

21 October 2022, Friday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



## *NEDA prepares issuance of Public Service Act IRR*

By LOUELLA DESIDERIO

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) is looking to issue the implementing rules and regulations of the amended Public Service Act (PSA) within the month.

"We are still trying to release something before the end of this month because we committed that," NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said.

NEDA, however, is looking at a graduated issuance of the rules as there are many agencies involved that need to sign the IRR.

"Getting that coordination with many other agencies might take us long. So we are looking at that possibility of graduated issuance depending on how quickly we can reconcile concerns of other agencies," he said.

In coordination with NEDA, the following agencies will have to promulgate the IRR of the law: Civil Aeronautics Board, Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, Department of Energy, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Information and Communications Technology, Department of Transportation, Energy Regulatory Commission, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, Land Transportation Office, Local Water Utilities Administration, Maritime Industry Authority, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, National Telecommunications Commission, National Water Resources Board, Philippine National Railways, Philippine Ports Authority, and the Toll Regulatory Board.

Republic Act 11659, which amended the PSA, was signed by former president Rodrigo Duterte last March 21.

Under the amended PSA, full foreign ownership will be allowed in telecommunications, domestic shipping, railways, subways, airlines, airports, expressways and tollways.

Prior to the approval of the law, foreign ownership in the sectors was limited to 40 percent.

Balisacan said earlier the implementation of the amended PSA, along with economic liberalization reforms passed during the previous administration such as the amendments to the Foreign Investments Act (FIA) and Retail Trade Liberalization (RTL) Act, would enable the country to get more investments.

Under the amended FIA, foreign firms can invest up to 100 percent in a domestic enterprise, unless participation is prohibited or limited by existing laws.

The amended RTL, meanwhile, reduced the minimum paid-up capital for foreign investors in the retail sector to P25 million from the previous \$2.5 million.

"These reforms would attract high-value and innovation-driven investments which, in turn, could generate more and quality employment," Balisacan said.



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## DENR, DOLE ink agreement to create green jobs

By Joel dela Torre

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) signed an agreement with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to create new job opportunities particularly in the environment sector.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonio Yulo-Loyzaga and Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma formalized the partnership through a memorandum of agreement (MOA) they signed during the DENR Multistakeholder Forum in Manila recently.

This is in line with DOLE's Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers or TUPAD project that provides emergency employment for displaced, underemployed, and seasonal workers.

Under the MOA, both agencies agreed to promote employment opportunities aligned with the protection and conservation of the country's natural resources and ecosystems.

Unemployment rate worsened in August this year where a survey of 10,810 families nationwide showed that 2.68 million families were either unemployed or out of business, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) report.

On the other hand, PSA reported that the 2021 poverty incidence, which is the proportion of Filipinos whose per capita incomes are not sufficient to meet their basic needs, was at 18.1 percent or 19.99 million Filipinos which is higher than the 17.67 percent in 2018.

According to Loyzaga, the DENR now is working closely with the DOLE in calculating how many jobs to cover by identifying all the regions, both land and coastal areas, which are in need of support in terms of forestation and implementation of the government's greening programs.

She said the DENR's Forest Management Bureau (FMB) is looking at the country's geography and is in charge of mapping out possible areas where the so-called "green jobs" would be available.

"There is a full range of opportunities available, and we hope that this may begin to serve as a strategic way of looking at how our environment and our economics might actually intersect, especially in the case of the most socially vulnerable, and most environmentally vulnerable geographies," Loyzaga said.

She pointed out that understanding the country's geography would help national government agencies in identifying unemployment rate, poverty incidence, and high value areas that would benefit the most from environmental employment opportunities.

Loyzaga said the green jobs – ranging from planting, forestation, monitoring, and upkeep of areas of concern – would alleviate unemployment in the country.



## Effective forest protection

I AM never impressed by photos or news reports about the confiscation of illegal logs or fitches that have been poached from our forests. The damage has been done. Those arrested in these instances are mere drivers delivering goods from one place to another. Where are those who hired them and who are ultimately behind this illicit business of cutting trees from our public forests? Who are the masterminds and who are the consumers? These are the essential elements that must be dealt with. Catching mere drivers is a charade that has no impact on the prevention of future poaching. Usually, such arrests seem to just stop there. Nothing is accomplished, no other trees are saved, hardly anyone except the unfortunate clueless drivers are charged. This is not authentic protection of our forests at all.

Moreover, what happens to the valuable wood? Sometimes it mysteriously disappears, or it is given to a government agency to use because it is a government agency. So, we have hardwood school desks, hardwood patches in need-of-repair government buildings, all a wasteful use of the wood which, at the very least, should be auctioned off to get some return for the government agency in charge or funds for the National Treasury.

It is really time to be more ef-



### AMBIENT VOICES

MA. ISABEL ONGPIN

fective in the protection of our forest reserves and the punishment of those who steal them. One of the obvious steps is to have a strong and large battalion of trained forest rangers who can stand up to poachers. In numbers there is strength. A lone ranger or two will not be effective because they will not have the clout to enforce the law. They have to be many, well-trained, well-equipped and able to call reinforcements, whether the PNP (Philippine National Police) or other rangers, when necessary. As of now, they are left defenseless against criminal elements for which many have lost their lives.

What happened in the Magsajon Georeserve in Rizal was that the protectors were overwhelmed though not intimidated by armed men. They had to call for reinforcements which the Department of the Interior and Local Government was able to provide. This came only with the media publicity showing what was happening. Otherwise, the armed men would have had their way because they were more in number than the defenders. In most other forests,

there is no media monitoring the situation and so poachers literally get away with murder.

The DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) has to have a proper budget adequate enough for forest protection. It should have a seriously provident outlay for the required number of forest rangers so as to be effective in preventing tree poaching. Here is where economizing on expenses can cause more costly depredation.

We have too many cases of forest rangers killed in the line of duty. The Philippines, unfortunately, is one of the top five countries where environmental protectors and environmentalists are literally done away with. This is intolerable and cries to high heaven for redress. It is not just a matter of justice for those killed which is vital, but also for defense of the environment which at this point is critical.

Government should also recruit private environmental groups to assist it in their work to protect our environmental assets. Public-private partnership could be a boon to this effort. It is time to be creative and imaginative on how to defend the environment.

Moreover, there should be a nationwide education program about the value and necessity of keeping our trees intact. This effort should not be confined to forested areas but everywhere.

In urban areas, people also cut down trees because of ignorance or the mistaken notion that it is better than sweeping up their shed leaves. Ethnic minorities usually know that trees are important to their environment, but sometimes they are inveigled by outsiders to cut trees because of livelihood scarcity. Here is where assistance in giving livelihood projects or means to earn a living should come in from government sources or private entities in partnership with the government. It should be a government task with a budget to help Indigenous People have a healthy livelihood so that the forests they live near or in are not cut down. They can become forest rangers properly supported and led. Or, private parties should be encouraged to hire them to give them a source of income. If there is focus on the subject, there will surely be solutions to the problems.

And finally, should there be cases of forest poaching, the masterminds and ultimate beneficiaries of this environmental crime must be brought to the bar of justice with adequate evidence from meticulous law enforcement so as to be convicted and receive the punishment due them.

Destruction of environmental assets is a high crime that must be stopped and punished.



**GUEST COLUMNIST**

# Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park

**A**lbert Einstein once said "Do not grow old, no matter how long you live. Never cease to stand like curious children before the great mystery into which we were born."

