrove forest in the only remaining enclave of small fisherfolks in Bacolod by a private developer who did it without the mandatory public hearing and barangay endorsement of his project, and environmental clearance certificate in the coastal area on the one hand, and the indiscriminate cutting of trees and defoliation in the forestal zone of the Northern Negros Forest Protected Area at Compuestuhan on the other, call for immediate and radical action.

Wanted urgently for Bacolod and the province is well-informed chief on environmental laws and codes, situation and state of their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. For Negros Occidental there is a need for representation of the province's interest in the governing board of the only remaining natural forest strip of Northern Negros Protected Area Management Zone -- one measure with precedence as the Provincial Management Office (Pemo) chief was designated governor's representative under the two successive Marañon brothers' administration.

An immediate change in the governor's designated representative at the NNPMB, and the assignment of a technically competent person in the person of the Pemo chief is rational, imperative, and critical at this point. The recurrent massive flooding in PAMB covered cities -- San Carlos, Cadiz, Victorias, Silay and Talisay, is indicative of the rather ineffective management of the NNPAMB. Recent rapid land conversions within Multiple Use Zones (MUZ) have been approved, both for private, and public land use--the latter, a controversial highway road network that would link Calatrava to Patag, the former, Memorial Parks, resorts and recreation facilities, Power line sites, and fishpond. Though there is no actual survey data to support it, a cursory scan of where the flooding is at its worst in such cities as San Carlos, Silay, and Victorias, is where there has been the rapid land conversion of reforestation areas to resorts/tourism destination, and choice hill/mountain housing subdivision.

Other than the widespread flooding problem, the great threat to MUZ refo-agroforestry areas rapidly converted to institutional facilities and infrastructures by virtue of actions and decisions of the NNP Management Board under largely 'politicized' control, is a radical diminution of freshwater supply.

At Don Salvador Benedicto, and upland Compuestohan-Cabatangan in Talisay the problem of continuing spring water source is now becoming a real problem, and a source of inter-landowner conflict in the grossly affected areas. The NNP Management must explain the effete monitoring, evaluation and penalty measures given to gross acts of violations.

While Pemo field officers are near burnout by being pressed to "major in minors" such as endless investigations prior to the approval of special orders covering extraction of soil from one's own property to fill a road concreting in another property that has a negative environmental impact, it is precluded from survey and assessment of projects with critical and high impact on the environment like the clearing of trees to give way to upland resort and recreation facilities as in Patag, Compuestohan and Gawahon.

Pemo must be mandated with greater authority and scope of functions, less focus on trivial individual small scale digging of soil, or non-industrial sand and gravel quarrying to industrial, large scale ones, as well as critical land-use conversions to high negative impact government projects.



At this point whence the province has set vast road networks projects that cut through threatened forestal areas and reforestation zones with few remaining bio-diversity, Pemo must be tasked in collaboration with NGOs and competent researchers to come up with environmental situation analysis through rapid appraisal using a drone, geoscan and community-based studies across all the listed expanded integrated protected areas. The City and Municipal Land Use Plans must be reviewed and analyzed if these CLUPs are aligned with the protection and restoration of critical watershed and biodiversity areas of their localities.

The easy way by developers and even DPWH to resort to clearing of mangrove and aged trees in Bacolod and upland Talisay indicate a serious need for vigilant eco-watch of environmentalists in Negros Occidental. Thanks to the immediate response of concerned and watchful citizens in Bacolod under a Facebook chat group, the mangrove clearing of an unscrupulous engineer-developer has been subjected to a cease and desist order proceeding by the local DENR. For Bacolod, the series of environmental crimes points to the great need for the city mayor and his councilors to the environmental code, the clean water act, and other relevant laws for environmental protection.

It's getting more likely the world will reach a climate tipping point in the next five years

By Ivana Kottasová, CNN

Published May 27, 2021 11:50:12 PM



(CNN) -- The likelihood that the earth's average temperature will at least temporarily breach a crucial tipping point is rising, according to the world's leading weather and climate organization.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said Thursday there is now about a 40% chance that the annual average global temperature will temporarily reach 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels in at least one of the next five years.

