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ENVIRONMENT ON

TOP OF

By CORY
MARTINEZ

PRESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr. has assured that the environment and the country's resiliency and adaptation to the new normal of climate change will be on top of the national agenda. /Page 15

MARCOS AGENDA

ENVIRONMENT

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Marcos made the commitment during the opening of the three-day forum on environmental challenges wherein over 200 industry and sectors are now attending. The forum, which was initiated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) started last Wednesday and will end today, Friday.

In his keynote address, the President commended the DENR for leading the way in conducting discussions to include all the different stakeholders, to listen to concerns and the opportunities that our stakeholders can provide.

He also noted that the consultations are among the first and most vital steps toward environmental resilience.

President Marcos further stressed that he always believed that there is no greater shared responsibility than the care for our environment.

"Collectively, we not only have the expertise, but also the commitment and the determination to steer our practices and systems towards a greener environment," Marcos added.

For her part, DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Lozaga reaffirmed the agency's commitment to protect the country's natural resources, and stressed the importance of inclusive and multidisciplinary dialogue across all sectors in making this possible.

"In order to do this, we will need to work with partners to develop integrated strategies for a science-based, risk-informed, ethical and equitable stewardship of our environments," Lozaga said.

Lozaga claimed that this guarantees that each sector's unique and shared challenges, actionable recommendations and commitments are incorporated in the process of forming the DENR's policy agenda and multi-year Roadmap for Programs, Activities and Projects (PAP).

The forum aims to produce inclusive long-term policies that will address multi-sectoral challenges in environmental resilience. It will also ensure evidence-informed actions for the protection, conservation, enhancement and regeneration of the Philippines' ecosystems.

The inputs to be shared by representatives from government, civil society, academe and scientific institutions, private, and development sectors, will contribute to the Resiliency Framework for Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) – an integrated framework for multi-stakeholder strategic engagement in ENR.

"It is our hope that our conversations, the planned national natural resources geospatial database, a new experts advisory council and an organizational review will ensure that our people, processes and products will result in synergies that will transform our department into one that is fit for its complex purpose," Lozaga said.

The DENR is committed to creating strategic partnerships and accelerating cooperation and collaboration for the country's resilience.

The Resiliency Framework for ENR to be produced at the forum will serve as the foundation for science-based, data-driven, and socially, politically and culturally-sensitive environment and natural resource policies.



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What Marcos achieved in first 100 days

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

Ahead of his 100th day in office today, Oct. 7, President Marcos said his most significant achievements so far are bringing unity to the government, making other countries aware that the Philippines is open for business, and extinguishing fires while facing issues left and right.

At the Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC) President's Night in Pasay City on Wednesday, Oct. 5, Marcos said one of the things he made sure to achieve in his first 100 days was to build a functioning government with a clear objective.

"I think what we have managed to do in the first 100 days is put together a government that is functional and which has a very, very good idea of what we are targeting in terms of strict economic targets, of the number of growths, the number of the different measures, the different metrics that we are using for the economy," he said.

The President said he is still enjoying the "unifying force" the elections had become.

"Generally speaking, elections are polarizing. And, of course, even in this case, it was polarizing, but at least a very strong majority ►7



What Marcos achieved in first 100 days



made itself felt. And I think that is something that we continue to use as our foundation," he said.

"And with that, the promises that were made during the campaign, for example, that we bring the best and brightest and we do not look at color in terms of - political color, I think we have done that," he added.

According to Marcos, he has "galvanized the government once again into governing."

"Slowly, it's filtering down to the rank and file who are beginning to feel that there is a point to government, there is something that we need to be doing," he said. "This is the direction we are being led into. These are the things that we are going to do."

President Marcos said unity helped his administration pull the country out of the Covid-19 pandemic, which he described as a "terrible crisis" that Filipinos have suffered over the past two years.

"I think we have achieved that," he said. "That sense of urgency, that unity that we bring people together and we are bringing people together for a reason, and the reason is not ourselves, it's not our families, but it's our community, it's our country, it's our people."

"I think we have returned into government. I think that's the most important thing," he continued.

Engagement

Marcos believes he was able to renew friendships as he engaged with Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia and Singapore and many other friendly countries around the world.

He described his engagement with foreign leaders as the Philippines' "coming-out party for the world."

"This is the coming-out party for the Philippines, and we are able to explain this is what the Philippines is now. This is what the Philippines looks like after two and a half years of crisis," the President said.

"This is what the Philippines is doing, and this is how we can help each other because not any one country is going to manage this transformation by themselves, and we will need each other's help," he added.

The Chief Executive said the Philippines needed to find its place in the world and show that the Philippines is standing on its feet.

"The Philippines continues to have its aspirations and its dreams, and we are willing to do our part in making those dreams come true. And partnerships once again are going to be important, and we invite you to join us," Marcos said.

"That is one thing we have staked our place in the community of nations. I think that has been very, very important," he added.

Putting out fires

President Marcos said another significant achievement of his administration in its first 100 days is putting out fires and making things work while facing challenges left and right.

"We are putting out fires. We are just trying to make things work because suddenly, the problem with the sugar supply, the problem with fertilizer. We have to look to different... what we now refer to as non-traditional sources," he said.

Marcos said the country is now taking a "very balanced view" as it considers dealing with Russia for fuel and fertilizer while dealing with Ukraine for feed wheat and corn importation.

"All of these things have now become part of the mix that has made really... has made the world situation more volatile and more complex than it was before," he said.

"We have already made it clear where the Philippines stands in all of this. And it is something that I made clear again to the other leaders, and I said that, essentially, we are driven by our desire for peace. And all the economic development that we plan and all that we hope to do will come to naught unless there is peace."

