

06 August 2022, Saturday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

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# Cebu City hit by worst flood since Typhoon 'Odette'

says Pagasa; officials blame inundation to trash clogging waterways

Rainfall 'abnormal,'

CEBU CITY—This city and many localities in Metro Cebu were hit by severe floods that reached up to four feet in some areas on Thursday night following hours of heavy rain.

The excessive rainfall and heaps of garbage that clog drainage systems contributed to the severe flooding that submerged many parts of this city on Thursday night, which, authorities said, was the worst flood here since Typhoon "Odette" (international name: Rai) inundated and devastated Metro Cebu in December 2021.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) monitoring station on Mactan Island recorded 66.2 millimeters of rainfall in Cebu, which was caused by a low-pressure area formed inside the Philippine Area of Responsibility.

Romeo Aguirre, Pagasa weather specialist, said he was seen waving for help to the crowd on top of the bridge. Bobby was eventually saved by rescuers.

The heavy rains with moderate winds started past 7 p.m. It stopped past 9 p.m. but it started to rain again at about 10 p.m. but it was not as strong as before.

The CCDRRMO listed about 93 individuals who were temporarily evacuated from their homes because of the rising waters in Barangay Tisa. There were also 11 families in Barangay Pardo who were brought to safer grounds.

Alcontin said at least 50 out of the 80 barangays in Cebu City were affected by the flash floods.

No fatalities were reported as of 2 p.m. on Friday.

**'New normal'**

Lawyer Rose Liza Eisma Osorio, legal and policy director of the environmental group Oceana

amount rainfall in Cebu on Thursday evening was "abnormal" as the average rainfall on the island for the whole month of August was usually around 157.9 millimeters.

More rains are expected during the weekend in Cebu, according to Aguirre.

Aside from Cebu City, flooding were also reported in the cities of Mandaue, Lapu-Lapu, Talisay, Toledo and Naga; and the municipalities of Consolacion, Liloan and Minglanilla.

Harold Alcontin, operations head of the Cebu City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (CCDRRMO), said the amount of garbage that clogged the waterways was too much that rescuers could not even use their floating equipment.

"What I saw last night was that our drainage systems were overwhelmed by the amount of garbage. I think there is really a need to conduct an educational campaign to inform people about the ill-effects of throwing our garbage anywhere," he said.

"The signs are clear. Climate change is here. The door is fast closing for us so we need to accelerate our efforts towards adaptation and mitigation measures," she told the Inquirer.

"Local governments should prioritize these actions instead of pushing for coastal development projects that can worsen flooding, destroy mangroves that provide coastal protection and endanger the lives of local communities," she added.

Lawyer Gloria Estenzo-Ramos, vice president of Oceana Philippines, earlier called on local governments in Cebu to start updating the land use plan to prevent flooding.

The land use plan is designed to guide the future actions of a community. It also presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives for all activi-

tion campaign to inform people about the ill-effects of throwing our garbage anywhere," he said. Alcontin also saw the need to widen or improve the drainage canals as these could no longer hold the amount of water, especially during heavy rains.

He requested the city's Department of Engineering and Public Works to make an inventory of the waterways and to enhance or upgrade them.

**Evacuated residents**

The Cebu City government mounted a search and rescue operation after debris of what appeared to be from houses were seen being swept away by rampaging waters in Kinalumsan River in Barangay Mambaling.

A video taken by Mambaling resident Bruce Contratista showed a man being carried by debris under the Kinalumsan bridge. The man whom residents identified as "Bobby" ties that affect the local government.

"If the government won't heed the call of environmentalists in flood prevention, then the people should take up the cudgels," she said.

"We keep saying that the disasters are wake-up calls for everybody, but we cannot just wait for our public officials to act on them. If they won't act, we should take the initiative to prepare ourselves for disasters," she added.

The massive flooding in Cebu's highly urbanized areas, she said, should compel each one to reexamine their roles and stop their "ecologically destructive lifestyle."

"It is not too late to take the effort to make it more in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature," Ramos said.

—REPORTS FROM NESTLE SEMILLA, DALE G. ISRAEL AND ADOR VINCENT MAYOL INO



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**SAVE MANILA BAY** — Members of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) bring their protest to the doorstep of the the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Quezon City on Aug. 5, 2022, and urged Secretary Ma. Antonio Yulo- Loyzaga to take a stand against reclamation projects in Manila Bay. PAMALAKAYA said two reclamation projects in Manila Bay have acquired environmental certificates — 420 hectares reclamation project in Bacoor City, Cavite and 2,500 hectare in Bulacan Aerotropolis. The group claims both projects were responsible for the destruction of at least 6,000 mangroves in Brgy. Taliptip, Bulacan, Bulacan and the land filling of fishponds in Brgy. Maliksi III, Bacoor Cavite. (Mark Balmores)