It added that the chances of the threshold being breached are increasing with time.

The 1.5-degree marker has been identified by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a key tipping point beyond which the risk of extreme drought, wildfires, floods and food shortages will increase dramatically.

"These are more than just statistics," Petteri Taalas, WMO's secretary-general, said in a statement. "Increasing temperatures mean more melting ice, higher sea levels, more heatwaves and other extreme weather, and greater impacts on food security, health, the environment and sustainable development."

By signing the Paris Climate deal, countries around the world agreed to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial temperatures. Even better, the deal said, would be to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degrees.

But the world is now already two-thirds of the way to breaching the tipping point. The WMO said the annual average temperature is likely to be at least 1 degree warmer than pre-industrial levels in each of the coming five years, and very likely to be within the range of 0.9 to 1.8 degrees.

It added that 2020 was one of the three warmest years on record and that the global average temperature was 1.2 degrees above the pre-industrial baseline.

The organization said that there was a 90% chance that at least one year between 2021 and 2025 will become the warmest on record, surpassing 2016 in the top ranking, according to the Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update, produced by the UK's Met Office, the WMO lead center for such predictions.



It's all the more reason to take urgent action on climate change, according to Taalas.

"We are getting measurably and inexorably closer to the lower target of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change," he said. "The world needs to fast-track commitments to slash greenhouse gas emissions and achieve carbon neutrality."

The IPCC reported that to reach the Paris goal, global greenhouse gas emissions must reach net zero by 2050. Many countries have pledged to become carbon neutral by the middle of the century and several of the world's biggest economies, including the US, the EU, the UK and Canada, have recently upgraded their short-term emission cutting targets.

However, the UN has warned the details on how they are planning to get there remain vague.

This story was first published on CNN.com, ["It's getting more likely the world will reach a climate tipping point in the next five years"](#)



A turtle considered extinct 100 years ago in Galapagos still exists, says Ecuador

By **Reuters** - May 27, 2021 - 7:20 PM



A tortoise of the *Chelonoidis phantasticus* species, which had been considered extinct more than a century ago, is seen in Santa Cruz, on the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador July 10, 2019. Picture taken July 10, 2019. (Courtesy Galapagos National Park/Handout via Reuters)

QUITO — Ecuador confirmed on Tuesday that a giant tortoise found in 2019 in the Galapagos Islands is a species considered extinct a century ago.

The Galapagos National Park is preparing an expedition to search for more of the giant tortoises in an attempt to save the species.

The turtle was found two years ago on Fernandina Island, one of the youngest and most pristine in the archipelago, during a joint expedition between the Galapagos National Park and the Galapagos Conservancy.

Scientists from Yale University then identified it as the *Chelonoidis phantasticus* species, which had been considered extinct more than a century ago.

“Yale University revealed the results of genetic studies and the respective DNA comparison that was made with a specimen extracted in 1906,” the Galapagos Park said in a statement.

In the Galapagos Islands, which served as the basis for the British scientist Charles Darwin’s theory of the evolution of species in the 19th century, many varieties of tortoises live together with flamingos, boobies, albatrosses and cormorants, a family of species of aquatic birds.

It also houses a large amount of flora and fauna in danger of extinction.

“It was believed extinct more than 100 years ago! We have reconfirmed its existence,” Environment Minister Gustavo Manrique wrote on his Twitter account.

The current population of giant tortoises from various species is estimated at 60,000, according to data from the Galapagos National Park.

One was known as “Lonesome George”, a male Pinta Island tortoise, the last known of the species, who died in 2012 without leaving any offspring. —**Reporting by Alexandra Valencia; Writing by Sarah Kinosian; Editing by David Gregorio**

Source: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/trends-spotlights/2021/05/27/192732/a-turtle-considered-extinct-100-years-ago-in-galapagos-is-still-in-existence-says-ecuador/>

28 MAY 2021, FRIDAY



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COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DOH lists 210 new COVID-19 deaths as cases top 1.2 million

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published May 27, 2021 3:58:55 PM



The country logged 210 new COVID-19 deaths on Thursday, the highest in over six weeks, bringing the death toll to 20,379, the Department of Health reported. (FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, May 27) — The country logged 210 new COVID-19 deaths on Thursday, the highest in over six weeks, bringing the death toll to 20,379, the Department of Health reported.

