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SENATE URGED TO PROBE MASUNGI VIOLENCE

SEN. Ana Theresia Risa Hontiveros has called for a Senate inquiry into incidents of violence, land grabbing, illegal logging and quarrying at the Masungi Georeserve.

The senator on Thursday said these incidents might affect the Masungi Georeserve and the rest of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL).

"We, in government, have a

duty to defend the interest of this conservation site. We cannot take our environmental defenders for granted," Hontiveros said in a statement.

Masungi Reserve is a protected area established under Republic Act 11038 or the "Expanded Integrated Protected Area Systems Law."

On Sept. 19, 2022, it was re-

ported that over 30 armed men employed by Sinagtala Security Agency Services were encamped along the Marikina-Infanta Highway, within the vicinity of the conservation area.

Hontiveros said that the volunteers and employees of Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. have also reportedly been threatened and harassed by groups allegedly

engaged in illegal quarrying, logging and land grabbing. Two park rangers were shot in 2021.

"Aside from the issue on peace and order, it is also an issue on the preservation of our country's natural resources," she said in Filipino and English. "The biodiversity and integrity of the area's natural environment, including the 400 species of flora and fauna as well

as 60-million-year-old limestone formations, should be saved and secured."

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said that its personnel will maintain peace in the reservation.

PNP spokesman Col. Jean Fajardo said the dispute on ownership is for the courts to decide.

On September 19, policemen

seized 12 shotguns and two .38 caliber revolvers from the security guards in the area.

Fajardo said that upon checking with the PNP Firearms and Explosives Office, the 14 firearms were registered until 2024, and the police will be visible to maintain peace in the reservation.

**BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO
AND FRANCIS EARL CUETO**



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Protect the Masungi Georeserve

The threats faced by the Masungi Georeserve continue and are now seemingly more dangerous than ever.

Situated in the southern Sierra Madre range in Baras, Rizal, the Masungi Georeserve is a conservation area, some 47 kilometers east of Manila.

Everyone wants a piece of it, it seems – property developers, land grabbers, quarrying operators, etc.

The government must protect this place at all cost.

Masungi, you see, serves as a natural filter for vital waterways. Here, the air is crisp and fresh; wildlife and plant species abound. It's a community rich with heritage and life but threatened by modern-day developments.

EYES WIDE OPEN



IRIS GONZALES

Just recently, we again heard about another threat against Masungi.

A few days ago, Masungi sounded the alarm because over 30 armed men from a security agency were encamped on the roadside of Km. 48 of the Marikina-Infanta Highway.

'Let's be clear. This is an invasion.'

The Masungi Foundation called it an invasion and rightly so. The area

is part of the Masungi's conservation site.

"As it is, the group is flagrantly violating Articles (n) and (o) of Section 20 of RA 7586 (NIPAS Law) as amended by RA 11038, as well as trespassing and conducting forcible entry in broad daylight along a national highway.

"The area is part of Masungi's conservation site, the Kaliwa Watershed protected area, and has been legally titled to the Republic of the Philippines since the 1950s. It is being conserved and reforested by our team under an agreement with the government.

"Despite this, Sinagtala (Security Agency) claims to hold a

survey plan named after a certain Beatriz Sonquival that was signed by a director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Office in the early 2000's. Obviously, a mere survey plan is not a proof of ownership," Masungi Foundation said in a statement.

The DENR likewise confirmed that a survey plan is not proof of ownership.

Masungi also said:

"Thus we reiterate the urgent need for the DENR, DILG, and PNP to take immediate action to enforce the laws and mandates they are sworn to uphold, stop this ongoing invasion, and remove the invaders.

"This is a critical area for the wildlife sanctuary and the consequences of losing this area once again will set back forest protection and be a huge injustice to Filipinos," Masungi said.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has intervened and found out that the security officers failed to present registration of their firearms, which is a violation of existing laws on firearms.

"The Regional Civil Security Unit (RCSU) 4A (CALABARZON) found out that the security officers failed to present firearms registration of 12 shotguns and two revolvers, prompting the team to confiscate them," PNP spokesperson Col. Jean Fajardo said on Wednesday.

Fajardo, however, said the PNP's role on the matter is only limited to securing peace and order in the area.

The Masungi Foundation, therefore, continues to seek the government's help to address the matter and to prevent future threats against this protected area.

Protected area

In 2011, the Masungi Georeserve was declared a protected area under Proclamation 296.

However, numerous individuals and groups have been interested in the area due to its mining, quarrying and real estate potential.

Against all these threats, the Masungi Foundation strives to protect the area, comprising 430 hectares of secondary forest and 2,270 of grasslands from deforestation and which currently stores an estimate of 160,000 tons of carbon or the equivalent of 66 million gallons of gasoline consumed.



The foundation seeks to restore nearby forests to protect the natural ability of the watershed to regulate water. Watersheds are important because they provide many ecosystem services including carbon and water storage, erosion and flood control, increased biodiversity and many more.

Climate change

At the 77th United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 20 (New York time), President Marcos spoke about climate change, acknowledging it as "the greatest threat affecting our nations and peoples."

"There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations. The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect an historical injustice: Those who are least responsible suffer the most. The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink, we absorb carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the 4th most vulnerable country to climate change.

"This injustice must be corrected, and those who need to do more must act now.

"We accept our share of responsibility and will continue to do our part to avert this collective disaster.