As a person who grew up near the southern part of Manila Bay, I have always been curious about the development surrounding the bay area. When we were young, we used to visit the beaches in Zapote and Las Piñas for a family picnic, especially during Pista ni San Juan when everybody trooped to the beach to enjoy the clear water of Manila Bay. When I was studying in Manila, I saw the south part of the bay from Parañaque to Bacoor being reclaimed for the construction of the Manila Cavite Coastal Road. I also saw the opening of the Coastal Road in 1985 and its full conversion to a tollway in 1995.

When the Coastal Road was opened in 1985, two mysterious islands appeared off the coast of Las Piñas and Parañaque. According to stories, the excess reclamation soil and the tons of garbage from Manila Bay as well as those coming from its tributaries created the artificial islands. They were originally barren, and in fact attracted informal settlers who freely lived in

the islands, thus the name Freedom Island, but eventually, vegetation grew and mangroves were planted to prevent the islands from erosion. The islands also attracted wildlife, mostly birds, both indigenous and migratory, that would lead to the islands being a declared protected habitat. Informal settlers were later on asked to leave,



INTERTWINED

and the islands are now under the care of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

On April 22, 2007, the two interconnected islands were formally declared as a Critical Habitat by the Philippine government through Presidential Proclamation No. 1412. It became officially called Las Piñas-Parañaque Habitat and Ecotourism Area or LPPCHEA. LPPCHEA covered 175 hectares composed of Long Island in Las Piñas and Freedom Island in Parañaque. It was included as a Ramsar wetland of international importance on March 15, 2013.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. The Philippines has eight sites on the Ramsar list, including Tubtataha, Olango and Agusan Marsh, and only LPPCHEA is located in the bustling capital Manila. LPPCHEA is now called Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park (LPPWP) after the Ramsar inclusion.



**SENIOR  
BYAHERO**  
JOSEPH BAUTISTA



Not many people using CaviteX daily know that there's an ecotourism area right beside the tollway. I often see the mangrove forest and the migratory birds from the distance whenever I drive along CaviteX and have often wondered what's inside the mangrove forest.

An opportunity to visit LPPWP came recently with the birdwatching activity organized by the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines. In celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day, the club came up with an activity to identify migratory birds as well as endemic birds in the park. I signed up immediately.

The entrance to LPPWP is located right before the toll gate going south. From the entrance, there's a narrow road leading to the visitor center where the Wetland Center Complex is located. The complex houses the LPPWP office, open space auditorium and museum. Located near the complex is the Bambusetum, a collection of Philippine bamboo varieties to Buhong Dilaw to Kawayang Tinik. In the middle of Bambusetum is a sculpture called "Intertwined" highlighting the inseparable link between man and nature.

We were met by the members of Wild Bird Club who explained to us that from October to February, migratory birds like Little Egret, Black-Crowned Night Heron and Common Moorhen coming from Siberia, China and Japan come to the park to escape the cold weather. We were also given binoculars and sheet of paper containing the list of birds which we can see during the birdwatching activity.

From the center complex, we took

the trail leading to Freedom Island, the center of birdwatching activity in the park. Along the way, we saw the many varieties of endemic trees planted along the trail. They include agohe, alagaw, nilad (where the name of Manila came from) and kamuning, which I saw for the first time. I also noticed that no non-native trees like mahogany and gemilina are planted on the park.

We spent more than two hours looking for birds. We saw Black-winged Stilts, Common Sandpipers, Gray-tailed Tattlers, Whiskered Terns, Black-crown Night Herons and hundreds of Little Egrets, and many more. They were everywhere, on trees, on ponds, on the mangrove forest and on rocks. The guides also taught us not only to look for birds, but to listen to them. We learned that each bird species makes its own unique sound.

The birdwatching activity which we joined transported us to a place in the metropolis which we never knew existed. Walking on the board walk in the middle of the mangrove forest with little egrets flying around, it's hard to believe that I was only a few meters from a busy expressway. I then realized that the reason why the mysterious islands were created out of garbage and refuse from reclamation was to provide habitat for weary birds and escape for tired urban souls.

*(The author is a senior who recently retired. His taste for adventure has not kept him from travelling, usually via not-so-usual routes.)*



## Editorial

### Debt-for-nature swap a way to fight climate 'injustice'

**I**T has long been an inconvenient truth — the world's poor nations are the most vulnerable to climate change. But that is not their only lament; they are also wallowing in debt.

Economically strapped countries are caught in what has been described as a "Sisyphean trap" — they borrow money to protect themselves from the effects of global warming, only to suffer huge losses as storms become more intense and sea levels continue to rise.

So they borrow again to rebuild and become resilient after the disasters, and the cycle continues.

At the end of their annual meetings in Washington last week, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dissected ways to address climate and development needs. Among other things, a fund was proposed that will provide grant payments to developing countries that significantly reduce emissions.

But the finance ministers of 20 countries that are most threatened by climate change are offering a far better option — a debt-for-nature swap, in which part of a nation's debt is wiped out and invested in conservation.

"We are living not just on borrowed money but on borrowed time," rued Mohamad Nasheed, the former president of the Maldives, an island nation in danger of disappearing under the waves within this century if the rise in sea levels is not checked.

Stressing the gravity of the situation, Nasheed said these debtor countries are threatening to stop loan repayments until climate change issues are properly addressed.

Nasheed wants developing countries and low-lying island

nations to be compensated for losses and damage brought about by climate change. And rightly so. The United States, China and other wealthy countries are the leading emitters of greenhouse gases. The same countries, however, are opposed to creating such a fund, fearing they could be legally bound to settle disaster claims by poorer nations.

That is where the injustice lies. The biggest polluters blatantly refuse to accept responsibility for their misdeeds.

The hesitancy is evident in the statement of John Kerry, the United States special envoy for climate change: "In all honesty, the most important thing that we can do is stop, mitigate enough that we prevent loss and damage. The next most important thing we can do is help people adapt to the damage that's already there. And we have a limited, you know, we're not — you tell me the government in the world that has trillions of dollars, 'cause that's what it costs."

*The World Bank says that 58 percent of the world's poorest countries are at risk or are in "debt distress." A debt relief advocacy group says the share of government revenues that go into paying foreign debts nearly tripled to 17.4 percent between 2011 and 2020.*

As climate risks increase, developing countries are finding it harder to secure loans. According to a debt relief advocacy group, the share of government revenues that go into paying foreign debts nearly tripled to 17.4 percent between 2011 and 2020.

The World Bank says that 58 percent of the world's poorest countries are at risk or are in "debt distress." And they must spend from \$290 billion to \$580 billion annually by 2030 to recover from climate-induced calamities.

Nasheed said that if such debts were cut by 30 percent and the savings invested in climate mitigation projects, "it would have a huge impact."

There are signs that the IMF is warming up to the idea of a debt swap. Kristalina Georgieva, the IMF head, had pledged to work with the World Bank to "advance that option" at the UN climate summit in Egypt in November.

In a pre-summit meeting earlier this month in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Philippines was chosen to co-facilitate and lead the discussion on the global agenda for climate finance.

Robert E.A. Borje, the Philippines' Climate Change Commission vice chairman and executive director, focused the discussion on the commitments of development nations to step up climate finance delivery to at-risk countries.

Borje also stressed the need to be "innovative, creative and flexible" in tapping public and private sources for financial aid in achieving low-carbon and climate-resilient development.

We need to get more involved in formulating climate policy directions. Our survival as a country depends on it.