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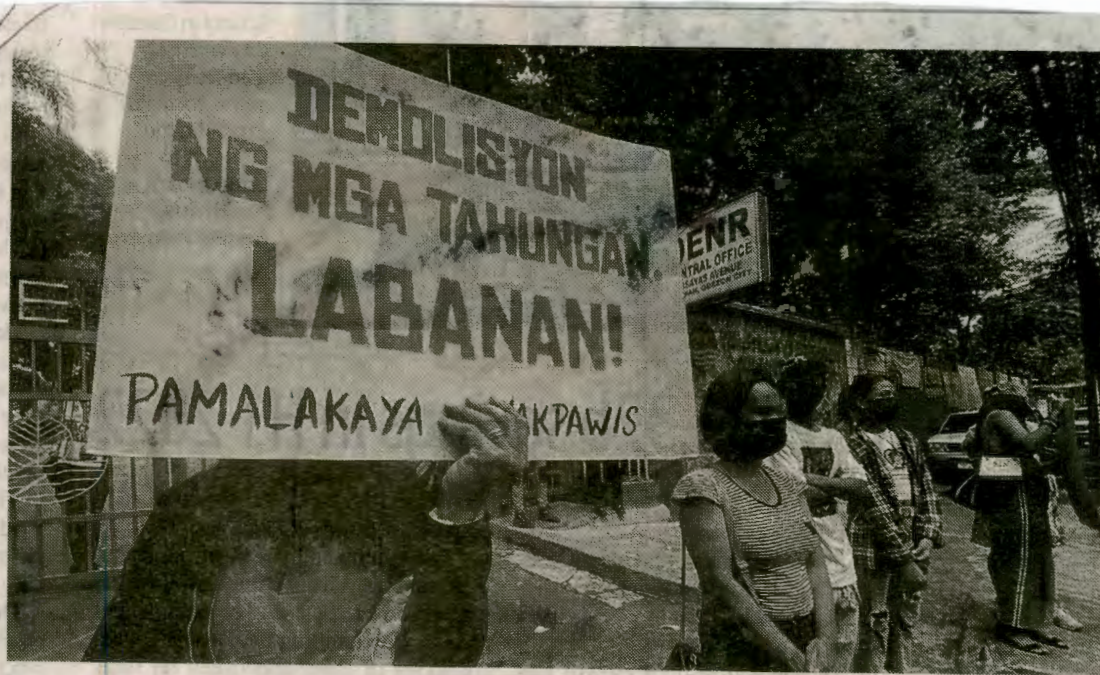
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**'NO' TO RECLAMATION.**  
Fisherfolk members of Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas troop to the DENR office in Quezon City as they challenge DENR Secretary Ma. Antonio Yulo Loyzaga to take stand against reclamation projects in Manila Bay.  
**Manny Palmero**



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## Navotas solon files bill creating Manila Bay Council

NAVOTAS CITY Congressman Toby Tiangco filed a bill to create the Manila Bay Management Council (MBMC).

House Bill No. 2926 stated that the council shall supervise, manage, and control the Manila Bay and formulate a unified policy for the bay's protection, preservation, and progress.

"The Supreme Court mandamus on Manila Bay caused local governments to administer and conserve the waters within their jurisdiction. However, this led to the implementation of varied and inconsistent policies that affect our fisherfolk," Tiangco lamented.

Manila Bay is bordered by coastal cities in Metro Manila - Navotas, Manila, Pasay, Parañaque, and Las Piñas - and the coastal provinces of Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, and Cavite.

"Despite the remarkable amendments in existing laws, the perceived problem on the exercise of jurisdiction of several municipalities and cities over the Manila Bay remains unresolved," he said.

"Through House Bill No. 2926, we seek to amend Section 16 of the Philippine Fisheries Code, giving the MBMC supervision and control of the Manila Bay," he added.

The MBMC will be composed of the agriculture and environment secretaries, the Metro Manila Development Authority chair, and Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, and Cavite governors.

"Restoring Manila Bay to its pristine state will only be feasible if all concerned government agencies and LGUs [local government units] follow and implement unified rules, policies, and procedures," Tiangco pointed out. Edd Reyes



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# Climate body welcomes new law for eco-friendly businesses

By JANVIC MATEO

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has welcomed the passage of the law mandating large enterprises to implement programs to reduce the plastic waste they generate.

The group said Republic Act 11898 or the Extended Producers' Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022, which recently lapsed into law, is consistent with President Marcos' commitment to environmental management and sustainable development.

RA 11898 amends the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003) by introducing provisions on EPR, defined as "environmental policy approach and practice that requires producers to be environmentally responsible throughout the life cycle of a product, especially its post-consumer or end-of-life stage."

Environment groups earlier urged Marcos to veto the mea-

sure, citing limitations on its provisions and inconsistencies with the principles of EPR. They noted, for instance, the inclusion of "thermal treatment" or incineration as one of the ways to deal with plastic waste, which could further contribute to the climate emergency.