'He's done great things'

House Speaker Martin Romualdez said President Marcos has done a "great job" so far as a leader.

"I think the President has done great things...in the government, particularly in his Cabinet and his policies are very clear," Romualdez told reporters on Thursday morning, Oct. 6, in a chance interview on the sidelines of the kickoff of HRep Month.

"On the part of the House of Representatives, we affirmed his fiscal framework along with the Senate. We passed his budget on third reading so we're well on our way. That's the most important piece of legislation, that's the national budget for 2023," said the Leyte 1st district congressman.

The P5.268-trillion General Appropriations Bill (GAB) for 2023 or proposed national budget is the first full annual outlay of the Marcos administration.

"So, my assessment is that he's done a great job and he's also done a wonderful job in engaging our friends in the international community whereby foreign direct investments (FDIs) would be coming," the House leader said.

As proof, Romualdez cited the results of Marcos's recent trips to Indonesia, Singapore, and the United States (US), which all happened to be country's top trading partners.

"Singapore, being the number one source of foreign direct investments, has seen so much enthusiasm

and they welcome his (Marcos) presidency and his administration," he said.

Romualdez further said he's "very excited" for the Marcos administration moving forward.

"So, we're looking for a swift recovery despite all of the pressures and the global economic... so we're very excited for his administration. And on the part of the House, we support him wholeheartedly and we wish him Godspeed and congratulations [on] his first 100 days," he said of the Chief Executive.

Marcos will mark his first 100 days in Malacañang today.

'Right on track'

In a subsequent statement Thursday, Romualdez said the Philippines was "right on track, and is sprinting steadily during the first 100 days of the administration of President [Marcos]."

"Our economy has bounced back from the ravages brought by the global pandemic and has already reached the first stage to full recovery...The future indeed looks brighter under the Marcos administration. Businesses now ramping up activity, new jobs are created and lost jobs are restored, and economic activities have turned dynamic once again," noted Romualdez, who accompanied Marcos in his recent work-related trips.

Romualdez cited the bilateral meeting between Marcos and US President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nation General Assembly (UNGA) in New York City, where the two leaders cemented a stronger security alliance and discussed opportunities to expand cooperation on a wide range of issues, including energy security, climate action, and infrastructure.

During his trip to Indonesia, Marcos and Indonesian President Joko Widodo witnessed the signing of agreements on defense, security, creative economy, and culture. They also renewed their commitment to stronger bilateral cooperation as fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In his state visit to Singapore, Marcos and Prime Minister Lee witnessed the signing and exchange of agreements on counterterrorism, personal data protection, digital cooperation, water resource management, and investment.

VP's 'First 100 Days' report

Meanwhile, Vice President Sara Duterte is finalizing a report on her first 100 days in office.

"Hinahanda na po namin 'yung (We are already preparing the) 100 days report ng (of the) Office of the Vice President (OVP)," she said in a media interview in Bangued, Abra on Wednesday, Oct. 5.



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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The Vice President, daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte, will mark her 100th day in office today. She is the country's 15th vice president.

Duterte also serves as secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd) in concurrent capacity.

"Iyon namang sa Department of Education ay isa-submit po namin sa Office of the President (OP) dahil hinihingi po nila 'yun (We will submit the Department of Education report to the Office of the President as they are now asking for it)," she added.

Under Duterte, the OVP provided medical and burial assistance since assuming office on July 1.

Her office has also deployed five buses as part of its "Libreng Sakay" program in Metro Manila, Davao City, Cebu, and Bacolod to augment public

transport during peak hours.

The Vice President also opened seven satellite offices in Dagupan, Cebu, Tacloban, Zamboanga, Davao, Bacolod City, and Tandag, Surigao del Sur to make the OVP's services more accessible to the people.

Duterte also aims to establish an official residence for the country's second highest official that she said will benefit future occupants of the post.

In Abra, Duterte shared to beneficiaries of OVP's "PagbaBAGO" campaign the importance of family planning as one way to alleviate poverty.

The Vice President also encouraged women and parents to make a norm of seeking birth control advice from health professionals. (With reports from Ellson A. Quismorio and Raymond F. Antonio)



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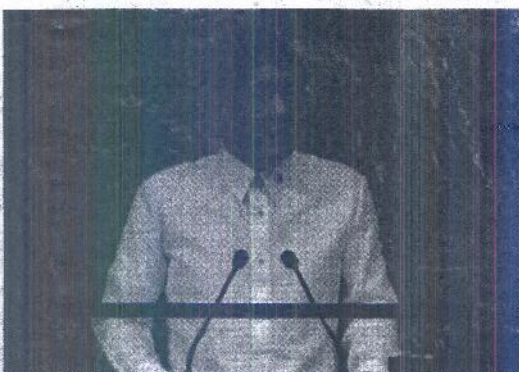
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FIRST 100 DAYS OF 6-YR MARATHON

'Settling into our track, finding our pace'



BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR-REYES

ONE hundred days -- one state of the nation address, four foreign trips, four vetoed bills, two foreign state leader visits, 10 Cabinet meetings, and two major disasters -- later, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. is still wondering if his administration has already done enough or even something that is worth reporting back to the people.

For the President, in fact, his first 100 days in office of leading the country is still too early a period to assess and report on what he and his administration had already achieved, accomplished, done or even not done.

"Alam mo si Presidente, is ambivalent about the term 100. 'Bakit 100, bakit hindi 50? Are we bound to give a report in 100 days... Have we done enough?'"

Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin said recalling Marcos' questions at a meeting with him and some members of the Executive branch earlier in the week.