# Revisiting the Samal Bridge

**“What militates against the way DPWH wanted to carry out the project is that there is a solution to the potential stalemate in the undertaking and yet surprisingly ignores this.”**

We, Dabawenyos, salivate in Cebu City, Metro Manila, and other places having their bridges and wide highways.

The much-ballyhooed Samal Bridge cannot even take off from its planning stage. Planning projects involve three Ps — politicians, planners, and people. In the case of Samal Bridge, only politicians and planners had been talking since day one.

The intransigence of the Department of Public Works and Highways in taking into consideration vital issues of concerns raised by stakeholders derailed the project.

If DPWH and its Chinese contractors insist on setting up the massive bridge infrastructures on the sites they wanted to land in Samal island that action would totally destroy the rich coral reefs which are part of the remaining two percent viable corals in the country. The environmental impact is simply ignored by politicians, DPWH and DENR.

The Rodriguez family who owns the first resort on the island — the Paradise Resort — had, since time immemorial, guarded the coral reefs and other marine life in the area from dynamite fishermen and coral collectors. The resort is fronting the reef. If you see a variety of fishes as you wade by the beach you can be sure these came from the coral reefs and diverse marine resources in the area which are veritable spawning grounds of fishes, octopuses, and squids to name a few.

The Rodriguez family is not alone in expressing their concerns about the environmental impact of the bridge as stoically planned by DPWH. To save the coral reefs the Rodriguez and the Lucas family had offered a part of the valuable properties they owned not far from where the DPWH and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources wisemen had approved without thinking.

Don't get me wrong if I raise a red flag on this project undertaking. I am all for this bridge and in my small way had been batting for it as this will redound to the economic benefits of the Island Garden City



SOUTHERN OPTICS  
JUN LEDESMA

of Samal.

What militates against the way DPWH wanted to carry out the project is that there is a solution to the potential stalemate in the undertaking and yet surprisingly ignores this.

Years back, Japan submitted a preliminary feasibility study for the construction of the Davao-Samal Bridge. That study focused not only on the bridge per se but on the environmental impact on the Davao Gulf marine resources. It, therefore, proposed several alternatives which comprehend what is environmentally acceptable and least costly as it is the shortest distance from Davao City and Samal. Among these is a site in Barangay Calielic which is adjacent to the property being donated by the Rodriguez and Lucas family. It merely requires a slight alignment from where DPWH wanted to anchor the bridge on the Samal side.

The tenaciousness of DPWH invites suspicion. Why would they insist on procuring expensive real estate properties instead of accepting the donations from Rodriguez and Lucas families? And why are you putting words into the mouth of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. saying he will attend the groundbreaking and the inaugural ceremonies of the bridge? Is it a strategy to stifle objections?

On the other hand, what is the interest of DENR officials in their acquiescence over these shady and surreptitious negotiations?

Then-president Rodrigo Duterte canceled the environmental compliance certificates of a reclamation project in Coron, Palawan because of serious violations. Why have they conveniently stonewalled Duterte's action? Their silence is deafening.

DPWH and DENR in Davao Region had been in the news for some time now. DPWH and its contractors were identified as the culprits behind the constant water supply disruption in Davao City. Their dredging equipment hit the Davao City Water District transmission pipes, not in a few times. It was only when Mayor Baste Duterte warned them of the consequences that they became cautious with what they do.

DENR, on the other hand, let go of illegal logging operations that had been flagrantly operating in Davao del Norte and Davao de Oro.

DPWH is also famous for constructing wave-like highways and DENR for its insensitivity to the environment and natural resources. And we wonder why the Cabinet Secretaries of these two departments have a very high tolerance for the ineptness and inutility of their regional officials.

**“The tenaciousness of DPWH invites suspicion. Why would they insist on procuring expensive real estate properties instead of accepting the donations from Rodriguez and Lucas families?”**





## Govt urged anew to ban waste imports

CIVIL society groups advocating for a zero-waste and toxic-free Philippines pressed the Marcos administration to ban waste imports and ratify the Basel Convention Ban Amendment that will protect the country from the detrimental impacts of exploitative global waste trade.

During the General Assembly of the EcoWaste Coalition, the groups passed a resolution urging President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. to ratify the Basel Convention Ban Amendment, an international law prohibiting hazardous waste exports from developed to developing countries.

To plug loopholes in current regulations that permit the importation of recyclable materials containing hazardous substances, the groups further asked the President to declare a national ban on all waste imports.

"These twin policy measures — ratifying the Basel Convention Ban Amendment and declaring a comprehensive ban on waste imports — are essential to provide our country with a strong legal protection against dumping and ensure that the right of every Filipino to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is upheld," said Aileen Lucero, national coordinator at EcoWaste Coalition.

Marian Ledesma, zero waste campaigner at Greenpeace Philippines, emphasized that the Marcos administration must make the ratification of the Basel Convention Ban Amendment a priority, as it is a crucial step in protecting Filipinos' right to a healthy environment.

"Beyond safeguarding the Philippines from hazardous waste and all the associated risks created by waste trade, it safeguards our nation from exploitation by wealthier states who

must be stopped from externalizing the costs of their waste generation to lower-income countries and be made accountable for their own waste," she said.

Environmental activists are not the only ones bucking the entry of waste from overseas. Among their most passionate allies is John Simon, an official of the Bureau of Customs, who is responsible for the decisive re-export in 2019-2020 of some 7,408 metric tons of contaminated plastic garbage shipments from South Korea. For this huge accomplishment, he received in 2021 the Environmental Justice Award from the EcoWaste Coalition, and the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award from the World Customs Organization and the United Nations Environment Program.

"Our bitter experience with the contaminated and illegal waste imports from South Korea, Hong Kong, Australia and Canada, which are still fresh in our people's minds, tells us that strong policies are needed to end the entry of hazardous waste and other wastes into our territory. To protect the national interest from the adverse effects of foreign waste dumping, let's ratify the Basel Convention Ban Amendment and stop waste imports now," said Simon.

Aside from ratifying the Basel Convention Ban Amendment and imposing a national ban on waste imports, the EcoWaste Coalition and its member groups are also urging the authorities to stop plastic pollution at source, ban single-use plastics, list non-environmentally acceptable products and packaging for phase out, and declare government's commitment to a zero waste and non-toxic circular economy.

**EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ**



## Ratification of Basel Convention Ban Amendment on foreign waste pressed

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA  
@jonlmayuga

**C**IVIL-SOCIETY organizations pushing for a zero waste and a toxics-free Philippines are appealing to the Marcos administration to adapt key measures to protect the country from the detrimental impacts of the global waste trade.

At the recently concluded General Assembly of the EcoWaste Coalition, a resolution was passed urging President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to ratify the Basel Convention Ban Amendment, an international law prohibiting hazardous waste exports from developed to developing countries.

To date, 101 parties have ratified the said amendment, which entered into force on December 5, 2019.

In a news release, they further asked the President to declare a national ban on all waste import

to plug loopholes in current regulations that permit importing recyclable materials containing hazardous substances.

"These twin policy measures—ratifying the Basel Convention Ban Amendment and declaring a comprehensive ban on waste imports—are essential to provide our country with a strong legal protection against dumping and ensure that the right of every Filipino to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is upheld," said Aileen Lucero, National Coordinator of EcoWaste Coalition.

"It's our turn to shut our doors to illegal and 'legal' waste imports and send an unequivocal message to waste brokers and traffickers that we are dumping grounds no more."