They also cited the lack of specific provisions on reduction of plastic production, such as banning the use of single-use plastics.

CCC Secretary Robert Borje, however, said the measure "will help ensure that mechanisms are in place towards sustainable production and consumption of products."

It will also "advance the country's move towards circular economy — one practical approach to efficient waste management," he added.

Under the new law, large enterprises or those with total assets of at least P100 million must implement EPR programs aimed at reducing their

plastic footprint, such as recycling and recovery initiatives.

The law requires enterprises to recover or offset a certain percentage of the plastic packaging they generate, starting with 20 percent by the end of 2023. It will then increase to 40 percent in 2024, 50 percent in 2025, 60 percent in 2026, 70 percent in 2027 and 80 percent in 2028 onwards.

Plastic packaging covered by the law includes sachets, labels and other flexible plastic products; rigid plastic products, including containers for beverage, food, personal care and cosmetics; plastic bags, and polystyrene.

While micro, small and medium enterprises are not covered by the law, they were also encouraged to implement EPR programs voluntarily.

Sen. Cynthia Villar, one of the proponents of the measure, described the law's passage as a "good start" and called for its strict implementation and monitoring.



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## House assures swift passage of commerce, industry bills

**SPEAKER** Martin Romualdez has assured the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the country's largest business organization, that the House of Representatives would act on the Marcos administration's priority bills related to commerce and industry before the year ends.

In his speech during PCCI's General Membership Meeting at Makati Diamond Residences in Makati City, Romualdez also committed to hold consultations with the PCCI regarding the priority legislative agenda of President Marcos as outlined in his first State-of-the-Nation Address.

"Majority of the priority measures spelled out by President Marcos in his SONA are principally authored by no

less than your House Speaker so I expect my fellow legislators to act on these bills with dispatch. In fact, I am hopeful that we can approve most of these measures before the year ends," Romualdez said.

He encouraged the business organization to make its position very clear on these issues, as he vowed to hear all relevant stakeholders before passing these important bills.

"One thing I assure you, though. As stakeholders, you will be consulted in every measure that we tackle especially those involving commerce and industry," he said.

The priority measures related to the sector include the Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Econom-

ic Recovery Act; Valuation Reform Bill; Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation Act; E-Government Act; Internet Transaction Act or E-Commerce Law; National Land Use Act; Enactment of an Enabling Law for the Natural Gas Industry; Amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act; and Amendments to the Build-Operate-Transfer Law.

PCCI, according to its site, is "a non-stock, non-profit, non-government business organization composed of small, medium, and large enterprises, local chambers and industry associations representing various sectors of business, all working together to foster a healthier Philippine economy and improve the viability of business in the community".



## Proyektong reclamation ng China sa Dumaguete, malabo na – grupo

Wala na umanong pag-asa na muling buhay pa ang proyektong reclamation sa Dumaguete City matapos na ayawan ng nakararaming mamamayan dito, ayon sa isang grupo na pumapalag sa proyekto.

Sinabi ni Gary Rosales, tagapagsalita ng grupo, mahihirapan din ang alkalde ng Dumaguete na muling mailahad ang reclamation project dahil karamihan sa miyembro ng city council ay kontra rito.

"Marami sa mga nana-long konsehal ay tumakbo sa ilalim ng 'NoTo174 Reclamation', ayon kay Rosales at sinabing maging ang bagong gobernador ng Dumaguete ay kontra sa proyekto.

Sinabi pa ng tagapagsalita ng grupo, matapos

ang kumpirmasyon ng Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), ang P23 bilyong reclamation project ng Guandong-based Poly Changda Overseas Engineering Co. ay biglang nawala sa listahan ng "considered projects" ng PRA dahil sa matinding pagtutol ng mamamayan ng nasabing lugar.

Ang pagkapanatili ng umano ng 10 miyembro ng konseho ng Dumaguete City laban sa kampo ng Lupad ng nahalal muli na si Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo ay patunay na ayaw ng mamamayan sa 174-hectare Smart City reclamation project na isinusulong ng alkalde.

Ang reclamation project na naging pangunahing isyu ng nakalipas na halalan ay inayawan ng mga residente sa Duma-

guete. Nakasaad sa batas na kailangan ng mayor ang pagpayag ng city council sa pagpapatupad ng proyekto lalo na yung may mga pinapasok na kontrata.

Ang P23-B reclamation project ay hawak ng EM Cuerpo, isang local construction firm na kinukuwestyon din dahil sa umano'y financial capacity nito matapos lumabas na nasa P1.4 billion lamang ang net assets nito noong 2020.

Ang pagpapatupad ng Guandong-based Poly Changda Overseas Engineering Co. bilang sub-contractor ng EM Cuerpo ay mas higit na nagbigay ng pagdududa na ang reclamation project ay pinondohan ng kapitalista mula sa China.