Bersamin also said that the first 100 days of a new president was supposed to be the "honeymoon period," but for the current administration, a honeymoon period may be non-existent, nor even needed, considering some of the criticisms hurled against Marcos.

Marcos, he said, just focuses on work instead of dwelling on the criticism against him.

It is because of this focus, that while Bersamin only joined the Marcos cabinet for several days, he could already see that the incumbent administration has already done a lot, and even had some worthy accomplishments such as when he addressed the United Nations' General Assembly (UNGA) in the United States (US) where he talked about climate change and

"No one person can do this. No one government... No one entity, not one corporation, not one business.

However, if we understand what we considered to be important for our country and for our people and we work in our different ways to achieve that aspiration, to make that dream come true, that unity will bring us to that level of success."

ing with peace and development in Mindanao and the country's bid to join the UN Security Council, among others.

The working visit of the President in the US from September 18 to 24 also yielded \$3.9 billion worth of pledge investments, which has the potential to generate more than 100,000 jobs.

This is on top of the estimated \$14.36 billion worth of pledged investments from his state visits to Indonesia and Singapore from September 4 to 6 and September 6 to 8 respectively, that guaranteed 20,000 jobs for Filipinos. Marcos had said that his second trip to Singapore, from October 1 to 2 had been productive as he met with other dignitaries and business leaders at the sidelines of the Formula 1 Grand Prix and the trip's results will be revealed soon.

Setting up house

Marcos, during the President's Night organized by the Manila Overseas Press Club the other day, even recalled that during the campaign, he had been asked what he intends to accomplish in his first 100 days as president and he had answered "finding the best and the brightest to help and to serve

Marcos mentioned that it would probably be focused on setting up his government which includes completing his Cabinet, filling up the vacancies in the different offices including downsizing if needed to make the delivery of services more effective and efficient; setting up the goals and policies of his administration; and sustaining efforts to address the coronavirus disease pandemic and its aftereffects including the post-recovery.

The President said he thinks "that we have managed to do that," as he talked about some of the personalities and experts that he appointed in office such as the members of the crucial economic team led by Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno.

Marcos, however, has yet to appoint permanent heads of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of National Defense (DND). DOH Undersecretary Ma. Rosario Vergeire and DND Undersecretary Jose Faustino Jr. are both serving as officers-in-charge.

With the recent resignation of Press Secretary Atty. Thixie Cruz-Angeles citing health reasons, the third departure in three months, there

bill strengthening the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) of the Department of Justice, citing "excessive grant of remuneration, incentives, benefits, allowances, and honoraria" to employees and hired lawyers; and the bill creating the Bulacan Airport City Special Economic Zone and Freeport due to potential and substantial fiscal risks, incoherence with existing laws, and the proximity of the proposed economic zone's location near the already existing Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone.

Marcos also vetoed the measure granting tax exemption on poll workers' honoraria, explaining that it will "negate the progressivity of the reforms introduced under RA 10963 or the TRAIN law".

The President said that "actually (in) the first 60 days, maybe 50 days, we were putting out fires" citing issues they found needing immediate attention such as the low supply and higher cost of sugar and fertilizer, the looming food crisis, the post-pandemic growth, and the need to ease the impact of the "polarizing" May elections.

"The Administration's first crucial objective is to secure food sufficiency and post-pandemic growth. I'm proud to share that in the recent working -- the recent visits that we have undertaken abroad, I was able to promote agricultural cooperation at D encourage trade investment in key sectors," Marcos said.

He said that the Department of Agriculture (DA) is maintaining assistance to farmers and fisherfolk with the distribution of high-quality seeds and fertilizers, as well as post-harvest machinery and facilities including trucks, tractors and

ton Emani Makamau Tagelag and looks forward to a stronger cooperation between the Philippines and Sri Lanka, and between the Philippines and the island nation Niue.

He also met with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during his visit to Manila where both the Philippines and the US reaffirmed both countries' commitment to the Mutual Defense Treaty.

Marcos also met with US President Joe Biden at the sidelines of the UNGA along with Japanese Prime Minister Kishida, French President Emmanuel Macron, and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Bilateral talks were held with Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Singapore President Halimah Yacob and Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during his state visits to those countries.

Marcos met with Loong a second time on the sidelines of the Formula 1 Grand Prix during his unannounced second visit to Singapore, a trip which received criticism as it came on the heels of the devastating super typhoon Karding particularly in areas in Luzon. The Palace has since cited the trip as in line with the government's goal of promoting business in the country in the presence of business and state leaders attending the event.

The super typhoon was the second biggest natural calamity that hit the country under the Marcos government. The first one was the magnitude 7 earthquake that devastated North Luzon in July.

Education and health

Among the top priorities of the Marcos government agenda is the resumption of face-to-face classes and improvement of the vaccina-



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With the recent resignation of Press Secretary Atty. Trixie Cruz-Angeles citing health reasons, the third departure in three months, there remains more positions to fill.

Also resigned were Atty. Victor Rodriguez who as executive secretary and Jose Calda whom Marcos appointed as Commission on Audit head.

Putting out the fire

The government has also pushed for the downsizing of the bureaucracy by removing redundant positions and abolishing redundant offices.

On his first day of office on June 30, he ordered and issued his first executive order abolishing the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) and the Office of the Cabinet Secretary, transferring its powers and functions to the Office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Legal Affairs, and the Cabinet Secretariat under the Presidential Management Staff, respectively.

A memorandum circular declared certain positions in the Executive as vacant, naming the most senior officials as the officers-in-charge (OIC) until December 31 or until a replacement has been made, "to ensure the continuous and effective delivery of government services".