"We call on industrialized countries to immediately fulfill their obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, provide climate financing and technology transfer for adaptation for the most vulnerable and developing countries to lead by example. We look forward to concrete outcomes at the Conference of Parties in Egypt later this year," he said.

This is a positive step in the right direction but the Marcos administration must also address the threats here at home with utmost urgency.

As Marcos said at the UN: Climate change is here. "The time for talk about if and when has long since passed — it is here, it is now."

The government therefore must protect our protected areas including the Masungi Georeserve, with utmost urgency.

Iris Gonzales' email address is eyesgonzales@gmail.com. Follow her on Twitter [@eyesgonzales](https://twitter.com/eyesgonzales). Column archives at eyesgonzales.com



Masungi row best left to courts – PNP

BY GLEN JACOB JOSE

The Philippine National Police has said it is up to the local courts to pass judgment on the dispute at the Masungi Georeserve in Rizal where armed men were accused of planning to take over portions of the reservation area.

PNP spokesperson Col. Jean Fajardo assured the public that the police will, nonetheless, maintain high visibility in the area to maintain the peace in the ecological reservation.

Fajardo made the statement shortly after the Masungi Georeserve Foundation urged President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. and other government officials, including PNP chief Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr, to order the arrest of guards from the Sinagtala Security Agency.

Over a dozen guns were seized from the guards this week after they failed to produce the licenses for the firearms which, a regional police official said, were found to be registered with the agency.

The foundation has been

claiming that about 30 Sinagtala guards have encamped at Kilometer 48 of the reservation since last week, allegedly preparing to grab huge tracks of protected land.

Survey plan

Sinagtala representatives claimed they have a survey plan under the name of one Beatriz Sonquival that was reportedly issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional office in the early 2000s.

The Masungi Foundation stressed the survey plan is not proof of ownership and cannot be used in taking land titled in favor of the government.

Fajardo said that they are seeking the help of the DENR regarding the matter.

“If there are issues with respect to ownership since the adverse claimant is occupying an area and even hired a security agency, I think it is best decided by the proper court,” she told reporters in a press briefing on Wednesday held at Camp Crame.



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PBBM, BLAIR DISCUSS PEACE EFFORTS

As well as food security, addressing climate change, and boosting trade

PRESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Wednesday (Manila time) discussed with former United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister Anthony Charles Lynton Blair the global economic issues and peace-building initiatives in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

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President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. (left) and former British prime minister Tony Blair (right). Photo courtesy of Bongbong Marcos Facebook page

PBBM

FROM PAGE 1

The issues were raised during Marcos' meeting with Blair in New York City.

Apart from the BARMM peace process, Marcos and Blair also tackled ways to ensure food security, address climate change, and boost trade.

"We tackled the optimistic peace process in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and explored concrete ways to address other priority issues in the global economy such as food security, climate action, and trade," Marcos said in a Facebook post.

Marcos is currently in the United States (US) for a working visit.

Blair, on the other hand, serves as the current executive chairperson of the Tony

Blair Institute For Global Change, a non-profit organization that provides support to political leaders and governments to build open, inclusive, and prosperous societies in a globalized world.

As longest-serving Labor Prime Minister of the UK, Blair's notable accomplishments include overseeing the Northern Irish peace process, public sector reform, and the response to terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and July 7, 2005.

Marcos, in his keynote address during the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Wednesday (Manila time), Marcos said "inclusive dialogue" has contributed to the Philippines' success in attaining lasting peace and development in BARMM.

"The peace that we have forged after many decades

of conflict among warring factions and clansmen demonstrates that unity is possible even in the most trying circumstances," he said.

Marcos said the country also takes the same approach in Asia, stressing that it forges partnerships for peace and development through inter-faith and inter-religious dialogue, especially in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

"In the face of great diversity, we believe that partnerships form the bridge to unite all of us in promoting peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region," Marcos said.

Marcos is on the fourth day of his six-day trip to the US where he is expected to hold more bilateral talks with heads of state and woo foreign investors and big businesses. PNA



PBBM, UNSG MEET

By RYAN PONCE
PACPACO

PRESIDENT Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. met with United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) António Guterres on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Tuesday (US time).

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PBBM, UNSG

FROM PAGE 1

"The Secretary-General and President Marcos discussed areas of United Nations cooperation and support," according to a readout posted on the UN website.

The two leaders also exchanged views on the international situation as well as climate action initiatives.

Climate change took centerstage in Marcos' key address earlier in the day, where he pushed for climate financing from industrialized countries, urging that the "historical injustice" caused by global

warming be corrected.

"There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations. The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect a historical injustice. Those who are least responsible suffer the most," said Marcos.

The chief executive lamented how the country has become vulnerable to the effects of global warming and called on countries to cut their carbon emissions and provide technology transfer.

"When future genera-

tions look back, let them not ask why we did not take this opportunity to turn the tide, why did we continue in our profligate ways until it was too late? This threat knows no borders, no social class, nor any geopolitical consideration. How we address it will be the true test of our time," said Marcos.

In his speech, the President also called for investments to improve agriculture and ensure food security.

He also looks forward to strengthening partnerships with the UN and other member states to bolster agricultural productivity, which is among the key programs of his administration.