"The Marcos administration must make the ratification of the Basel Convention Ban Amendment a priority, as it is a crucial step

in protecting Filipinos' right to a healthy environment. Beyond safeguarding the Philippines from hazardous waste and all the associated risks created by waste trade, it safeguards our nation from exploitation by wealthier states who must be stopped from externalizing the costs of their waste generation to lower-income countries and be made accountable for their own waste," said Marian Ledesma, Zero Waste Campaigner, Greenpeace Philippines.

Aside from ratifying the Basel Convention Ban Amendment and imposing a national ban on waste imports, the EcoWaste Coalition and its member groups are also urging the authorities to stop plastic pollution at source, ban single-use plastics, list non-environmentally acceptable products and packaging for phase-out, and declare government's commitment to a zero waste and non-toxic circular economy.



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## ELEVENTH HOUR

THE CLIMATE REALITY PROJECT PHILIPPINES

# Where are we headed with the new EPR Law?

**I**t is a good start."

This is what Sen. Cynthia Villar said about the new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act, a law she shepherded in the Senate that lapsed into law in late July when both Presidents Duterte and Marcos didn't act on it.

It's a welcome law that requires large enterprises or business entities with over P100 million in total assets to be environmentally responsible throughout the life cycle of their products, by reducing and preventing waste and pollution. Tighter mandates are imposed for plastic-producing companies that must recover or offset their plastic packaging footprint by 20 to 80 percent starting in 2023 up to 2028 and beyond.

Single or multi-layered materials (such as sachets, labels, and laminates), rigid products (such as containers, personal care, cosmetic, cutlery, straws, tarps, and signages), plastic bags, and polystyrene are covered by the law.

To say that this law would only set things moving, however, feels like a compromise.

Those who have been following the hearings in both chambers would also think that this is perhaps because of Sen. Villar's decision, as chair of the Senate Committee on the Environment, to prioritize the EPR Act over another similar bill, which also mandated EPR schemes from companies but whose main component was to regulate and phaseout single-use plastics. This push for a national ban came from a good number of legislators and even from the Department of Finance (DOF) and Climate Change Commission (CCC), in consideration as well of the over 30 percent of local government units that have policies regulating plastics.

It's a missed opportunity, considering the country's massive addiction and negligence on plastics. We're cited as the third highest plastic polluter in the world's oceans (next to Indonesia and China), with our rivers among the world's plastic-emitters. This could get worse as our plastic production and consumption would increase by 230 percent by 2040 and our unrecycled plastics would also increase to three million tons in 2030 and five million tons in 2040, according to a recent report from World Bank.

What's also revealing in the study made by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) in 2019 is that more than 50 percent of all unrecyclable residual waste discarded in the country is branded waste, with only 10 companies responsible for 60 percent of branded waste.

Believing that the EPR Act as a good start is acceptable, but "to what end?" is the question — especially since there are certain contestable provisions of the law.



*The author:*

*Ian Soqueño is a Climate Reality Leader and a strategic communications professional with engagements in the public and development sectors. He is currently the Plastics and Energy Campaign Lead of The Climate Reality Project Philippines.*



'The EPR Law should be a means toward the eventual ban on single-use plastics to turn off the plastic faucet and mitigate the risks and hazards to our health, environment, and climate due to the pollution and emissions produced throughout the whole life cycle of plastics.'



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# PBBM commends LGU role in mitigating climate-change impacts in Leyte speech

BY SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA

@sam\_medenilla

**P**RESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Thursday recognized the big role of local government units (LGU) in the country's efforts to combat the effects of climate change.

In his speech during the 75th Ormoc City Diamond Charter Day celebration in Leyte, Marcos discussed how a localized climate action plan helped the national government in its

efforts to mitigate the effects of global warming at the grassroots level.

He has repeatedly raised his concern on climate change since the country is among nations, which are vulnerable to the rising sea levels and extreme weather incidents it causes.

Under the Climate Change Act of 2009, LGUs are recognized as "front-line agencies in the formulation, planning and implementation of climate action plans in their respective areas."

Marcos lauded the Ormoc LGU

for coming out with its Local Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2025.

"It is commendable that you have given emphasis to initiatives that address the vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change," said Marcos addressing the local officials of Ormoc.

The plan also includes the use of renewable energy in Ormoc, which is expected to reduce global carbon emissions in the city.

"I look forward to these advancements that will yield to bounties benefi-

cial to the environment, our economy, and our people," the President said.

Aside from its climate change-related initiatives, Marcos also acknowledged Ormoc LGU's Social Protection Program for Adolescent Mothers and their Children and a successful novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) vaccination.

The President said he hopes Ormoc City will also sustain its programs, which seeks to help address food security.



## Ready for a quantum leap: Philippines is open for business



Dr. Carl E. Balita

### Entrepreneurs' Footprints

**T**HE Philippines was on its way to economic progress until the pandemic disrupted its path to its envisioned progress. The consolation of this global experience is that it affected even the most developed countries and that the adversity may have triggered the further strengthening of the strong and resilient economic fundamentals. The role of the private sector cannot be understated, both in good times and in bad.

With the easing of the economic restrictions, there is optimism that the economy will be able to rebound immediately. Massive investments in infrastructure are observable. The adoption of sound fiscal and monetary policies and several business-friendly reforms have attained for the country consecutive positive investment grade credit ratings. There is a perceivable improvement in the country's profile in the local and international business communities. This laid the groundwork to attract more foreign direct investments and the expansion of the domestic enterprises.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), being the voice of business in the Philippines, declared that the Philippines is ready and open for business. This optimism filled the air of the 48th Philippine Business Conference and Expo (PBC & E) held on October 19 and 20 at the Manila Hotel. The business people from all over the country, as well as guests from all over the world, flocked to engage in discussions curated to benefit business in particular and the country in general. The Exposition chaired by Mila Lacson was a big hit communicating the readiness of Philippine businesses, especially the MSMEs.

The new administration, through the president and vice president themselves, as well as key Cabinet members, took turns in presenting to the private and business sectors the governance agenda across various areas of the Filipino lives.

The PCCI, through its President George Barcelon, handed to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. a 10-point resolution, which, according to Mr.

Edgardo Lacson, Chair of the Committee tasked to craft it, is probably the most comprehensive, focusing on the major areas of economic development. Consultations were made, nationwide, through the Area Vice Presidents of the PCCI and other business associations. Chairman Lacson assured the President that "If you can implement all of these, it will lead to a quantum leap that solves all the major problems of the country."

The first resolution is on Food Security. It urges the national government to achieve food security by:

- 1) amending the Agrarian Reform Law to increase land retention limit from 5 to 24 hectares,
- 2) implementing a debt condonation program for unpaid amortizations of Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries, and
- 3) converting Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) into simple titles.

The second resolution is on Health. This resolution urges the national government to reform the PhilHealth into a science-based and transparent healthcare system and to encourage Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in the implementation of the Universal Healthcare Law.

Employment takes the third area of concern of the business sector. The resolution urges the national government to work together with the private sector to reenergize the economy by supporting new investments to

- 1) generate employment,
- 2) provide assistance to pandemic surviving MSMEs,
- 3) amend all restrictive and punitive labor laws and
- 4) enact laws that will increase productivity.



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READY FOR A QUANTUM LEAP...