He also transferred the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as the government boosted efforts to produce more skilled workers to match and fill up the available job vacancies in new market iterations.

The President, meanwhile, rejected and vetoed the measure creating a transportation safety board citing that its functions are already being undertaken by the different agencies under the Department of Transportation, the Philippine National Police, and the National Bureau of Investigation.

He also vetoed the

He said that the Department of Agriculture (DA) is maintaining assistance to farmers and fisherfolk with the distribution of high-quality seeds and fertilizers, as well as post-harvest machinery and facilities, including trucks, dryers, and mills that can potentially contribute to the productivity and profitability of farm workers.

Rejecting initial plans to import 300,000 metric tons of sugar to address the current sugar supply situation and its increasing prices, with preferential use of the current available imported sugar and those produced locally, the President later approved a lower importation target of 150,000 metric tons.

To better assist farmers, the President also imposed a one-year moratorium on the amortization and interest payments of agrarian reform beneficiaries, which is seen to "lead to freedom of farmers from debts".

Improving business climate

Part of the President's priority agenda is to sustain the country's post-pandemic recovery which includes strengthening the public-private partnerships and sustaining the infrastructure program started by his predecessor, adopting it under his administration's "Build Better More (BBM) Infrastructure" agenda.

The Marcos administration has asked for a P1.196 billion budget from Congress for the BBM infrastructure program. Also ordered was a renegotiation of three cancelled China-funded railway projects—the PNR South Long Haul, Subic-Clark Railway, and the Mindanao Railway (Tagum-Davao-Digos).

He has also sought the revisit of the use of nuclear energy to increase the country's energy supply, stressing the need to include renewable energy and nuclear energy in the country's energy mix.

The President said the country needs efficient infrastructure systems which serve as the backbone of the economy.

The Marcos government, meanwhile, has also intensified its campaign against crime to help improve the business climate in the country.

The Philippine National Police reported a drop in index crimes of 11.67 percent during the first couple of months of the administration, even as several lawmakers urged the President to act swiftly in dealing with criminalities amid a reported series of kidnapping cases.

The administration, meanwhile, is still formulating its policies for his anti-drug campaign which will be focused more on prevention and rehabilitation.

The President said the country also has no intention of rejoining the International Criminal Court (ICC), maintaining that deaths linked to Duterte's drug war are already being investigated by the local courts.

On foreign policy, Marcos is maintaining his predecessor's policy of making the Philippines a "friend to all, enemy to no one."

Since assuming office, he has hosted visits to the Philippines of Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Niue Premier Dal-

Education and health

Among the top priorities of the Marcos government agenda is the resumption of face-to-face classes and improvement of the vaccination rate in the country which it is now slowly realizing.

About 24,000 schools had resumed a five-day-face-to-face classes in August while more than 29,721 schools adopted a hybrid formula that combined having face-to-face classes on several days of the week and doing online classes for the rest of the week.

The government intends to implement full face-to-face classes by November in all schools nationwide.

It has also tapped schools to serve as mobile vaccination sites to increase vaccination rates not just among children but also of yet unvaccinated families. Booster shots are being vigorously pushed as well as a mobile registration site for the national identification system.

The President wants the registration expedited and physical and national IDs distributed physically and online by next year, stressing that the national IDs are important especially in identifying and distributing social aid to those in need.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), on the orders from the President, has started to clean up its list of beneficiaries under its different subsidy programs including the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino program (4Ps). About 1.3 million family beneficiaries are facing removal from the 4Ps.

To expedite the release of aid, such as the one-time educational cash aid for students, the government has lessened the requirements for those seeking assistance from DSWD. The agency has distributed P1.652 billion to 676,922 students nationwide.

Unity

The President, who ran on a platform of unity, said it remains as a "guiding light" of his administration and he needs everyone's support and help to be able to deliver on his promises not just in uniting the country but also in bringing sustainable post-pandemic development and progress.

"Since the campaign — unity has been our battle cry, and now we are settling into our track and finding our pace for the six-year marathon — unity remains one of the primary driving forces in pursuing economic recovery... What we have to do is to strengthen the Philippine economy, what we have to do is to strengthen our position in the world. And we need everyone's help in that," he said.

"At the very first, as I assumed office, I asked for everyone's help. No one person can do this. No one government can do this. No one entity, not one corporation, not one business.

However, if we understand what we considered to be important for our country and for our people and we work in our different ways to achieve that aspiration, to make that dream come true, that unity will bring us to that level of success," he added.



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Baguio to rush land ID and titling process

BAGUIO CITY: Mayor Benjamin Magalong has directed the reconstitution of the City Land Needs Identification Committee (CLNIC) in a bid to expedite the identification and titling of lands for city and village needs.

Executive Order 101-2022 signed recently states that the CLNIC will be headed by the mayor with the city administrator as co-chairman.

Members are the chairman of the city council committee on urban planning, lands and housing; city planning and development coordinator; city engineer; city assessor; city general services officer; Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cordillera assistant regional director for technical services; city environment and natural resources officer (Cenro); and Department of Public Works and Highways Baguio City District Engineering Office district engineer, among others.

In the order, Magalong noted that various lands had been identified by the city government and there

is a need to fast-track their delineation to be utilized for the general welfare of the public.

Earlier, city officials said they are adopting a more aggressive stance in having government lots and those identified for city and public needs titled under its name to avoid losing these to land speculators and to apply the correct measurements of roads and alleys for crucial purposes such as disaster and other emergency responses.

City Administrator Bonifacio de la Peña said the revival of the CLNIC will help speed up the titling program, which at present is hampered by the tedious process involved.