PT SENIOR REPORTER WITH PBBM, SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ — President Ferdinand "Bongbong" R. Marcos Jr. chats with Speaker Martin G. Romualdez, People's Tonight senior reporter Ryan Ponce Pacpaco



and other members of the delegation before leaving to participate in the 77th United Nations General Assembly at the UN Headquarters in Midtown Manhattan, New York City Tuesday afternoon (US time). Inset shows Speaker Romualdez (2nd left) and Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel G. Romualdez (2nd right) in a light moment with Pacpaco (left) and senior staff Menchie E. Dulay (right).



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THE PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

MEMBERS of the Quezon City Department of Public Order and Safety join riders from environmental advocacy and cycling groups during the Pedal for People and Planet event on April 24, 2022 to push for more immediate action in addressing climate change impact.

Groups seek concrete steps from Marcos on climate crisis, rights

PHILIPPINE-BASED groups on Thursday said President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. failed to substantiate his climate change talk at the United Nations General Assembly, adding that he also fell short of discussing the country's human rights situation.

Jon Bonifacio, national director of Kalikasan People' Network, a coalition of green groups, said Mr. Marcos needs to lay down a clear platform to shield the Philippines from the worst impacts of global warming and protect environmental defenders.

"While millions of Filipinos suffer directly from the impacts of our ongoing economic and ecological crisis, all we are getting from Marcos Jr. so far are flowery statements," said Mr. Bonifacio, who participated in climate-related activities in New York in time for the UN event.

"While Marcos Jr. included climate change in his central message, this is mere posturing as he plans on expanding the fossil-based energy industry in the Philippines," he added.

Press Secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles did not immediately reply to a Viber message seeking comment.

Mr. Bonifacio said Mr. Marcos has not yet tackled concerns about development projects that the former administration said pose threats to the environment and communities.

The Marcos government considers the mining industry as one of the major contributors to the Philippines' economic recovery.

Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines (CEC) Executive Director Lia Torres said this contradicts his "stated commitments on climate change."

"Marcos Jr.'s push for more large-scale mines in the Philippines will only worsen the rapid degradation of our forests, rivers and seas," she said. "Big mining is a major factor in the massive displacement of indigenous people and rural communities."

"This will augur more disaster for mineral-rich forestlands and the rural poor communities of mostly indigenous peoples," she said. — **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code or by typing the link < bit.ly/climatecrisis092322 >



Philippine government says it can't deal with climate change alone

THE Philippines needs to take a "whole of society" approach in tackling climate change because of the government's inability to shoulder the burden on its own, officials said, citing the need for full-scale efforts in mitigating disaster risk and transitioning to renewable energy.

"We need to invest in early warning systems, social protection, resilience building, R&D (research and development), and innovation and technology," socioeconomic planning Undersecretary Rosemarie G. Edillon said at the Disaster and Climate Emergency Policy Forum on Thursday.

"There are limits to government resources... Government itself is just responsible for 12-15% of GDP (gross domestic product); the rest is really private sector contribution," she added.

Finance Assistant Secretary Neil Adrian S. Cabiles said at the same event that over the long term, typhoons and earthquakes can inflict P177-billion worth of annual losses to public and private assets in the Philippines.

"In the next 50 years, the country has a 40% chance of experiencing a loss exceeding P989 billion, and a 20% probability of experiencing a loss of as much as P1.5 trillion," he said.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Assistant Governor Lyn I. Javier said the resulting risks to the banking sector are substantial.

"With extreme weather episodes, there is a decline in the total deposits, total resources, (and) total loans, while there is an increase in the nonperforming loans of the banks. This would actually impede them, or make it challenging for them, to lend to households, consumers, and businesses," she said.

"We expect banks to progressively increase their exposure to sustainable projects, and also assist their borrowers in terms of transitioning and being resilient to the impact of climate change and other environmental risks," she added.

Ms. Edillon said that responsible consumption and production, or sustainable development goal (SDG) 12, is at the heart of all SDGs, prompting the creation of a Philippine Action Plan for that specific purpose.

However, implementors face a lack of institutional capacity, both in terms of knowledge and funding.

"The estimated cost to implement climate change mitigation actions for the sectors of energy, forestry, industry, and transport alone is around \$4.12 billion from 2015 to 2030," Mr. Cabiles said, noting how this does not yet include the costs the Philippines shoulders to fulfill its Nationally Determined Contribution commitment of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75%.

Robert E.A. Borje, vice-chairman of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said that the current funding access of the Philippines for climate change initiatives is low compared to other countries.

"The CCC identified only P74 billion worth of financial support committed for 15 climate change projects from 2022 onwards. Why do I say this with a little trepidation? Because the grants amount to only to P6.9 billion and the loans are P67.1 billion," he said.

"The position of the Philippines is that while we want a mix or a blend of financing, as a developing country, we need better access to grants."

Budget Assistant Secretary Romeo Matthew T. Balanquit said P338.2 billion was allocated for adaptation projects next year under the proposed budget, against P114.9 billion this year. He added that the government's efforts are aimed at minimizing the negative effects of extreme weather events to help ensure the attainment of national development targets.

The government hopes to expand the economy by 6.5-7.5% this year, and by 6.5-8% next year until 2028.

Energy Undersecretary Felix William B. Fuentebella said that the department hopes to raise the share of renewable energy (RE) in the fuel mix to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040.

"We have seen that we have a lot of (fuel) imports, and what happens when the dollar goes up against the peso. So where's the opportunity? We really have to pursue RE," he said.