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The Manila Times

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## DENR implements Asean-wide GEF-funded marine ecosystems project

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) held an inception workshop as it prepares for an extensive Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) collaborative project on Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) which faces serious threats amid their vast marine resources.

The project "Effectively Managing Networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) in ASEAN" (ENMAPS) is being deliberated for implementation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

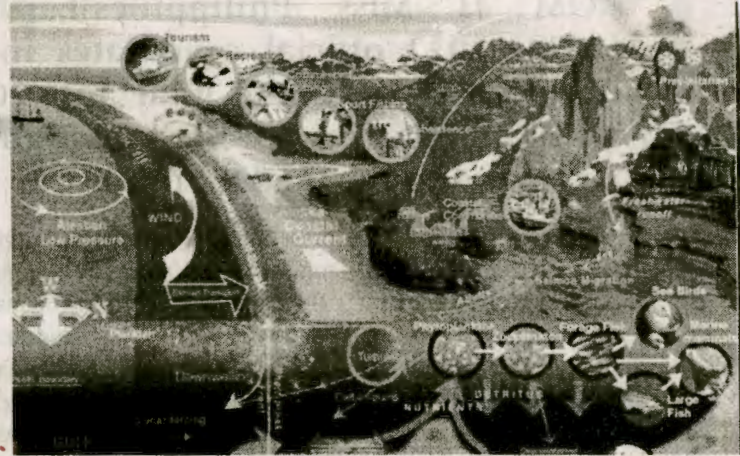
Director Al Orolfo of the DENR Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS) joined the National Inception Workshop at the Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria in Quezon City on July 13, stressing the project's importance to sustainable development.

LMEs in Asean are a huge source of livelihood and jobs for struggling fishers.

The workshop validated data and gathered inputs from stakeholders from the national and regional government agencies, private sector, non-government organizations and academe. The project's concept will be elaborated during the full proposal development.

The Coastal and Marine Biodiversity of Asean is known to have 20 percent of the world's seagrass beds, a third of world's mangrove forests with 45 to 75 true species, and a third of the world's coral reefs with more than 75 percent of species of coral and 40 percent of fish species.

ENMAPS will involve at least five countries in Asean including the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, and South China Sea.



■ Image of large marine ecosystems. GEF IMAGE

The Asean ENMAPS project will be executed by the Asean Center for Biodiversity (ACB) in collaboration with the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) under GEF funding.

"The project is expected to comple-

ment our existing efforts in the Philippines toward productive partnerships with the neighboring countries in terms of scaling up management under the regional marine protected area network approach," Orolfo said.



# Banking on mining for growth

**FINANCE** Sec. Benjamin Diokno said the mining industry is a potential source of sustained economic growth as he underscored the benefit of mobilizing investments for mine development.

"The mining industry holds the greatest potential to be a key driver in our economic recovery and long-term growth, especially now that world metal prices are high. The Philippines, after all, is one of the world's most richly endowed countries in terms of mineral resources," Diokno said at the listing of Philex Mining Corp.'s common shares in the Philippine Stock Exchange.

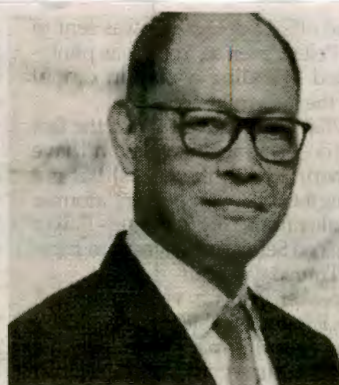
Philex is mobilizing investments for the development of its Silangan underground copper-gold mine in Surigao del Norte.

In a disclosure to the PSE, the company said it is offering a maximum of 842 million common shares at the rate of one offer share for every 5.8674 shares owned for P3.15 each to raise a total of P2.652 billion new equity.

The stocks rights offering period started on July 12, 2022 and ended July 25, 2022.

The Silangan project, considered one of the biggest copper-gold mines in the country, is planned to be mined in two phases.

The first phase has a mineable ore



**DoF chief Benjamin Diokno**

reserve of 81 million metric tonnes which will be mined for 22 years at a rate of four million tonnes per year.

The mine is targeted to commence commercial operations in the first quarter of 2025.

The DoF chief said Philex' SRO listing demonstrates the mining industry's confidence in the country's promising economic growth prospects.

He said the offering means more jobs will be created, local economies will be reinvigorated, and additional revenues would be contributed to the government.

The Department of Finance esti-

mates that the project would generate around P8.5 billion in excise taxes alone for its entire mine life.

Diokno said the listing sends a strong signal to the mining industry that the country's capital markets are viable instruments for fast tracking the development of large mining projects.

He said the Marcos administration is committed to continue creating an enabling environment for mining activities to flourish in the country as he looks forward to similar listings in the future.