He also said the city had enlisted the help of the Cenro, which committed to facilitate the survey of 96 government lots for one year even as the city for its part also conducts surveys of other pieces of government real property to identify the technical descriptions of the lots that is a requirement in the titling process.

GABY B. KEITH



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P19.3-B PROJECT FUNDED BY CHINA

DAVAO-SAMAL BRIDGE HOUNDED BY LAND, ENV'T IMPACT ISSUES

**By Carmelito Q. Francisco
and Germalina Lacorte**
@InqNational

DAVAO CITY—Issues relating to right-of-way (ROW) and environmental impact are hounding the long-awaited construction of a bridge that will connect this premier urban center of Mindanao with the tourist haven Samal Island.

The Samal Island-Davao City Connector (SIDC) project, which will be funded by China at the cost P19.3 billion, is feared to cause the destruction of coral reefs and other marine habitat around its landing point on the island.

This is why the Rodriguez-Lucas family that owns Costa Marina Beach Resort in Samal's Babak district—the target landing point of the bridge—is opposing its current design and is one with environmental groups in calling for a “realignment” of the bridge.

To show its support for the project, which is a four-decade dream of Davao City, the family has offered to donate another property as an alternative landing point.

Apart from Costa Marina, the family also owns the adjacent Paradise Island Park and Beach Resort.

But Dean Ortiz, spokesperson for the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in Davao region, told reporters in a recent forum here that the agency's unified project management office, which has jurisdiction over the bridge project, had already chosen the Costa Marina site, from among the various options.

Costa Marina, he said, offers the shortest and the most economical landing point from Davao City's Barangay Lizada in Lanang District, making the actual bridge length at 1.2 kilometers.

“illegally entered [the family's] properties with armed men in tow ...”

Ortiz clarified that the DPWH regional office was not involved in the project but was only there to aid the project team. He said the armed men were members of the Philippine Coast Guard, whom the project team requested for safe navigation to the island.

'Neutral ground'

He denied there was anything illegal in their entry since the part of the property where their rented speedboat docked was the part of the property whose foreshore lease the family had failed to pay since 2006.

“There was no forceful entry because when they arrived, the resort owners were there and they talked, they took their snacks and they left. There was no commotion,” he said.

“Some resorts don't like anybody to dock on their beach line but that particular area of the property [where we docked] had no foreshore lease or occupational fee since 2006, so there was no forceful entry because [that area was a] neutral ground, that's a public property to begin with, so [entering it] was legal,” Ortiz said.

He assured, however, that just like other projects of the DPWH, they would not enter a property nor start a project without the consent of landowners. Since they have decided on the bridge's landing point, they will soon be negotiating with the family, so expropriation as a recourse is still farthest from their minds.

Legal action

On Tuesday, the DPWH project team visited Costa Marina, accompanied by the Philippine Coast Guard, for an ocular inspection and validation.

This raised alarm among members of the Rodriguez-Lucas family, who threatened to sue the group for “illegally” entering their property.

“[T]respawning, coercion and other criminal charges are being mulled against the resorts' unwelcome guests and their armed contingents,” said a statement from the Rodriguez-Lucas family.

The statement claimed that the group, composed mostly of the DPWH project team, the City Environment and Natural Resources Office in Panabo, representatives of the mayor's office and the Chinese contractor of the project

Protected area

Earlier, environmental groups belonging to the Save Samal Reefs Alliance called for the realignment of the project because of the damage that the bridge construction might bring to the Paradise coral reefs and marine life in the area.

The statement of the Rodriguez-Lucas family claimed that the environmental compliance certificate for the bridge project could have been issued “without a protected area management board clearance.”

“Contrary to the DPWH's claim that the Samal landing site is outside a protected area, the entire Samal Island remains a protected area. It was established as a Mangrove Swamp Forest Reserve under Proclamation No. 2152, series of 1981—an initial component of the National Integrated Protected Areas System,” the family statement said.

“The law requires an act of Congress to disestablish a protected area or modify its boundary. The DPWH has not come forward with any such evidence insofar as Samal Island is concerned,” it said. INQ



Save Sierra Madre for food sustainability

WITH President Marcos' pronouncement that addressing climate change is on top of his agenda, agriculture stakeholders have called for the protection of Sierra Madre mountain range as "protector" of the environment.

Super-typhoon Karding's (international name Noru) expected onslaught was shielded by the mountain range, minimizing the damage to crops and livestock, and saved 17 million brood stock in Central Luzon.

"About 17 million brood stock would've been lost if not for Sierra Madre. Luzon is number one in aquaculture production, and Central Luzon or Region 3 produces 16 percent by value. By volume, it is also huge," said Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Region 3 Director Wilfredo Cruz.

Brood stock are mature fish used in aquaculture for breeding purposes.

A week after Karding hit the country

on Sept. 25, farmers, fisherfolk, youth, indigenous people, and other food producers continue to thank the Sierra Madre Mountain Range, as well as the Caraballo and Cordillera Mountains, for diminishing the impact of the Category 4 typhoon.

Norberto Chingcuanco, vice president for corporate planning of Feedmix Specialist Inc., said Sierra Madre's importance during Karding's rampage shows that nature is vital to ensuring a sustainable livelihood.

"We need nature for our livelihood. Aquaculture depends on clean water to survive and thrive. It is in our best interest to preserve the environment so we can keep on producing fish," Chingcuanco said.

Former BFAR national director Asis Perez said the six regions affected by Karding -- the Cordillera Autonomous Region, Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, and Bicol

Region -- are connected through the three mountain ranges.

"The impact of Karding to everyone in the agricultural community might have been worse had it not been for Sierra Madre. The mountains both protect us from danger and ensure that we are able to produce food," he said.