"Six years ago, it was difficult to push for RE because of the cost; now it's easier (because costs have fallen)."

"It's about editing those choices, editing those menu(s), so that people will just choose from those sustainable consumption and production goods," Ms. Edillon said, noting the importance of R&D, innovation, and technology.

"We need to provide them the options (and) alternatives to these unsustainable goods and services, and then, of course, the infrastructure is needed to be in place so that we encourage the sustainable behavior and discourage the unsustainable behavior."

Albay Rep. Jose Ma. Clemente S. Salceda said that RE can help solve the problem of high power rates that disincentivize investors from doing business in the Philippines.

"Rapid, inclusive growth requires cheap renewable energy, and cheap energy can come from a combination of dependable base load, a surplus of renewable, and setting aside legacy issues for a fresh start," he said.

He said the main obstacles to expanding RE involve restrictions on foreign capital. — **Diego Gabriel C. Robles**



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



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Defining and understanding climate change is already half the battle

We often read or hear about climate change. The topic, admittedly, is not “exciting” and would not even go viral online. A friend even told me that talking about climate change is too gloomy with all the negative forecasts and doomsday scenarios. I agree. But not talking about it now is just delaying the inevitability that we have to face the effects of climate change as a nation sooner than later.

That friend asked me to explain climate change as if he was a child. Fair enough. As journalists, we have the responsibility to “talk” to a wide audience, especially to those who need to understand it most. Climate change, I said, is change in the usual climate of the planet caused by human activity. Because of this “unbalance,” the sustainability of the earth is threatened. Simple enough?

To dig deeper into climate change is to have a macro view of the definitions surrounding it. Part of addressing climate change is understanding what it truly is. For example, the United Nations (UN) defined climate change as “long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns.” The UN noted that these shifts may be natural...but since the 1800s, “human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas.”

The UN further added: “Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the earth, trapping the sun’s heat and raising temperatures. Examples of greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change include carbon dioxide and methane. These come from using gasoline for driving a car or coal for heating a building, for example. Clearing land and forests can also release carbon dioxide. Energy, industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and land use are among the main emitters.”

Compare the UN definition from the one provided by the US’ National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). It said that climate change is a “broad range of global phenomena created predominantly by burning fossil fuels, which add heat-trapping gas to the earth’s

atmosphere. These phenomena include the increased temperature trends described by global warming, but also encompass changes such as sea-level rise; ice mass loss in Greenland, Antarctica, the Arctic and mountain glaciers worldwide; shifts in flower and plant blooming; and extreme weather events.”



The Manila Bulletin is organizing the first 'Sustainability Forum' on Nov. 23-24, 2022 with the theme 'Beyond Green.' The two-day event will include a virtual forum highlighting best ESG (environment, social, and governance) practices, and a recognition night at the City of Dreams Manila where Manila Bulletin will honor programs and initiatives that have made our planet better.



IT'S GETTING HOT IN HERE. The earth is now about 1.1-degree Celsius warmer than it was in the late 1800s. (Photo from UN.org).

See any difference? It sounds like they just copied from one another.

In our country, it is the Climate Change Commission (CCC) that is mandated by law (Republic Act 9729: The Climate Change Act of 2009) to serve as the “lead policy-making body tasked to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate action plans of the government related to climate change.” For the CCC, climate change is caused by man’s lifestyle. “Our lifestyle has led to the accumulation of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. These gasses trap heat from the sun,

making the earth warmer. Manifestations of a warmer world include rising mean temperatures, sea level rise, and increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events like droughts and greater rainfall.”

Referring to these definitions, one could already sense a pattern. First, it is man’s activity in pursuit of progress that changed our climate. The UN warned that “greenhouse gas concentrations are their highest levels in two million years.” “Emissions continue to rise. As a result, the earth is now about 1.1-degree Celsius warmer than it was in the late 1800s. The last decade (2011-2020) was the warmest on record.”

“Because the Earth is a system, where everything is connected, changes in one area can influence changes in all others,” said the UN. Consequences of climate change include catastrophic events such as intense droughts, water scarcity, severe fires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting polar ice, devastating storms, and declining biodiversity.

Now, climate change is part of President Marcos’ speech in front of the UN General Assembly. There is much to discuss there as he asked for nations who have the highest greenhouse gas emissions to help countries such as the Philippines, which is the “fourth most vulnerable country to climate change.”

This is an issue that I personally agree with the administration. I would even join the President in calling for “climate justice.” Whatever politics or ideologies we may have, we all agree that there is one — only one! — earth. And starting to clearly define climate change, and making the majority of the 110 million Filipinos truly understand what it truly means, is already winning half of the battle.

Johannes L. Chua is the editor of the Environment & Sustainability section.



EDITORS DESK

JOHANNES L. CHUA



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VIDEO MESSAGE AFTER PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT UN

GRETA, OTHER ACTIVISTS DOUBT 'CLIMATE JUSTICE' UNDER MARCOS

By **Dempsey Reyes**
and **Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**
@Team_Inquirer

Achieving climate justice under the administration of President Marcos and "under fascist leaders" is not possible since it also entails fighting for democracy, according to international climate activists, including the outspoken Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg.

Their messages were conveyed in a short video played on Wednesday night during a program held by protesters on the University of the Philippines Diliman campus marking the 50th anniversary of the declaration of martial law.