"We recognize that apart from boosting local development, mining is a strong magnet for investments that can propel our economy into a higher growth trajectory," he added.

The Finance chief said the government expects the mining industry to strictly adhere to responsible and sustainable mining practices.

He said the mining industry should strike a balance between protecting the environment, uplifting local communities, and supporting the government's socioeconomic agenda.

"This is a non-negotiable condition so we can guarantee the sustainability of the industry and the strong economic growth of its host communities," he said.



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# Much ado over Biden 'climate emergency' declaration

## Much ado over Biden 'climate emergency' declaration

Last of a series

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ment suffered a major setback in July 2022, when US President Joe Biden hemmed and hawed about declaring a climate emergency in America, and then retreated sheepishly without explanation.

This development upset what was projected to be a signal stage in the climate agenda, preparatory to other events slated this year.

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Had Biden delivered, the shift in terminology from "climate change" to "climate emergency" might have taken off and spread globally. Americans see themselves as the center of the world, even the universe, which other countries generally follow.

Demand for a US declaration of a climate emergency has been rife since the Supreme Court ruled in *West Virginia v. EPA* on June 30, 2022 that the bureaucracies have no power to fundamentally transform the use of energy in the economy without a clear direction from Congress, which on the climate issue cannot be found in existing statutes. It became clear that no such statutory direction is likely to emerge from Congress before the midterm elections in November.

The calls for President Biden to make such a declaration have come from everywhere since the Supreme Court's decision at the end of June. In the politician category, a collection of Democratic senators sent a strong letter to Biden on July 20 making the demand:

"Declaring the climate crisis a national emergency under the NEA would unlock powers to rebuild a better economy with significant, concrete actions . . . Under the NEA, you could redirect spending to build out renewable energy systems on military bases, implement large-scale clean transportation solutions and finance distributed energy projects to boost climate resiliency. All of these actions would employ Americans in new and emerging industries while securing American leadership in global markets."

Indeed, there was plenty of talk that Biden was going to make the big declaration on July 20 when he went to Massachusetts to give a speech at a closed coal-fired power plant. But he stopped just short of issuing a formal "emergency" declaration, and only took the occasion to emit the usual clichés about the impending climate apocalypse, including liberal use of the term

"emergency" itself. He said:

"Climate change is literally an existential threat to our nation and to the world . . . This is an emergency, an emergency, and I will look at it that way."

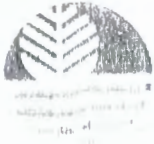
What would declaration of an "emergency" mean? The idea is that there are plenty of existing statutes out there granting the executive powers of various sorts in the event of such an "emergency," provided that there had been a formal declaration of it. Thus arguably there would be a way around the lack of clear statutory authority that sank the EPA's power plant regulations in the *West Virginia* case.

Here's the problem. There is no sense in which the climate is an "emergency" within the ordinary meaning of that word in the English language. Predictions by climate models of a few degrees of temperature rise over the next century are the opposite of an "emergency." Indeed, the statutes granting various "emergency" powers to the executive all deal with the question of time periods too short to give the Congress time to enact legislation appropriate to the situation at hand.

### Emergency declaration

The declaration of a climate emergency has been promoted by climate activists and pro-climate action politicians to add a sense of urgency and assign priority to the problem. In declaring a climate emergency, Wikipedia says, a government admits that climate change (or global warming) exists and that the measures that have so far been taken have not been enough. The decision stresses the need for the government to devise measures that would stop human-caused global warming. The declaration is supposed to justify and focus the governing body toward climate action.

The Welsh government declared a climate emergency on May 1, 2019, be-



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coming the first in the world to officially declare a climate emergency.

As of December 2020, five years after the Paris Agreement, at least 15 countries have already declared a state of climate emergency, including Japan and New Zealand.

On Nov. 28, 2019, the European Parliament declared a climate emergency. The European Union represented at that date 28 member states.

The United States was envisioned to join the parade with President Biden's declaration of a climate emergency in July 2022.

## Media opposition

He was apparently dissuaded from the initiative by strong opposition in the media to the idea of a climate emergency declaration.

At the same time, he was presented with a pair of public opinion polls that clearly showed the majority of the American people opposed to his climate policies, and clamoring for a return to their fossil-fuel economy with plenty of energy.

The *Wall Street Journal* was blunt and straightforward in its editorial on July 19. It said: "For Biden to declare a 'climate emergency' would be a serious abuse of power.

"While a president may sometimes need to act with dispatch during an emergency, climate change isn't close to such an event. "Climate change is neither sudden nor unexpected. The world has warmed by 1.1 degree Celsius since the late 19th century, and the pace of future warming is uncertain and depends on multiple variables.

"In any case, nothing progressives want Mr. Biden to do will affect the climate or even reduce global CO2 emissions. China and India will continue to build coal plants that offset all of the West's climate sacrifices.