Sierra Madre is the longest mountain range in the country. Spanning over 540 kilometers and runs from the province of Cagayan down to the province of Quezon, forming a north-south direction on the eastern portion of Luzon.

Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park is the largest protected area of the country covering the northern range of the Sierra Madre Mountains of eastern Luzon. The park is located in the eastern part of the province of Isabela in Cagayan Valley (consisting of a total area of 359,486 hectares, broken down to 287,861 has. of land area and 71,652 has. of coastline water area).



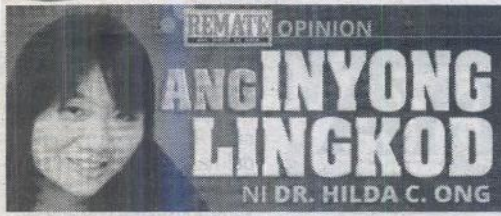
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REMATO OPINION

ANGINYONG LINGKOD

NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

NAKUKUHANG GROUND WATER SA BANSA PAKONTI NANG PAKONTI

ANG National Water Resources Board ay isang ahensya ng pamahalaan na namamahala sa lahat ng katubigan sa buong bansa at nagmomonitor sa paggamit ng tubig.

Ang pagkontrol ng paggamit ng lahat ng uri ng katubigan tulad ng alokasyon, konserbasyon at pag-iingat na kakibat ang pagsustena sa pagpapaulad nito sa pamamagitan ng sistema ng water rights.

Pangunahing pinagkunan natin ng potable water ang ground water na ayon sa datos ng NWRB ay 49% ay na-

gagamit sa mga domestikong pangangailangan, 32% sa agrikultura, 15% sa mga industriya, at 4% na iba pang pinaggagamitan.

Pero nababahala ang NWRB sa pangunguna ni executive director Dr. Sevelio David, Jr. sa pagkatuyot ng mga ground water sa malaking bahagi ng bansa.

Ang region 10 o ang Northern Mindanao na siyang may pinakakonting ground water sa buong bansa ay halos wala na talagang makuha, habang pakonti na ng pakonti ang nakukuhang tubig mula sa Ilo-

candia at sa Central Visayas na siyang mas maraming imbak na ground water.

Sanhi ito ng mas dumaraming bilang ng tao, hindi maaayos na pagtatapon ng mga wastewater, malawakang polusyon, ang saline water intrusion, at epekto ng mas lumalalang climate change and global warming.

Bunsod nito, nanawagan si Executive Director David na pangalagaan ang yamang-tubig sapagkat ang fresh at ground water ay hindi na gaanong kailangan ng treatments, hindi kagaya ng salt water na kailangan munang dumaan sa salination upang mainom.

Kapag sinasabi nating pinoprotektahan natin ang environment at ang kalidad ng tubig natin, ang pinoprotektahan talaga natin d'yan ay ang sarili natin.

May mga lugar nilalagyan ng NWRB ng Telemetry Sensor Network Systems, sa pamamagitan ng mga sensors na ito, makakakuha ng mga

real-time information ukol sa water parameters maging ang dami at kalidad ng tubig sa kapalaan ng dalawang bayang nabanggit.

Aktuwal na makukuha ang water level para malaman ang quantity habang masusukat din ang power of hydrogen, temperature at electrical conductivity para sa quality.

Maging responsible tayo sa paggani ng tubig kahit pa masasabi natin na may sapat tayong supply, hindi pa rin dapat tayo maging kampanante, kinakailangang magtipid, mag-recycle.



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Preventing a water catastrophe

To prevent the water crisis from becoming a catastrophe, urgent solutions that were arrived at five years ago during seven water summits all over the country must now be implemented.

Last Sept. 20, in a forum sponsored by Water.org, Management Association of the Philippines, Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines and Accralaw, both Philippine and international water experts talked about the water crisis. We realized that we are involved in an even more serious global water crisis.

United Nations data stated that by 2025, 1.8 billion will suffer from water scarcity. By 2050, 45 percent of the world's population will be in various water-shortage situations.

In 2019, then President Rodrigo Duterte created a legislative-executive-private sector water roadmap committee. It was established because of the poor evaluation received by the Philippines from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) studies conducted in 2013 and 2016. Both times, the Philippines ranked in the bottom third of 48 Asia-Pacific countries for water governance. This was true in all of the five areas the ADB studied: environment, economy, household, urban and resilience.

The committee focused on these areas, and added two: agriculture and governance. They wanted to know if their work would result in an improvement in the next cycle of review.

The committee generally succeeded. From a low rating of 1 (nascent) in 2013 and a 2 (engaged) in 2016, our evaluation rating improved to a 3 (capable).

When the committee was abolished to make way for a

COMMENTARY

ERNESTO M. ORDOÑEZ



United Nations data stated that by 2025, 1.8 billion will suffer from water scarcity. By 2050, 45 percent of the world's population will be in various water-shortage situations

presidential executive order that unfortunately was never signed, the momentum for improved water governance also stalled. Given our current crisis, this momentum must now be restored.

The seven recommendations from five years ago must be implemented with haste:

Since there is no coordination among the 32 water-related agencies, an executive order should create an interim coordinating body immediately. We should do this while we await the proposed legislation creating the Department of Water Resources.

The globally recognized Integrated Water Resource Management approach should be used in the 18 critical major water basins. This cannot be done right now because of the low budget (about P1 million to P2 million) for each.

We must correct our dismal 4-percent water harvesting rate, which is very low compared to parts of India that are recording 60 percent. We should require better regulation in our building structures as well as better education.