The clip featured the 19-year-old Thunberg, who came to international attention for her scathing "How dare you!" speech at the United Nations climate conference in New York in 2019.

She was joined by fellow

climate activists—Alde Nilsson also from Sweden and Mitzi Jonelle Tan from the Philippines—who pledged their support to human rights and environmental advocates in the country.

On Sept. 20, in his speech at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York City, Marcos noted that the effects of climate change had been "uneven" and reflected "historical injustice," and that countries that were actually "least responsible" for climate change tend to "suffer the most."

But for Thunberg and Nilsson, climate justice in the Philippines may not be achievable especially under the current administration.

"There can be no climate justice under Marcos," Thunberg bluntly said in the video. "We stand in solidarity with martial law victims, seeking justice for human rights defenders who seek the democratic rights



Greta Thunberg —AFP

of the people and climate justice."

"Fighting for climate justice is the fight for democracy and freedom," Nilsson said. "We cannot attain climate justice under fascist leaders."

Gov't allies

For Ann Dumaliang, a trustee and cofounder of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation, she

hoped that the remarks of the President at the UNGA would be "mirrored and demonstrated" in the plight of environmental defenders and civil society organizations.

The foundation is currently facing threats of harassment based on the encampment of more than 30 armed men within the protected area of Masungi.

Dumaliang emphasized that environmental defenders and groups have been at the frontlines and should be considered as the government's allies "in overcoming inertia for change from the ground up and in implementing nature-based solutions for climate and disaster risk resilience."

"We hope to see conviction and timely action manifest in our recent calls for Malacañang's intervention in the challenges we are currently facing, the invasions and land-grabbing operations happening in Masungi as he at-

tends to the UN," she said.

Added Dumaliang: "We need action now and we look forward to having an ally in the President."

Meanwhile, environmental group Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment dismissed Mr. Marcos' speech at the UNGA as "flowery statements and empty promises."

"All we are getting from [the President] so far are flowery statements while millions of Filipinos suffer directly from the impacts of our ongoing economic and ecological crisis," Jon Bonifacio, Kalikasan national coordinator, said in a statement on Wednesday. "We need concrete action that puts the interests of the Filipino people first."

Posturing

Bonifacio said his group expected Marcos to include climate change in his message at the UN, "something he has

been doing (from the) campaign trail."

"But it's clear that despite hitting all the right notes with his language—much like [Vice President Sara] Duterte was able to do before the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and other international bodies—this is mere posturing as he plans on expanding the local fossil gas industry," he said.

Mr. Marcos' speeches, he said, had "consistently been lacking in the human rights dimension around transition and ensuring that the needs of communities are put first, rather than the profits of local oligarchs."

"With planned and ongoing mega-dams and even mega-solar farm projects in the hands of local billionaires, it's clear that democratic and decentralized energy production is not on the Marcos agenda," Bonifacio lamented. INQ



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ACTIVISTS SEEK REMOVAL OF 'DENIER' MALPASS

PRESSURE GROWS AFTER WB CHIEF DODGES CLIMATE QUESTIONS

WASHINGTON—Climate groups called Wednesday for the World Bank's president to be removed after he refused multiple times to say if he believed man-made emissions contributed to global warming.

Activists have previously called for David Malpass to resign or be removed for what they say is an inadequate approach to the climate crisis.

The head of the World Bank is traditionally an American while the other big international lender in Washington, the IMF, tends to be European. Malpass is a veteran of Republican admin-

istrations in the United States and was appointed in 2019 while Donald Trump, who famously and repeatedly denied the science behind climate change, was president.

'I'm no scientist'

The chorus against Malpass grew louder after his appearance Tuesday at a New York Times conference on climate finance.

Asked by a journalist to respond to former US Vice President Al Gore's claim that he was a climate denier, Malpass said that some of his critics "may not know what the World Bank

is doing." He boasted that its climate funding is "by far the biggest" among international financial institutions.

After another attempt failed to get a straight answer, the journalist, David Gelles, said: "Let me just be as clear as I can: Do you accept the scientific consensus that the man-made burning of fossil fuels is rapidly and dangerously warming the planet?"

Malpass again pointed to the World Bank's work on the issue, at which point multiple people in the audience shouted: "Answer the question!"

"I don't even know. I'm not



David Malpass —REUTERS

a scientist," responded a clearly frustrated Malpass.

The Big Shift

The Big Shift, a consortium of climate groups, called Wednes-

day for the World Bank's board to remove Malpass over the comments.

"For the World Bank to maintain any shred of decency, Malpass cannot remain as president," said Tasneem Essop, executive director of the Climate Action Network, a Big Shift member group.

A separate group of activist organizations said they would on Thursday unveil a banner at the World Bank's headquarters in Washington that reads: "The World Bank Group is Run by a Climate Denier."

Malpass' term ends in 2024

and he can only be removed by a vote of the World Bank's board.

'Biden's decision'

Climate groups have called on President Joe Biden to up the outside pressure.

Biden's climate change envoy, former US Secretary of State John Kerry, declined during an appearance at the same Times event to comment on Malpass' future, saying "that's the president's decision."

The World Bank declined to comment on the situation when reached by Agence France-Presse (AFP). —AFP



IPs seek apology for past abuses

BY GABY B. KEITH

BAGUIO CITY: "I believe that, as present officials, we owe the Baguio indigenous peoples (IPs) a public apology like [what] the Australian government [made] to their aboriginal peoples."