"But that isn't stopping progressives from demanding that Mr. Biden roll over the Constitution's separation of powers.

"The most serious harm with all

this would be to the rule of law. Declaring a climate emergency would flagrantly circumvent Congress.

A New York Times/Siena College poll reports that a mere 1 percent of voters prioritize climate. Climate scored zero percent among Latinos, Republicans and the 45 to 64 age group.

All this is occurring against a backdrop where the Supreme Court has ruled that the EPA doesn't have the authority to regulate greenhouse gases from coal plants; and the world is in the worst energy and inflation crises in 40 years.

If Joe Biden declares a climate emergency and acts upon it, he will only make things worse.

## No public recognition

Joe Biden was cognitive enough to see the writing on the wall. He did not declare a state of climate emergency in the United States.

International opinion is just as divided. There is plainly no international consensus behind a climate emergency declaration. Most countries do not care one way or the other about the issue.

In the Philippines, there is barely any public recognition of a climate alarm, regardless of what some politicians say. Some politicians may see political advantage in standing for aggressive climate action by the government.

But Congress is far from ready to march in lockstep with climate alarmists in calling on the president to declare a state of climate emergency.

The Congress and the public will want proof of a real climate emergency.

Suppose its continued existence and budget will depend on it, can the Philippine Climate Commission provide incontrovertible proof or a persuasive brief on a climate emergency?

yenobserver@gmail.com



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## Asean: Biodiversity conservation through protected area legislation\*

First of 2 parts

**A** CLOSE look at the laws of the Asean countries would readily reveal the intricate mosaic of legal systems in existence in the region. It is not simply a choice between common law or civil law or a mixture of both. While one system is founded on Islamic or Hindu law, a few others share traditions of British law superimposed upon Islamic foundations, modified by modern indigenous legal innovations. Others have indigenized eclectic legal systems which have integrated concepts from American, Spanish, Indian and French legal systems. Intricate as it is, the mosaic is even more elaborate when seen in detail, with a great variety of ethnic and customary law.

Despite the diversity in legal cultures owing to the differences in population, territories, history and government, environmental law, i.e., protected area legislation, suits all legal systems in the light of the present worldwide concern about the conservation of biological diversity brought about by significant loss in habitats and of species used for food, medicines, industry, etc., to cope with the rising consumption and thoughtless demands for economic growth.

The establishment and maintenance of national protected areas are essential for two of the most urgent environmental concerns these



AMBASSADORS'  
CORNER

AMADO S.  
TOLENTINO JR.

days: biodiversity conservation and resilience to climate change.

### The CBD

In 1993, a new international treaty or multilateral environmental agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity Conservation (CBD), entered into force. It is the first time that concerns for biological diversity are expressed in a binding instrument at the level of the globe and recognized as a common concern for humanity.

The convention calls for, among others, the establishment of a system of protected areas, elaborating national strategies and plans, integrating biodiversity concerns into other sectors and controlling activities which may have significant negative impacts on biodiversity, expanding the use of environmental impact assessment procedures, and promoting research training, public education and awareness.

The Asean Center for Biodiversity located at UP Los Baños, Laguna records protected areas in the Asean region distributed as follows: Brunei Darussalam (28); Cambodia (21); Indonesia

(1,034); Laos (17); Malaysia (196); Myanmar (3); Philippines (247); Singapore (11); and Vietnam (53).

### Laws on protected areas

The Philippines' National Integrated Protected Areas Law (Nipas), or RA 7586 (1992), contains provisions that serve as the mechanism through which the implementation of the national protected areas program, in general, is harmonized at the national level. Among its salient features are: 1) new classification of protected areas (i.e., protected seascapes and landscapes, natural monuments, natural biotic areas, resource reserves, etc.); 2) strict requirements on management plans; 3) delineation of types of allowed activities within a protected area and those which may be regulated through special permits; 4) provision of safeguards (zoning, environmental impact assessment and procedures for agency review of permit applications; 5) recognition of ancestral lands within protected areas and customary rights over them; and 6) direct participation by local people in protected area management.

Furthermore, the Nipas Law adopts a two-tiered management plan. There is a general management planning strategy on the first level to serve as a guide in

formulating individual plans for each protected area. The onsite plan on the second level effectively addresses peculiar situations in the area. It also affords more direct participation by the private sector in management and planning through the management board. Most important of all, participation by indigenous people and other local communities is included in the management scheme. Community benefits from the protected area in the form of livelihood sources are essential to the successful management of protected areas.

For a more effective administration and management, private sector and local government participation was given much thought and consideration. The management board takes the role of local protected area administrator. Likewise, the creation in the DENR regional office called the Protected Areas and Wildlife Division helps solve the problem of lack of priority and interest in protected area management.

To be continued on  
Sunday, August 7, 2022.