The National Irrigation Authority should consider using a larger part of its budget on management to ensure effective use. It has been shown that several times, rehabilitation and repairs, as well as small irrigation systems, yield higher return on investment versus larger systems.

All water-related data must be submitted in a consistent form to the Philippine Statistics Authority. This will enable informed water management planning and encourage decentralized water resource centers to provide better research expertise.

We should increase planning and budget delivery using the latest cost-effective technologies to give almost 10 million Filipinos access to clean drinking water.

We must focus on reforestation, with emphasis on bamboo and mangrove restoration. There is a huge international Green Climate Fund for this purpose, which we have hardly touched. New groups like the Bamboo Warriors are looking into this, and more should be encouraged to do so.

Some things have been accomplished, but more can still be done to prevent not just a water crisis but also a water catastrophe. **INO**

The author is Agriwatch chair, former secretary of presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry. Contact is agriwatch_phil@yahoo.com.



Goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030 out of reach

COVID-19 has dealt the "biggest setback" to global poverty reduction efforts in decades, and the World Bank warned Wednesday that the goal to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 likely remains out-of-reach.

Poverty rose sharply during the pandemic, and the development lender estimates about 70 million people were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020 — the biggest one-year spike since monitoring began in 1990. **►PovertyA8**

POVERTY FROM A1

Goal of ending

The report offers the first tally of those struggling to live on less than \$2.15 a day, the new global definition of extreme poverty, but follows many warnings from the global development lender that poorer nations are being left behind.

Earlier this year, the institution warned that as many as 95 million people would fall back into extreme poverty by the end of this year.

War in Ukraine, rising inflation and slowing global growth have put further pressure on the bank's mission to lift people out of poverty.

"Inflation, currency depreciations, and broader overlapping crises" point to a grim outlook, World Bank President David Malpass said in a statement.

"Progress in reducing extreme poverty has essentially halted in tandem with subdued global economic growth," he said.

Global extreme poverty had fallen to 8.4 percent by 2019 from 38 percent in 1990, but the pandemic triggered the first rise in more than two decades.

Amid the setbacks the report projects the global extreme poverty rate for 2030 will only fall to seven percent, or nearly 600 million people.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 60 percent of all people in extreme poverty, according to the bank, and history-defying growth rates for the rest of the decade would be needed to hit poverty reduction targets.

While wealthy countries generally had the resources to cushion the economic blow from the pandemic, this was not the case for developing economies.

Income losses of the world's poorest countries were twice as high as in their richer counterparts, causing global inequality to rise for the first time in decades, the report said.

"Over the next decade, investing in better health and education will be crucial for developing economies," said World Bank Chief Economist Indermit Gill.

Governments should favor targeted cash transfers over broad subsidies to support poor and vulnerable groups, the World Bank added.

It also urged for measures like property and carbon taxes, which can raise revenue without hurting the poorest. **AFP**



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'Climate change made' 2022 drought likelier

PARIS: Human-caused climate change made this summer's drought across the Northern Hemisphere at least 20 times more likely, according to a rapid analysis released on Wednesday that warns such extreme dry periods would become increasingly common with global heating.

Last June, July and August were the hottest months in Europe since records began, and the exceptionally high temperatures led to the worst drought the continent has witnessed since the Middle Ages.

Crops withered in European bread-baskets, as the historic dry spell drove record wildfire intensity and placed severe pressure on the continent's power grid.

Successive heat waves between June and July, which saw temperatures top 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in the United Kingdom for the first time, saw some 24,000 excess deaths in Europe.

China and North America also experienced unusually high temperatures and exceptionally low rainfall over the period.

An international team of climate scientists has determined the warming caused by human activity made such extreme weather significantly more likely than it would have been at the dawn of the industrial age.

The World Weather Attribution service calculated that the agricultural and ecological drought over the Northern Hemisphere was at least 20 times likelier, thanks to global heating.

"The 2022 summer has shown how human-induced climate change is increasing the risks of agricultural and ecological droughts in densely populated and cultivated regions of the North Hemisphere," said Sonia Seneviratne, a professor at the Institute for Atmospheric and Climate Science at ETH Zurich in Switzerland and one of the study contributors.

'Faster than expected'

To quantify the effect of human-caused climate change on soil moisture levels, the team analyzed weather data and computer simulations to compare the

real climate as it is today — that is, some 1.2 C hotter than pre-industrial levels — with a climate absent of any human-induced heating.

They found that western and central Europe experienced particularly severe drought and substantially reduced crop yields.

Moisture in the top 7 cm of soil across the Northern Hemisphere was made five times likelier to experience severe drought due to climate change, the study found.

For the top one meter of soil — known as the root zone — this summer's dryness was made at least 20 times likelier on account of global heating.

"Really, what is most relevant for agriculture and ecological impacts is the top one meter of the soil because that's where plants have their roots," Seneviratne said.

Overall, a Northern Hemisphere drought such as this summer's was now likely to occur once every 20 years in today's climate, compared to once every 400 years in the mid-18th century.

Producers in Europe and China have warned of significantly lower than expected harvests in crop staples due to the dry spell, after food prices spiked to multiyear highs following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24.

Friederike Otto, senior lecturer in climate science at the Imperial College London, called the crop shortfall "particularly worrying."

"It followed a climate change-fueled heat wave in South Asia that also destroyed crops, and happened at a time when global food prices were already extremely high due to the war in Ukraine," she said.

Otto also said the Northern Hemisphere in general was showing a "pure climate change signal" in its overall warming trends.

Maarten van Aalst, director of the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Center and professor of climate and disaster resilience at the University of Twente, said governments needed to do far more to prepare for future heat and drought shocks, which would become ever more frequent as temperatures rise. **AFP**



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'Three-peat La Niña' La Niña caused by climate change

FORECASTERS are predicting a "three-peat La Niña" this year.