The death tally is equivalent to 1.7% of all cases. Thursday's count is the highest following April 10, when there were 225 fatalities recorded. The number of cases also breached the 1.2 millionth mark at 1,200,430 after 6,483 more people got infected, DOH said.

Of this total, 4% or 48,109 cases were active or currently ill with 92.7% experiencing mild symptoms, 2.2% without symptoms, 2.1% with severe symptoms, 1.6% in critical condition and 1.47% in moderate condition.

Meanwhile, recoveries rose to 1,131,942 or 94.3% of the COVID-19 count with 4,335 more survivors, the department added.

The DOH said 139 of the newly reported fatalities were earlier mistakenly tagged as recoveries and added after validation. Twenty-five duplicates were also deleted, including 22 recoveries. Two of the deleted recoveries had actually tested negative.

The total excludes data from six laboratories that were not able to submit their reports on time, DOH added. These laboratories contributed an average of 2.2% of samples tested and 3.9% of positive individuals in the past 14 days.

The daily positivity rate or rate of individuals who tested positive continued to stay in the 11-13% range at 12.5%, based on 47,869 tests done as of May 25. The rates have stayed in that range since May 5 but they are still high since the recommended percentage is below 5%, according to the World Health Organization. Higher rates may mean high transmission and more undetected cases, experts said.

In the regions

The positivity rate in Metro Manila had dropped to 10% in the past seven days, the OCTA research team reported. The rate is "acceptable" although the target is still below 5%, the researchers added. The seven-day average of new COVID-19 cases in the area dipped by 23% to 1,023 as of May 20 to May 26, with an average daily attack rate of 7.41. The attack rate refers to how fast the coronavirus spreads in an area. The reproduction number, or the number of persons infected by one case, was at 0.52.



OCTA noted a downward trend in local government units in and near Metro Manila such as Pasig City, Calamba in Laguna, Muntinlupa City, as well as the cities of Imus and Dasmariñas in Cavite. Malabon and Caloocan cities had the lowest average daily attack rates at 3.57 and 4.89, respectively. Healthcare utilization and ICU occupancy rates in the National Capital Region were both within the safe level threshold of 60%, with the former at 42% and the latter at 57%.

Outside NCR, Zamboanga City had the second highest number of new infections, although it is currently seeing a downward trend as well, OCTA said. Notable increases were also found in the cities of Davao, Puerto Princesa, General Santos, Butuan, and Cebu.



Soldiers and health workers guarding an anti-COVID-19 checkpoint in Maguindanao province.

Philstar.com/John Unson

COVID-19 cases still rising in Visayas, Mindanao

[Mayen Jaymalin](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 28, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health (DOH) yesterday reported a continuing increase of COVID-19 cases in Visayas and Mindanao regions.

“In Visayas and Mindanao areas, we see a continued increase, higher than the increase we saw and relayed last week,” DOH Epidemiology Bureau chief Dr. Alethea de Guzman explained, noting that 11 regions nationwide recorded rising COVID cases.

According to De Guzman, all Visayas regions showed an upward trend with Western Visayas posting the highest and fastest growth, while Zamboanga peninsula (Region 9) and Northern Mindanao (Region 10) had the highest spike in cases. In Luzon, only Ilocos and Mimaropa posted positive growth.

In cities outside National Capital Region Plus (Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal), OCTA Research Group noted significant one-week growth rates — Davao (93 new cases daily), Puerto Princesa (61), General Santos (48), Butuan (41) and Cebu (36).

Meanwhile, other areas with previous spikes are now on a downward trend, including Zamboanga City and Cagayan de Oro, OCTA Research said.