\*2002 is the Year of Protected Areas to commemorate the 90th year of establishment of the national parks system in the Philippines by virtue of the "1932 National Parks Act" (RA 3915).



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# Sustainability as the key to resiliency



A clean-up drive initiated by the Botolan LGU helps ensure that the local Najeko River would remain free of debris despite the influx of tourists.



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**By Ar. Vittoria Mawis-Aliston**  
@INQ\_Property

**T**he Philippines, with its rich landscape, has always been vulnerable to natural calamities. Thunderstorms, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes—these are just some of the dangers we have faced in the past. And with the onset of global warming, these calamities seemed to have gotten more dangerous in recent years.

With disaster resiliency programs in place, both in the public and private sectors, what else could we do to mitigate the effects of natural calamities? According to the Climate Change Commission (NTE of CCC), the answer lies in our communities' efforts to combat climate change.

### FIGHTING A GLOBAL PROBLEM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

"What is global must now be addressed at the local level. What was theoretical now demands practical applications on the ground." These words were uttered by CCC chairperson-designate Carlos Dominguez III during the 2021 Global Warming and Climate Change Consciousness Week.

This sentiment encourages local government units (LGUs) to implement projects geared towards adapting to climate change. By implementing local measures to fight global warming, our government hopes to empower vulnerable communities to combat the effects of climate change and to better prepare for disasters.

Thankfully, many communities have already begun efforts to take better care of the environment. Such initiatives were rewarded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through the 2021 Resiliency Awards. These projects serve as exemplary models on how local communities can make a difference and prepare for natural disasters.

### A GENDER-EMPOWERED INITIATIVE

The project that won first place in the 2021 Resiliency Awards is commendable not only for its environmental efforts but also for highlighting its feminist achievements. Entitled "Women Leadership, Trailblazers of Environmental Sus-

tainability," the presentation was made by Annadine Manzinares, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer (MENRO) in Botolan, Zambales. The initiative highlighted the efforts of Botolan in promoting sustainability in their area.

In particular, Botolan has installed artificial reefs with coral transplantation—an initiative that helps enrich marine life and ensure the livelihood of fishermen and tourism-based businesses. Besides this effort,

the LGU also implements mangrove and forest reforestation, as well as a solid waste management system. Some of the waste is recycled and turned into income-generating products, such as Eco-bricks and Fish Amino Acid.

### FIGHTING AGAINST GREENHOUSE GASES

The second place winner was represented by Engr. Rey-

naldo Gonzales of the Office of the City Environment and Natural Resources in Zamboanga City.

For its part, Zamboanga established a transfer station and materials recovery facility, and implemented reforestation projects in the city's watershed and mangrove forests. The city also established climate-resilient school buildings which are designed with rainwater collection systems and other sustainable features. The LGU further spearheaded the development of the City Waterfront and Heritage Walk as part of its tourism efforts.

These initiatives have turned Zamboanga into a model city when it comes to reducing greenhouse gases. According to Engr. Gonzales, the city has further reduced their carbon footprint by monitoring their fossil fuel and electricity consumption.



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These concrete barriers make up the artificial reef that was installed in Barangay Panan in Botolan, Zambales.

### THE SAGIP-WAKATAN PROGRAM

An annual drive to reforest mangroves, replant trees and clean-up coasts won the third prize in the Resiliency Awards. Implemented by the LGU of Bayabas in Surigao del Sur, the project aims to increase the population of mangroves in their area. This would help protect the people from disasters such as storm surges, tsunamis and soil erosion accidents.

As a bonus, the project also



Locals help establish a mangrove nursery at Barangay Magobawok in Bayabas, Surigao del Sur as part of its Sagip-Wakatan program.

allowed the locals to earn their livelihood from the additional tourism and activities generated by the project. The "Gakit festival" was developed as part of the initiative, which boosted eco-tourism in the area.

"For the changing climate, the strong community ownership and co-ownership of ecosystem conservation is a resilient foundation of a community," said Bayabas Mayor Limbaro.

protecting our environment.

Hopefully, these community projects mark only the beginning of local efforts to promote sustainability in our country. If these projects help pave the way for other initiatives to take place, there is much hope that the Philippines would be able to better overcome disasters of the future.

### GOING GREEN TO SAVE LIVES

In general, it makes sense to take care of Mother Nature to avoid her wrath. Community-led green initiatives make a lot of difference when it comes to preventing massive destruction from natural calamities. While we cannot predict or prevent earthquakes or storms from happening, we can avoid destruction by pro-

#### References:

Ms. Annadine D. Encinares - Manzinares, Acting MENRO of LGU-Botolan Zambales; FB Page of Menro Botolan, Zambales; FB Page of City Government of Zamboanga; Donard Compe Maturan and Jove Japson Cahatian via FB Page of Mayor Maria Clarita Limbaro of Bayabas, Surigao del Sur; [Lorenlegarda.com.ph](http://Lorenlegarda.com.ph); [Pna.gov.ph](http://Pna.gov.ph)



In Zamboanga City, LGU representatives address flooding challenges by declogging, fixing and cleaning drainage canals and pipes.