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Gladly, the PCCI is taking active advocacy for Education. A resolution was passed urging the national government to amend the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) Law to create a Philippine Qualifications Authority (PQA) which will establish and maintain Qualification standards for all levels of education and training. During the pandemic, the PCCI convened the Education Task Force under Dr. Alberto Fenix to finalize recommendations on the improvement of the competencies of the human resource for the world of work.

National Security is seen by the business sector as a major concern. Resolution was passed urging the national government to deepen cooperation with neighboring states, expand participation in regional and multilateral defense agreements while accelerating the Modernization Program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Being active in the promotion of innovation and technology, Digitalization also took center stage in the resolutions passed by the PCCI. A resolution was passed urging the national government to develop and implement a nationwide Internet connectivity program that is reliable and competitive by passing into law the Open Access in Data Transmission Act. Having Mr. Ferdinand Ferrer, an ICT advocate as PBC Chairman, it is expected that technology will take centerstage in the conference. The pivotal role of digital infrastructure and breakthrough technology in a fast changing world has to be revisited on its readiness to enable competitive business.

Environment and Climate Change had long been a major concern of the PCCI and the business sector in general. The PCCI is urging the national government to address climate change and environmental protection by developing public-private partnerships (PPPs) to establish world-class water and waste management infrastructure. The central elements of the inclusive economy was tackled in the conference around the areas of manufacturing, BPOs, and creative industry along with natural capital in agriculture, fisheries, tourism, hospitality, mineral resources and forestry.

Power is a major challenge among the utilities in the country that affects business. And the PCCI urges the national government to accelerate the

integration of the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao grids to enable the free flow of electricity nationwide and for the DOE to amend the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Renewable Energy Act to allow 100 percent foreign investment in solar and wind projects.

The business sector is fully aware that Transportation causes problems in the country's economic development. The PCCI urges the national government to provide world-class integrated transport systems and decouple the regulatory and commercial functions of the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) and other similarly situated transport agencies. Ensuring transport connectivity and reducing logistical costs are of primordial importance in moving the agenda of enabling growth outside Metro Manila.

Lastly and in the context of globalization and International Trade the PCCI urges the national government to hasten the ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and to join bilateral free trade agreements and trans-pacific partnerships to minimize barriers to the free flow of goods and services. In a market dynamics and technological innovations that challenges business, effective alliances and economic partnership is essential towards achieving a competitive edge and greater chance of success. In a plenary, China Ambassador H.E. Huang Xilian and US Embassy Official Heather Variava shared the stage to ensure the healthy relationship of the Philippines with their respective countries.

"We shall monitor how the government will implement these resolutions," assures Mr. Edgardo G. Lacson who acknowledges the team behind its finalization, namely Atty. Anthony D. Bengzon, Dr. Albert P. Fenix Jr., Calixto V. Chikiamco, Atty. Dick Dubaladad, Jose P. Leviste, Prof. Dindo Manhit, and Mr. Ferdie Diaz.

Optimism is a key character of the resilient entrepreneurs. Their courage is not about the absence of fear but their mastery of fear. With the business leaders and the entrepreneurs that survived and thrived during the pandemic, and a government that gives premium to their situation and points of view, the Philippines can indeed take a quantum leap.

For feedback, please send e-mail to [dr.carbalita@yahoo.com](mailto:dr.carbalita@yahoo.com).



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SURVEY OF 10,000 STUDENTS

# 'CLIMATE ANXIETY AFFECTS HALF OF WORLD'S YOUTH'

By Krixia Subingsubing  
@krixiasINQ

Climate anxiety is gripping nearly half of the world's youth, who, while motivated to take action and help save the planet, are hindered depending on where they live, according to a recent global study that looked into how climate change is hurting people's mental health.

The study, "Climate anxiety, well-being and pro-environmental action" recently published in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, sought to take the broadest look at climate anxiety among over 10,000 university students in 32 countries including

the Philippines.

Generally, climate anxiety is understood as the psychological distress—fear, shame, guilt, worry, hopelessness and despair—caused by the environment and climate crisis on people.

### Extremely worried

Overall, they found that almost half of the young people surveyed felt "very" or "extremely" worried about climate change. Nearly a quarter felt "terrified," and even more felt either "very" or "extremely" anxious.

In the Philippines, the number is higher: 63 percent of the 1,418 respondents felt "extremely worried," while

44.5 percent felt "very or extremely terrified."

They found that climate anxiety is directly related to the amount of attention people pay to climate news: not just the sheer volume of media exposure, but "the content of the information and the amount of attention people pay to it..."

Information about climate change impacts also appears more strongly linked to climate anxiety than information about climate change solutions.

### Unable to do anything

More significantly, the study found that the ability to do something about it depends on where they live. While anx-

ity can drive people to adopt pro-environmental behavior, this is largely confined to Western, democratic and relatively affluent countries.

In contrast, people in the Global South or authoritarian countries could be unable to engage in climate action due to financial or political barriers, having insufficient knowledge, or simply lacking opportunities irrespective of how they feel about climate change.

For example, only a dismal 5.1 percent of the Filipino respondents have attended climate protests or engaged in climate activism even though the country is one of the most vulnerable to climate impacts. **INQ**



## PERSPECTIVE

# Are climate summits a waste of time?

BY FELIX DODDS AND CHRIS SPENCE

**NEW YORK:** Next month, the latest annual United Nations climate extravaganza, COP27, will take place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. Last year it was in Glasgow. Next year it will be held in (drum roll please) ... Dubai!

These big climate events have been around a long time. Since 1995, there has been a climate COP (short for "Conference of the Parties") every year except 2020, when it was postponed due to the Covid pandemic. Over the years, the COP roadshow has traveled far and wide. From Berlin to Buenos Aires, Kyoto to Cancun, and Bali to Marrakesh, the COPs have criss-crossed the globe with the aim of finessing new agreements to see off the specter of climate change.

These annual summits generate a lot of interest. The most recent event in Glasgow attracted tens of thousands of participants. World leaders and celebrities often jet in and join the throng, while the global media reports every move in the corridors of power and concerned citizens protest outside. And yet the COPs are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg when it comes to UN-sponsored climate meetings.

If you add the several preparatory meetings in the lead-up to the COPs, plus a host of workshops and other events by various expert technical groups, you're easily looking at several dozen gatherings every year.

Each event is supposed to help us move the needle on climate change, keeping our warming world within the 1.5 Celsius threshold beyond which we face potentially catastrophic consequences. But what, exactly, do all of these many meetings accomplish? Are they really worth all this time and effort?

### The climate bandwagon

There are plenty of arguments against letting the climate circus continue its endless circuit. For a start, science tells us that in spite of all the many meetings held, we're still on a dangerous path. Groups like Carbon Action Tracker estimate that we're currently on track for somewhere between 1.8-2.7°C, with the lower number representing their most optimistic — and least likely — scenario. This is clearly well above where we need to be.

Another common complaint is that UN climate COPs are mostly just talking shops; in Greta Thunberg's words, too much "blah, blah, blah" and not enough action. For all the millions, even billions, of words uttered at these events, they can often end in acrimony with little of substance agreed. Surely, the money used to

hold these summits could be better spent on something else?

Even when agreement is reached, say the critics, there is no guarantee governments and other stakeholders will keep their pledges. History is littered with broken promises and diplomatic treaties that aren't worth the paper they're written on.

These arguments are all credible and we don't disagree with any of them. But here's the thing. For all their weaknesses and flaws, these summits actually matter a lot.