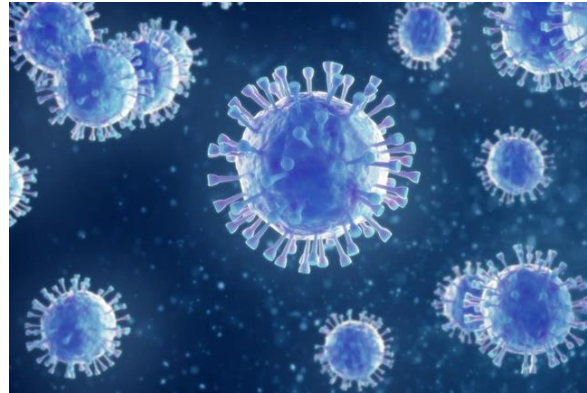
Health care utilization remained above the critical threshold of 70 percent at Zamboanga City (74 percent), Iloilo City (81 percent), Dasmariñas, Cavite (77 percent), Baguio (72 percent), Butuan (76 percent) and San Fernando, Pampanga (83 percent).

Amid rising numbers in high-risk cities, the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) appealed to the national government to include other localities in the list of priority areas for vaccination. – **Janvic Mateo, Romina Cabrera**



MAYROON NANG COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION NG UK, SOUTH AFRICAN VARIANT NG COVID-19 SA NCR PLUS —WHO

written by [Lyn Aurora Legarteja](#) May 28, 2021



Mayroon nang community transmission ng UK at South African variant ng COVID-19 sa NCR plus.

Ayon kay Dr. Rabindra Abeyasinghe, World Health Organization country representative, na mayroong rason para paniwalaan na mayroon ngang community transmission ng nasabing dalawang variants of concern sa NCR plus, batay na rin sa ebidensya at bilang ng mga kaso nito.

Gayunman, hindi pa naman masabi ni Abeyasinghe kung ang uk at south african variants ng COVID-19 ang dominanteng variants sa NCR plus.

Dagdag pa nito na ang presensya ng dalawang nabanggit na variants ay naglalagay sa NCR plus sa “very fragile situation” sa kabila ng pagbaba ng naitatalang kaso nitong nakalipas na mga linggo.

Samantala, tiniyak naman ng WHO na silay nakikipagtulungan na sa DOH at Philippine Genome Center para ma-improve pa ang genomic biosurveillance sa bansa at mapa-igting pa ang paghahanap sa mga kaso ng India variant cases.

28 MAY 2021, FRIDAY



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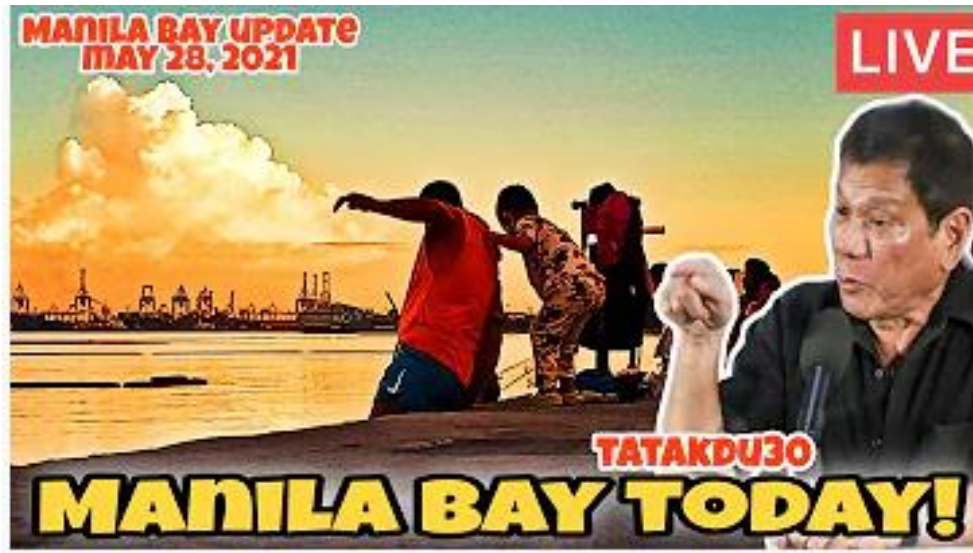
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