This was the statement of Councilor Jose Molintas, an Ibaloy, in his privilege speech during the city council's regular session on Sept. 19, 2022.

Molintas made reference to the public apology made by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2008 to the aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples of Australia "whose lives had been blighted by past government policies of forced child removal and assimilation."

Just like the Australian government, the city government of Baguio must also acknowledge the historical injustices committed against its indigenous peoples, he said.

These Baguio IPs whom Molintas referred to were the Ibaloy and the Kalanguyas.

He noted the discrimination and oppression experienced by the Baguio IPs for the past 120 years, particularly the deprivation of the original settlers of their right to claim legal ownership of their lands.

"The Baguio indigenous peoples lost their ancestral lands due to the imposition of foreign laws implemented in a very discriminatory manner as if they were non-existent under the Spanish regime," Molintas recalled.

He brought up Mateo Carino's fight for his ownership over his 148-hectare land within the Camp John Hay reservation that his clan, the Ibaloy tribe, had been occupying since time immemorial.

Records show that the United States Supreme Court upheld Carino's rights over the proper-

ty, which ruling paved the way for the establishment and recognition of the ancestral lands' native titles.

The ruling of the US Supreme Court penned by Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes is known as the Mateo Carino Doctrine, which has benefited not only the IPs of the Philippines but also native communities in the other parts of the world as courts around the globe continue to cite this jurisprudence in protecting the rights of the original inhabitants of a certain territory.

According to Molintas, however, Baguio City had allegedly been selling the lands supposedly covered by "native titles" through townsites sales application, commercial sales application and miscellaneous sales application since the day it was chartered.

"Baguio has been making money out of these ancestral lands. In fact, this system encouraged illegal occupation of lands as they were given priority to acquire titles instead of being disqualified. This is one of our present major land problems because illegal settlers



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have now encroached into our reserved lands," he stated.

Molintas asserted that the current and future administrations must work harder for the remuneration and restoration of these ancestral lands that the original settlers had lost.

He called out the city government for not acknowledging the "historical discrimination" against the Baguio IPs during the yearly celebration of Baguio Day.

Molintas further expressed disappointment on the presumed lack of historical and cultural sensitivity during the celebration as he pointed out a specific instance.

He admitted to taking offense on the chanting of "Uggayam" and the conduct of "Pitik," both non-Ibaloi rituals, instead of the recitation of the Ibaloi prayer called "Badiw" during the Baguio City Charter Day celebration on Sept. 1, 2022.

"If we are sensitive and not ignorant of the past injustices, then we should formally apologize to them [Baguio IPs] and avoid being offensive in the next celebrations," Molintas said.

Furthermore, he pointed out the exclusion of a certain provision in the original city charter from the revised city charter of 2022 (Republic Act 11689).

The provision mentioned was Section 9, which provided for the creation of an advisory council including five Igorots as members.

Consequently, there are no Igorots on the list of members of the newly constituted advisory council, Molintas claimed.

He also bemoaned the absence of an indigenous people mandatory representative in the city council.

Molintas went on to assail the revised city charter, saying the ancestral land claims of the Baguio IPs "were not given emphasis" and were instead made subordinate to the jurisdiction of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority over an expanded area, including lands occupied by 13 villages.

He said a technical working group created by the city council will initiate a comprehensive review of the revised city charter together with all the stakeholders

and the academe.

He expressed hope that Baguio City Lone District Rep. Marquez "Mark" Go, principal author of the revised city charter, will work with the technical working group on the proposed amendment of the "vague provisions" of the law.

Molintas pointed out the absence of the annual celebration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples in Baguio City as institutionalized by Ordinance 87-2019 because no funds were allocated for this purpose.

In his speech, he appealed to his fellow city officials for the issuance of an official public apology by the city government to the Baguio IPs on a fitting occasion like the supposed celebration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples in the city.

Molintas also appealed to the event organizers of the city government to seek the advice of leaders of the Igorot communities on the conduct of culture-related events in order to accurately portray the "true customs and traditions" of the Baguio IPs.



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REGIONS

Pangasinan to fix quarry industry

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—The quarry industry in Pangasinan will undergo an extensive regulatory overhaul to curb illegal operations that have damaged rivers and left communities vulnerable to flooding. Gov. Ramon Guico III finds the province's P12-million annual income from local quarrying to be "measly" compared to its counterparts in Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur and La Union provinces.

—STORY BY YOLANDA SOTELO



TAXES, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

PANGASINAN TO FIX 'UNREGULATED' QUARRY TRADE TO SAVE RIVERS

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—The quarry industry in Pangasinan will undergo an extensive regulatory overhaul to curb illegal operations that have damaged rivers and which put communities at risk to flooding, Gov. Ramon Guico III said.

During a recent meeting with officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Guico ordered a review of quarry operations which bring a "measly P12 million" annually to the

provincial government, despite the daily extraction of river sand and gravel.

Pangasinan used to generate the highest quarry revenues in the Ilocos region, said Socrates Gaerlan, regional director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

"When the sand and gravel business started, Pangasinan had the highest income on the number of quarry permits issued here when compared to permits released by the provinces of La Union, Ilocos Sur

and Ilocos Norte. So we wonder why it has lagged behind," Gaerlan said at the meeting with Guico.