### Like a rolling stone...

First, the United Nations climate process has definitely moved the needle when it comes to our response to climate change. When the UN climate treaty was first signed in 1992, it triggered a wave of national laws, policies and regulations that have rippled out across every country on earth. This process has started to shift almost every aspect of our modern economic system away from 200 years of reliance on fossil fuels.

Take our global energy systems, for instance. From being a niche market in the 1990s that could not compete on cost with coal, oil and gas-generated electricity, in 2020 solar power became the cheapest source of electricity in history. The technology behind both solar and wind have moved on in leaps and bounds since the 1990s, thanks in large part to the flow-on effects of international lawmaking.

The much-maligned Kyoto Protocol of 1997, now largely superseded by the 2015 Paris Agreement, brought the private sector firmly into the equation, launching carbon markets and spurring private sector investment that has begun to reshape our global economy away from its reliance on fossil fuels.

From electric vehicles to power generation to building design, the number of changes catalyzed by our international work on climate change are too many to list. Probably the best metric for judging the UN climate summits, however, is their impact on long-term global warming.

In recent years, projections for the expected long-term warming have fallen from as much as 4-6°C before the Paris Agreement was inked, to around 1.8-2.7°C now, assuming we implement pledges made at UN summits. And while anything above 1.5°C is still very, very bad and the need for more action remains urgent, it's not as unimaginably catastrophic as those higher numbers would be.

That's not to say the UN climate process can't be improved. Some people would like to see them shrink back to their size in the early days, when just a couple of thousand people — key

negotiators and a smaller number of other stakeholders — met in person. This, they say, would render it more manageable, reduce the carbon footprint, and make it less of a "circus."

There are arguments on both sides here. While on the one hand it is true that arguably only a few hundred diplomats could handle the haggling over the official UN documents under negotiation, it is worth noting the impact those other participants can have.

For a start, many new pledges and promises are emerging on the sidelines of the official negotiations; "coalitions of the willing" wishing to make progress in specific sectors like, say, green investment, electric vehicles, reducing methane emissions or halting deforestation.

### Last best hope

These alliances of governments, private companies and other stakeholders are able to make advances in specific sectors where the official UN negotiations — which require consensus among more than 190 governments — cannot. The groups involved in such coalitions choose to network, negotiate, and announce their plans during the COPs because of the public interest in these events.

Attend just one of these COPs and you will soon notice how many connections are made, partnerships are formed, and ideas generated, by participants not involved in the formal UN business of treaty-making. The benefits of these meetings and collaborations are hard to measure, but certainly considerable.

UN negotiations can often feel glacial. With the scientific community — and the daily news of extreme weather events around the world — reminding us of the need for urgency, it can feel like the discussions are going far too slowly. Obviously, there is much more to be done in a short space of time given that we are still hurtling towards some pretty frightening outcomes without more progress. Still, the UN process has made a difference and started to move the needle, even if it is not yet happening fast enough.

And what are the alternatives? No single country or private entity stands a chance of dealing with this threat alone. Neither Amazon nor Google can conjure up an online answer to this type of problem. The US or China can't "go it alone" and no coalition of governments has been able to deliver what's needed. It is clear, therefore, that a multilateral, global process involving all governments and stakeholders presents our only chance of containing such a global threat.

Winston Churchill once described democracy as the worst form of government

except for all the others. The same applies to multilateralism and climate change. It is flawed, frustrating and at times agonizingly slow. But it is still without doubt our last best hope of success.

### Stepping up

So what needs to happen at COP27 in Egypt? Many are describing it as the "implementation COP" where we begin to turn pledges and well-laid plans into action. There will be pressure for countries to come with bolder measures to reduce their national emissions and for wealthier nations to bring more money to the table when it comes to supporting the developing world. In particular, more support for adaptation, as well as financial help dealing with the loss and damage already wrought by climate change, will need to be addressed promptly.

We will also need to see inspired leadership. In our new book, *Heroes of Environmental Diplomacy*, we argue that dedicated and committed individuals can make a significant difference at these events. Examples from the recent past, such as the dedication of a handful of scientists and diplomats who helped create the Montreal Protocol and save the ozone layer, show that we can all play our part in turning the tide.

More recently, Christiana Figueres, the former head of the UN climate office and one of the architects of the Paris Agreement, is an example of the type of leadership that will be required at the next COP. Figueres is an advocate of "stubborn optimism" and the need to blend urgency with action. We agree. Persistence, combined with a belief that there is still time to make a difference, should be our guiding light during this critical time.

Currently, the UK as hosts of COP26 still hold the climate presidency, which they will hand over officially to Egypt at the start of COP27 in November. Glasgow exceeded many insiders' expectations, with Alok Sharma delivering a poised performance in spite of the UK's recent domestic political turmoil. How will the incoming Egyptian presidency step up to the challenge? And how will the new UN climate chief, Simon Stiell, approach this major meeting?

As we look to COP27 and beyond, we wonder who the heroes of tomorrow might be? With time running out, we need environmental champions now more than ever. **IPS**

*Felix Dodds and Chris Spence have participated in UN environmental negotiations since the 1990s. They co-edited Heroes of Environmental Diplomacy: Profiles in Courage (Routledge, 2022).*





## Fifth alarm for the planet

**W**hen I took an environmental reporting course last year, one of the most important takeaways that I learned was that a majority of the world's population consider reading or learning about the environment "boring" and not "sexy" enough. There was even a criticism from regular readers and online followers that media organizations are too "preachy" when it comes to issues about the planet and that they focus too much on "doomsday" scenarios, turning off readers, rather than converting them to become advocates.

At the end of the course, we were challenged to make environmental reporting "softer" and more "palatable" to the audience. Our mentors showed us various ways on how to deliver the message more effectively, showing us how to subtly use certain words in order to zero in the message. There were also sessions on how to use social media platforms, videos, and infographics to make our pieces "sexier."

After months of training, I wholeheartedly agree that there are various creative ways in order for the message of environment protection, sustainability, and conservation to attract the eyeballs needed for it to become an effective message. However, I do not agree on one thing — and that is to temper the scare regarding the fragile state of our planet.

Call me an alarmist but I have seen enough data, read enough research, and listened to a lot of scientists and environmentalists revealing the true state of our one and only home. If there is nothing that will be done in the coming years, no drastic change in our lifestyles, or that massive reliance on coal and oil continues unabated, then I don't have any words of comfort to say. Considering what I know (and I'm not even a science guy), I want to beat my chest and shout out loud that we are destroying any chance for future generations to survive on this planet.

Emotions aside, I reached out to friends at the Climate Reality Philippines and asked them if I'm "sane" in my urgent call for attention to the planet's plight. They responded with an article from Danielle Madriaga and Keith Sigfred Ancheta, both from the youth cluster of the organization. And when I read what they wrote, I could feel not only their passion for the planet, but also their earnest call — something like a fifth alarm during a fire — that an urgent action must be done by each and every one of us.

Allow me to share portions of what Danielle and Keith have written, both in their 20s, about their sentiment on the planet's present condition.

"Reading the news nowadays can feel like an endless scroll of grief— of health emergencies, calamities, impunity-fueled violence, corruption, and all-around chaos. All the while, the earth hurtles toward its thresholds. This year, we marked the earliest ever 'Earth Overshoot Day,' the day when humanity's demand for resources exceeds what the earth can regenerate in that year. The clock is counting down for us, but instead of racing toward a better reality, humanity is racing toward its



**EDITORS DESK**  
JOHANNES L. CHUA

early grave.