New research led by the University of Washington explained that climate change is, in the short term, favoring La Niñas.

A La Niña winter tends to be cooler and wetter in the Pacific Northwest and hotter and drier in the U.S. Southwest. Other worldwide effects include drier conditions in East Africa, and rainier weather in Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Scientists hope to predict the direction of these longer-term El Niño-like or La Niña-like climate trends in order to protect human life and property.

"This is an important question over the next century for regions that are strongly influenced by El Niño, which includes western North America, South America, East and Southeast Asia and Australia," said lead author Robert Jnglin Wills, a UW



research scientist in atmospheric sciences.

Knowing what to expect in the future helps communities prepare for potential weather in the coming season and in years to come.

Global warming is widely expected to favor El Niños. The reason is that the cold, deep water rising to the sea surface off South America will meet warmer air.

Anyone who's sweated knows that evaporation has a cooling effect, so the chillier ocean off South America, which has

less evaporation, will warm faster than the warmer ocean off Asia. This decreases the temperature difference across the tropical Pacific and lightens the surface winds blowing toward Indonesia, the same as occurs during El Niño. Past climate records confirm that the climate was more El Niño-like during warmer periods.

But while Earth's atmosphere has warmed in recent decades, the new study showed a surprising trend in the tropical ocean. The authors

looked at temperatures at the surface of the ocean recorded by ship-based measurements and ocean buoys from 1979 to 2000.

The Pacific Ocean off South America has actually cooled slightly, along with ocean regions further south. Meanwhile, the western Pacific Ocean and nearby eastern Indian Ocean have warmed more than elsewhere. Neither phenomenon can be explained by the natural cycles simulated by climate models. This suggested that some process

missing in current models could be responsible.

The upshot of these changes on either side of the tropical Pacific is that the temperature difference between the eastern and western Pacific has grown, surface winds blowing toward Indonesia have strengthened, and people are experiencing conditions typical of La Niña winters. The study focused on temperature patterns at the ocean's surface. Thirty years of data is too short to study the frequency of El Niño and La Niña events.

The researchers aren't sure why this pattern is happening. Their current work is exploring tropical climate processes and possible links to the ocean around Antarctica. Once they know what's responsible, they may be able to predict when it will eventually switch to favor El Niños.

(University of Washington)



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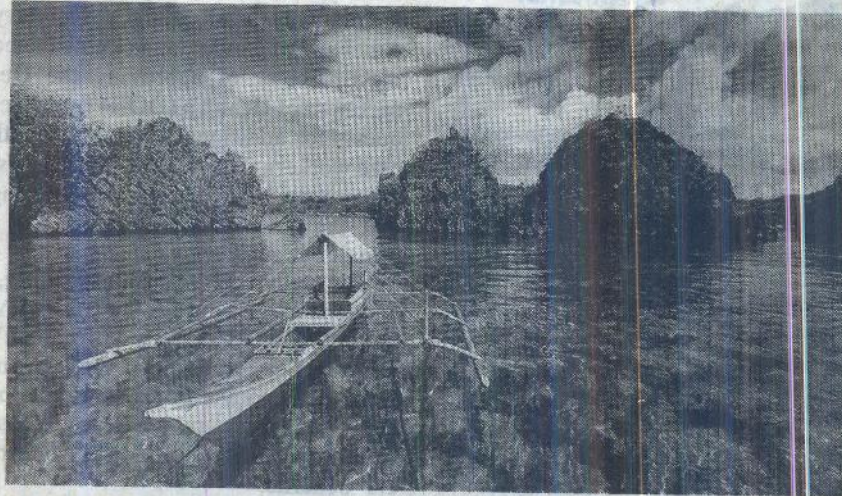
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MARINE PROTECTED AREAS OF PALAWAN. The United States government, through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), has recognized and granted awards to four of Palawan's best marine protected areas (MPAs). USAID Philippines Deputy Mission Director Rebekah Eubanks and Palawan Governor Victorino Dennis Socrates presented the awards. Cited were the Siete Pecados Marine Park as best managed MPA, followed by San Jose MPA as best emerging MPA, while the Balisugan and Bulalaco MPS were recognized as best community managed and best locally managed MPAs, respectively. The Calamianes MPA network, an inter-local government unit alliance of Busuanga, Coron, Culion and Linapacan, received a special award.



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

AMAIA SKIES CUBAO CONDOMINIUM
CORPORATION,

Applicant.

Case No. 22-3436

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NOTICE OF HEARING

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within Amaia Skies Cubao Condominium, Barangay Socorro, Quezon, Metro Manila, with the following proposed rates:

PROPOSED TARIFF

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m3 (min)	6-10 m3	11-20 m3	21-30 m3	31-40 m3	Over 40 m3
1/2"	₱147.50	36.90	44.20	51.60	59.00	88.50

This application will be initially heard by the Board on **24 October 2022**. The hearing will start at **9:00 o'clock in the morning** at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8th Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

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

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

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

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

Witness the Honorable Executive Director of the National Water Resources Board this 6th day of September 2022.

By Authority of the Board:

(Sgd.) **Dr. SEVILLO D. DAVID, Jr., CESO III**
Executive Director

Affected Parties:

The Secretary
Sangguniang Panlungsod
Quezon City, Metro Manila

The Barangay Chairman
Barangay Socorro,
Quezon City, Metro Manila

The Homeowners Assn. President
Amaia Skies Cubao Condominium
Barangay Socorro,
Quezon City, Metro Manila

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

(PDI – Oct. 7, 2022)