Pangasinan has been collecting an excise of P16 per cubic meter of gravel since 2010 from haulers and the rate has not increased. Other provinces, records showed, collect P25 to P30 per cubic meter.

Guico said a team would be deployed by the provincial government and the DENR to screen operators and determine who

have proper documentations.

"Those [firms] without papers will have to go. They have to stop," he said in a separate interview on Monday.

Waste disposal

Guico said the review should not disrupt quarry operations to avoid delaying schedules of construction projects relying on materials supplied by the province.

But the review team must also assess the impact of the

industry on rivers, which could worsen flooding during storm season, he said.

The management and disposal of waste from quarry operations is another problem that needs to be resolved, the governor added.

"Stone crushing plants are right in the middle of the river, which is dangerous because [it affects riverside sand that] are a natural flood control mechanism. Each day, I pass by the river along San Fabian town

and the river is like 'sungka (full of holes)," Guico said.

Gaerlan said quarry extractions must be done upstream of the river while processing plants must be located outside the waterways.

Guico also observed that roads have been worn down by trucks hauling quarry materials. He urged the DENR to install weighing scales to prevent overloading, or to find an alternative quarry route to spare barangay roads. —YOLANDA SOTELO INQ



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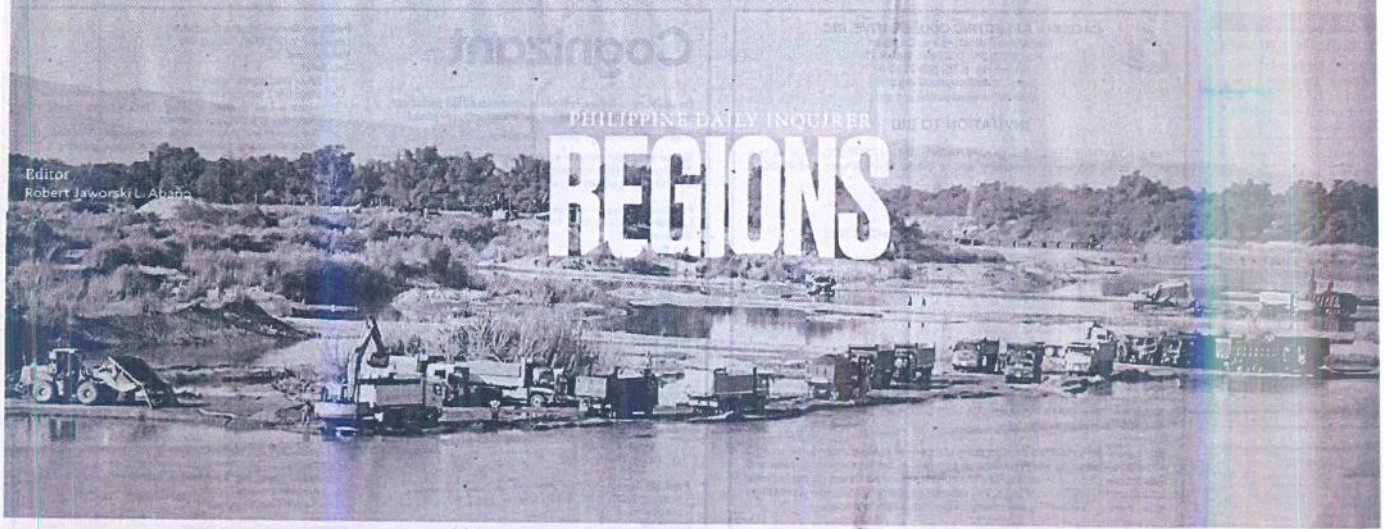
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RIVER BOUNTY Trucks haul river sand and gravel quarried from the Agno River in this photo taken in Rosales, Pangasinan, in December 2020. The local quarry trade has been giving the provincial government P12 million in annual revenue, which the governor describes as "measly." —WILLIE LOMIBAO



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FOR RECYCLING AND UPCYCLING

URC OPENS MORE PLASTIC COLLECTION SITES

By **Miguel R. Camus**
@miguelrcamusINQ

Gokongwei-led food and beverage giant Universal Robina Corp. (URC) is ramping up sustainability efforts via its plastic collection and recycling program.

Dubbed Juan Goal for Plastic, URC said this was aimed at achieving "plastic neutrality," or the retrieval and repurposing of manufactured plastics.

The company said it opened new plastic collection sites in Barangay Sambat in Balayan, Batangas and Barangay Nagasi in La Carlota, Negros Occidental.

These locations collect used PET bottles, which are commonly used by bottled water companies and other recyclable plastic waste.

"The plastic materials being collected are shredded into flakes that are then sent to an upcycling center. These flakes can be used to make high-value products such as chairs, bins and tables," URC said.

The other collection sites are in Robinsons Malls Galleria, Ermita, Las Piñas, Magnolia and Starmills Pampanga. Collection booths would be set up every payday weekend until the end of the year, URC said.

In partnership with affiliate Robinsons Land Corp., these booths gather clean and

dry plastic waste under a drop-weigh-redeem scheme.

URC said the Batangas collection site was in partnership with the local government of Balayan, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office and the Balayan Junkshop.

It said about 280 kilograms of PET bottles were collected during the site's opening last month.

Youth participation

In Negros Occidental, URC coordinated with the local government and Environment and Natural Resources Office and the barangay council of Nagasi.