"Has it not always been this way, though? Every

decade feels like the worst, yet here we still stand. Humans are survivors and when the hour seems most dire, we somehow find a way to pull through.

"We are now in that dire hour. We are set to surpass 1.5-degree Celsius of warming — the turning point for many of the natural systems that sustain us — in the next two decades. When there is overwhelming noise from the many crises at home, it is easy to ignore the sound of the gas leaking until we suddenly find ourselves choking on the fire's smoke.

"What if we listened? What if we cut through the noise, cared more, and came together to save our one home? We have not come this far only to get this far. There must be a redemption arc waiting for us but how do we achieve it? How do we secure a livable world for all?

"To change everything, we need everyone. We need intergenerational solidarity."

Danielle and Keith concluded their piece by saying that even though today's generation is the least responsible for this crisis, young people have



*'We must be clear: our time is running out and we cannot afford to keep climate change at the end of our long list of crises. We need fast-tracked and scaled-up action to prevent the worst of the climate impacts billions are already suffering today.'*

"recognized their duty to ensure the future they will pass on to the next generations is better than the one they are currently living through."

I continue to believe in the youth. While older generations may have the wisdom, the youth "holds the wisdom of conviction."

They wrote: "We must be clear: our time is running out and we cannot afford to keep climate change at the end of our long list of crises. We need fast-tracked and scaled-up action to prevent the worst of the climate impacts billions are already suffering today. We're in the endgame now, but we know, shoulder to shoulder, we can do this all day. We can keep fighting together until we finally achieve a better reality for all."

Yes, we all have to act as one to extinguish the fifth-alarm fire, because in the end, "there are no Boomers, Millennials, or Gen Z's in a vanishing earth."

*Johannes L. Chua is the editor of the Environment & Sustainability Section.*

# SM Prime Holdingshold 2022 International Coastal Cleanup together with SM Cares, SM By the Bay



**SM BY THE BAY AND SM CARES' ICC EVENT FOR THIS YEAR WAS DONE IN COLLABORATION WITH DIFFERENT PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

SM Prime Holdings, together with SM Cares and SM By the Bay once again took part in the annual International Coastal Cleanup (ICC), bringing together thousands of volunteers into an event that underscored the importance of protecting the world's seas, oceans, and other bodies of water. The event was held last September 17 at the SM By the Bay Central Park, SM Mall of Asia Complex in Pasay City.

A total of 2,438 volunteers joined this year's ICC, composed of students, professionals, and others from different private and public organizations. At the end of the activity, an estimated 12,158 kgs of trash, equivalent to a total of 1,613 trash bags filled, was successfully collected.

Among those who graced the event were Climate Change Commission Vice Chairperson Sec. Robert Borje, Department of Environment and Natural Resources - National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) Regional Executive Director Jacqueline A. Caancan, DENR-NCR Regional Executive Director for Technical Services Engr. Ignacio R. Almira, DENR-NCR Regional Strategic Communication and Initiatives Group Head Chris Villarín, DENR-NCR Communication Development Officer II Ariz Abad, SM Investments President and CEO and 2GO Group President and CEO Frederic DyBuncio, SM Prime Holdings Inc. SVP Glenn Ang, SM Supermalls SAVP for Operations Perkin So, SM By the BAY Mall Manager Marie Charlene Claire K. Canoy-Narvasa and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Phil-

ippines' Markets and Assurance Executive Director Allan Cao.

The ICC is a yearly global event that encourages individuals to be part of the movement for cleaner seas and oceans. Every year, thousands of Filipino volunteers from various sectors and communities join the efforts to help ensure the cleanliness of the shorelines and waterways in the country.

"The International Coastal Clean Up is part of the overall SM Green Movement. As a proven responsible property developer and community partner, SM Prime's various Sustainability programs across its malls, residences, hotels and leisure properties promote resource conservation & environmental protection for an improved quality of life in the communities it serves," said SM Supermalls SAVP for Operations Perkin So.

This year's event was made possible by SM Offices, 2GO, PwC, Maynilad, and International Coastal Clean Up Philippines. DENR-NCR, the Climate Change Commission, and the Philippine Coast Guard were also present to provide their support.

Aside from the annual observance of ICC, other sustainability projects of SM Cares include the Trash-To-Cash Recycling Market where individuals can drop off their recyclable waste in exchange for cash; the Plastic Waste and Electronic Waste Collection Programs which promotes responsible plastic and electronic waste management affecting our seas, just to name a few.



SM Cares is the corporate social responsibility arm of SM Prime Holdings, responsible for initiatives that promote sustainability and the development of the community. SM Cares' advocacies include programs on Women and Breastfeeding Mothers, Persons with Disabilities, Senior Citizens, and Children and Youth, as well as the Bike-Friendly SM initiative, in addition to its Programs on Environment.

To learn more about these, visit [www.smsupermalls.com/smcares](http://www.smsupermalls.com/smcares).



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## Manila Water readies 12 more sewage facilities

MANILA Water Co. Inc. said it will build 12 additional sewage treatment plants in order to comply with its mandate and the Clean Water Act.

Manila Water currently operates 41 treatment facilities capable of treating up to 410 million liters of water per day (MLD).

In a statement yesterday, the company said it targets to have a total of 53 wastewater facilities with 1,156 MLD treatment capacity which will cover 100 percent of

its concession area, translating to a total of 715 kilometers of sewer network to serve 7.6 million population in the East Zone.

Manila Water did not mention the amount it will spend for the additional facilities but in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, it said it will spend P105 billion for capital expenditures for water and wastewater projects in the next five years.

"As Manila Water is committed to provide 24x7 clean and

potable water to our customers, we are also focused on protecting the environment by making sure that we properly dispose, treat wastewater and its by-products, as these remain essential elements of our services," said Donna Perez, head of wastewater operations, in a statement.

The company said its wastewater treatment plants employ various technologies that treat wastes and pollution through a variety of mechanisms and processes,

including the collection of sewage and seepage from households and establishments to conveyance as well as full treatment and safe disposal of by-products.

Manila Water mainly serves customers in Makati, Pasig, Pateros, Marikina, Mandaluyong, San Juan, Taguig, some parts of Quezon City and Manila; and several towns in Rizal province that include Taytay, Teresa, Angono, Antipolo, Baras, Binangonan, Cainta, San Mateo and Rodriguez. *Jed Macapagal*



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### Dagdag na wastewater facilities, itatayo ng Manila Water

Magdaragdag ng wastewater treatment plants ang East Zone concessionaire Manila Water para maliyak na ang domestic wastewater mula sa mga kabahayan ay hindi magdudulot ng polusyon sa mga ilog at sa iba pang uri ng katubigan sa bansa.

Ayon sa Manila Water, ang hakbang ay bilang pagtatama nila sa Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 na nangangalaga sa kalidad ng lahat ng uri ng katubigan sa bansa mula sa polusyon mula sa land-based sources tulad ng mga psbrika, mga kabayanan at commercial establishments.

"As Manila Water is committed to provide 24/7 clean and potable water to our customers, we are also focused on protecting the environment by making sure that we properly dispose, treat wastewater and its by-products, as these remain essential elements of our services," pahayag ni Manila Water Wastewater Operations Head Donna Perez, Ibat-ibang teknolohiya ang gamit ng wastewater treatment plants ng Manila Water upang mag-treat ang wastes at polluton sa pamamagitan ng mga mekanismo at mga ipinastuhap na proseso. Kasama sa wastewater management ang collection ng sewage at septage mula sa mga bahay at establisimento. (Angie dela Cruz)



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## Shift to polymer banknotes to result in P2.4 B savings

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) will save as much as P2.4 billion in production costs in the ongoing shift to polymer from paper-based banknotes.