"Over 700 kilos of plastic waste were gathered during the site's recent launch, with some 300 children and their parents and other community members participating," the listed manufacturer said.

Meanwhile, URC plans to open two more plastic collection sites in Batangas and other parts of the Philippines.

"URC's initiatives are in line with the Gokongwei Group's thrust to promote long-term efforts that will significantly help manage post-consumer plastic waste. Various business units under the group have ongoing collection, sorting and recycling programs in various areas nationwide," the company said. INQ



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Angeles launches 'waste to cement' program

Valencia confirmed that polyethylene plastics can serve as an alternative fuel to manufacture cement

BY JONAS REYES

ANGELES CITY — The local government here is set to launch the waste-to-cement program that will exchange collected plastics into cement, according to Mayor Carmelo Lazatin Jr.

The local chief executive said that collected plastics will come from the Walang Plastikan: Plastik Palit Bigas project following the meeting with Republic Cement and Building Materials Inc. managing director Angela Edralin-Valencia.

Lazatin said that the usage of polyethylene plastics, polystyrene packaging material, and other non-recyclable combustibles were discussed to manufacture cement, while Valencia confirmed that polyethylene plastics can serve as an alternative fuel to manufacture cement.

Under the program, every one metric ton of shredded waste will be converted to 10 bags of cement while five bags of cement is the equivalent to one metric ton of unshredded waste and the collected plastics will be made into cement, aside from the produced brick pavers.

All of the cement produced from the project, as well as the brick pavers will be solely used in the administration's projects and minor repairs in public schools.

At least 1,465,546 kilos of plastic were collected and exchanged into rice thru the Walang Plastikan: Plastik Palit Bigas project since its launching on January 2022.

PH sea level rising 3 times faster than world average, says expert

By Nestor Corrales
@NCorralesINQ

The sea level in the Philippines is rising three times faster than the global average, putting many of its coastal villages in peril, according to a climate scientist of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

With 70 percent of the country's municipalities facing large bodies of water, including the Pacific Ocean, that could spell a "big impact" on those populations, Rosalina de Guzman, chief of the state weather bureau's climate data section, said on Thursday.

"Based on a report done by Pagasa, we saw that the sea-level rise of the Philippines is rising three times faster compared to the global average," De Guzman said during the Laging Handa briefing.

"So, this can cause inundations hitting the country will continue to increase.

To help address this, she said climate change mitigation should be "fully integrated in the planning process" of the government, including earmarking funds to address the impact of climate change and build resilience among communities in low-lying coastal areas.

De Guzman also urged the public to "practice energy efficiency" and recycling, including conserving water and using mass transport.

The World Bank said rising sea levels "create not only stress on the physical coastline, but also on coastal ecosystems." "Saltwater intrusions can be contaminating freshwater aquifers, many of which sustain municipal and agricultural water supplies and natural ecosystems. As global temperatures continue to warm, sea level will

tion of low-lying areas, especially many of our countrymen who live on the beach," she said.

The Philippines has one of the world's longest coastlines, stretching more than 36,000 kilometers.

Warming temperatures

Scientists attribute sea level rise to warming temperatures, which melt the polar ice caps, causing the ocean to expand.

In April, Pagasa climate scientist Dr. Marcelino Villafuerte said the sea level in the Philippine Sea had risen by about 12 centimeters, or about 5 inches, over the past two decades.

De Guzman did not explain what was causing the phenomenon.

But according to the World Bank's climate change portal, regional variations in the rise of sea levels exist "due to natural variability in regional winds keep rising for a long time because there is a substantial lag to reaching an equilibrium," it said.

"The magnitude of the rise will depend strongly on the rate of future carbon dioxide emissions and future global warming, and the speed might increasingly depend on the rate of glacier and ice sheet melting," it added.

'Greatest threat'

In April, then President Rodrigo Duterte called on industrialized nations to pay smaller countries like the Philippines reparations for the damage caused by climate change.

"We produce the least but we suffer the most. We are really the one paying for it the most. The pollution produced by other countries, we are the ones who catch it," he said.

Addressing world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, President

and ocean currents, which can occur over periods of days to months or even decades."

Fewer, stronger typhoons

While typhoons hitting the country are becoming fewer, those that do make landfall are becoming stronger and a bit more frequent, De Guzman noted.

An average of 20 tropical cyclones enter the Philippine area of responsibility every year, with about eight or nine crossing the Philippines.

"Based on our data, we have seen that the frequency of typhoons is decreasing a bit and we have seen that for those greater than 170 kilometers per hour, there is a slight change, there is a slight increase," De Guzman said.

Based on Pagasa projections, she said the country's temperature will rise by 4 degrees by the end of the 21st century while the intensity of typhoons amplified his predecessor's point, calling climate change the "greatest threat affecting our nations and peoples."

"The Philippines, for example, is a net carbon sink. We absorb more carbon dioxide than we emit. And yet, we are the fourth most vulnerable country to climate change," he said on Wednesday (Manila time).

"There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort, one led by the United Nations. The effects of climate change are uneven and reflect a historical injustice," Mr. Marcos said.

In response to calls from the leaders of developing nations, including the Philippines, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres said on Thursday it was time for "meaningful action" on the issue of compensation for damage wrought by the climate crisis. —WITH A REPORT FROM AFP INQ