During a recent briefing by the Senate Committee on Banks, Financial Institutions and Currencies, BSP Deputy Governor Mamerto Tangonan said that estimates of potential savings from longer bill lifespan stood at P1.26 billion to P2.4 billion based on actual 2021 bank withdrawals of new P1,000 banknotes from the central bank.

"The longer lifespan of polymer banknotes would translate into lower replacement costs, hence higher production cost savings," Tangonan said.

Tanganon said polymer banknotes lasts two and a half times to four times longer than paper-based banknotes.

Higher savings, Tangonan explained, would redound to higher earnings for the BSP, half of which accrues to the national government in the form of dividends.

"Higher dividend remittance to national government can then be used to fund government's economic and social programs," the BSP official said.

These include the flagship tuxy buying special project of the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) that aims to produce higher quality abaca, as well as double farm and income productivity.

Others include funding more hospital

beds and classrooms, higher number of household beneficiaries from 4Ps program, mass housing units, among others.

The circulation test of the 100 million pieces of P1,000 polymer banknotes is ongoing alongside the existing P1,000 paper banknotes.

Polymer-based banknotes, Tangonan explained, are more difficult to counterfeit, more hygienic and sanitary, more durable, environment-friendly, and more cost-effective.

According to Tangonan, the country's abaca industry will continue to prosper even with the shift to polymer banknotes from paper bills amid growing demand for natural fibers in the global market.

Tanganon said that the circulation test of 500 million pieces of P1,000 polymer banknotes are estimated to affect just 0.2 to 0.4 percent of abaca farming jobs or 210 to 481 jobs, and 0.1 to 0.2 percent of abaca export revenues or from P8.5 to P17 million.

"The estimates were based on the assumption that abaca suppliers have no alternative markets that is, it is a do-nothing scenario. However, the BSP fully recognizes the vast potential and growth opportunities given the large global demand," Tangonan said.

The BSP official explained abaca farmers do not directly supply abaca to the central bank for production of cotton-abaca paper bills, but supply to

processors and exporters who sell abaca pulp to manufacturers of specialty paper abroad.

"The share of the estimated abaca content of the Philippine banknotes to total volume of abaca fiber production in 2020 is just around two. Meanwhile, the share of abaca content of our banknotes to abaca export earnings is less than two percent at its peak. That is, when the BSP had multi-year procurement," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel III is looking into the plan of the BSP to shift to polymer from paper-based banknotes.

For her part, Sen. Pia Cayetano said polymer-based bills are non-biodegradable as opposed to paper banknotes that use natural materials.

"When we look at the sustainability picture, we always have to take different factors into concern. It may, in fact, use less water, may have a smaller carbon footprint, but it will not biodegrade. It will still be there and it is a product we created and will stay there forever, as opposed to abaca and cotton," Cayetano said during the inquiry.

Cayetano, who chairs the Senate Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking, also questioned the BSP's claim that polymer bills use less water and can be recycled into chairs and tables.

- Lawrence Agcaoili



REMATE ORINTON  
**ANGINYONG  
LINGKOD**  
NI DR. HILDA C. ONG

## PAGTATATAG NG DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, MULING IGINIIT NI PBBM

SA gitna ng sunod-su-nod na pagtama ng mga malalakas na bagyo sa bansa, muling nanawagan si President Ferdinand "BBM" Marcos, Jr. sa kasalukuyang Kongreso para sa pagpapasa ng batas na lumilikha sa DWR o Department of Water Resources.

Matatandaan na sa kanyang kauna-unahang SONA o State of the Nation Address, isa sa mga naging priority legislative agenda ni PBBM

ang water resources management.

Pangako ni PBBM, bibigyang solusyon ng kanyang administrasyon ang lumalalang problema sa kakulangan ng suplay ng fresh water sa bansa na kailangang-kailangan sa oras ng mga kalamidad at trahedyas.

Kagyat na utos niya ang karagdagang purifying stations na kailangang kaagad na mailagay sa mga lugar na tinatamaan ng kalamidad

dahil isa ito sa agerang pangangailangan ng mga mamamayan.

Kung may kakulangan sa malinis at malirom na tubig, karagdagang problema ang dulot nito dahil magreresulta ito sa mga sakit na katulad ng cholera, diphtheria, at diarrhea na lubhang nakasasama sa mga apektadong residente.

Habang wala pa ang DWR, nais ni PBBM na ipatupad muna ang IWRM o ang Integrated Water Resources Management o ang binuong national strategic framework para sa water management, policy making and planning na ginawa ng NWRB o National Water Resources Board sa pangunguna ni Executive Director, Dr. Seville D. David Jr., na may konsultasyon sa iba't ibang stakeholders bago tumama ang coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

Isinusulong ng Pangulo ang pagkailangan ng DWR para sa rehabilitasyon at modernisasyon ng water supply systems sa bansa na karamihan ay nasa estado pa ng taong 1950's.

Dahil na rin sa nagpapatuloy na mababang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa kabilang mga sunod-sunod na mga bagyo, kinakailangan na ang paghahanap ng karagdagang mapagkukunan ng fresh water para sa Greater Manila Area na tinatayang nasa gitit kumulang 15 million ang populasyon.

Sa nakaraang 18th Congress ay naaprubahan ng House Committee on Government Reorganization at ng House Committee on Public Works and Highways ang consolidated House Bill No. 4944 pero nabigong matalakay sa plenary. Habang hindi naman umasad sa Senado ang mga panukalang inihain.

Sa kasalukuyan, hiwa-hiwalay ang mandato ng 39 government agencies na may kinailaman sa usapin ng water management kabilang ang NWRB.



TITLE:

PAGE:

DATE:



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

THE COLUMNS LEGAZPI VILLAGE  
CONDOMINIUM CORPORATION,

Case No. 22-3420

Applicant  
X-----X

**NOTICE OF HEARING**

This is an application for Certificate of Public Convenience to operate and maintain a waterworks system within The Columns Legazpi Village Condominium, Barangay San Lorenzo, Makati City, Metro Manila, with the following proposed rates:

**PROPOSED TARIFF**

Residential and Institutional

Pipe Size	0-5 m <sup>2</sup> (min)	6-10 m <sup>2</sup>	11-20 m <sup>2</sup>	21-30 m <sup>2</sup>	31-40 m <sup>2</sup>	Over 40 m <sup>2</sup>
1"	P263.50	50.80	81.00	71.20	81.50	122.00

This application will be initially heard by the Board on **7 November 2022**. The hearing will start at **9:00 o'clock in the morning** at the NWRB-WUD Conference Room, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, NIA Building, EDSA, Quezon City, at which time applicant shall present its evidence.

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

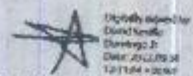
Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition supported by documentary evidence on or before the above scheduled date of hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant.

Failure on the part of any person affected to file its opposition on time and to appear at the hearing will be construed as a 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 15<sup>th</sup> day of September 2022.

By Authority of the Board:



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

*Affected Parties:*

The Secretary  
Sangguniang Panlungsod  
Makati City, Metro Manila

The Barangay Chairman  
Barangay San Lorenzo,  
Makati City, Metro Manila

The Homeowners Assn. President  
The Columns Legazpi Village Condominium  
Barangay San Lorenzo, Makati City, Metro Manila

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