Editor: DOREEN G. YU

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

CHIT U. JUAN

### What is your advocacy?

I have been a coffee advocate for over 20 years now, and it started with my worry that our coffee supply might run out as farmers started selling off their lands in Cavite and Batangas. So it stemmed from a business risk mitigation that became a true passion for helping farmers. I am only so glad that many coffee lovers soon embraced the movement and now Philippine coffee has become a source of pride for many millennials and Gen Z caffeine takers. It did take a generation to feel the effects, but just the same, it is all positive. Maybe the only negative effect is the desire of some to make quick money by importing coffee and labelling it as "Philippine coffee." But did you ever think "Philippine coffee" would have the cachet it has now?



We had many detractors who said it could not be done. Some said "coffee prices are dictated by men in blue suits at the New York Stock Exchange." Well, not anymore. The farmer in Benguet now can dictate her price and find buyers for the prized crop. The farmer in Bukidnon sends me a message "Pick up ma'am. We don't deliver." This never happened 20 years ago.

Then in 2008, we opened a social enterprise where we worked with women's groups who grew coffee, peanuts, cacao and herbs. Luckily, social enterprises are given a leg up by organizations who look for markets for their livelihood programs. That's how we started our humble eco-friendly retail store. Today, every retail establishment like groceries, handicraft stores and supermarkets have community-sourced products with lesser-known brands, but they thrive with the Filipinos' penchant for all things local. It has taken 14 years, but we are only too happy that there are more retailers who now give these women a chance to sell their value-added products.

Having seen results in 14 to 20 years, we know now that an advocacy intertwined with business can be an effective way to influence market preferences and taste profiles. The business style becomes easily replicable and this is why we now have social enterprises (helping farmers) and coffee businesses that are born overnight, though we hope they all become sustainable enterprises.

Because it is not always about the money. It is also because of an advocacy that people want to share and express through consumption and patronage. Like buying local, buying Filipino and everything native - these are no longer just for *balikbayans* and tourists. They make perfect corporate gifts because they say so much about your company, too. I am glad the importation of cheap company giveaways has lessened, if I were to judge by what gifts we get during Christmas and even tokens I get for speaking engagements. I now receive handmade gifts, local products from artisanal producers and almost always even coffee products. My heart is full.

So on to our next advocacy which is Food Security. Sustainability. How do we now ingrain and inculcate these ideas in the youth and make them successful like our advocacies in coffee and women empowerment?

- Start a local farm project. We planted coffee along with vegetables and herbs we can use and eat everyday. I observed that the visitors below 40 years old do not care much about the herbs and medicinal plants. The ones 40 and above are ecstatic to smell, touch and taste Nature's bounty.
- Take them to a coffee farm. The young ones, 20-50 years old, are very engaged as they see how coffee grows from seed to tree to cup.
- Keep talking about heirloom species like Ark of Taste and Slow Food. Engage the youth in preserving native fruits and vegetables.
- Patronize local businesses that promote local food products so they can continue to buy from farmers or producers to make them sustainable.

So when they ask, what is your advocacy? Is it something you choose when you have made money and decide to help others? That is philanthropy, is it not?

Is it advocating for something to ensure business sustainability? That makes it a social enterprise, right?

Is it corporate social responsibility or CSR? That is when you do projects with communities you affect (like mining companies who plant vegetables in a mining site) or maybe groups that are totally divorced from your business but you help regularly (like a cancer ward in a hospital, unless your products cause cancer). Even in CSR, I believe it should be aligned to your business. Example: Binalot uses banana leaves from a community they support because banana leaves are part of Binalot's raw materials. Or Jollibee buying onions from farmers for use in their commissary.

But what is an advocacy? Is it something you can live with for the next 20 years? It is standing up for someone who otherwise would not have a voice. It is finding a cause you care about and then getting involved with a group who shares your views. And that is what I learned when we joined Slow Food ([www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com)). We educate, we advocate and we hopefully will influence policy makers to change our food system.

When I joined Slow Food's Terra Madre in 2012, I had no idea how they expected to change the world through food. But as I got exposed to like-minded people in our activities, I began to understand it better. We can change the world, one person at a time. There are millions of members who can bring the ideas of Good, Clean and Fair food to their communities - all over the world.

This is my last year as a Councilor of Slow Food (like a congresswoman of sorts), purely voluntary pro bono work, and I hope that the new members of the Slow Food Council will carry on the cause for the next 10 years or more. It is not my business but Slow Food does influence what businesses we get involved in.

Think about it. Are you an advocate for a cause? Or is it just business?



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# Former Aboitiz legal counsel new ERC chair

By Nestor Corrales  
and Jordan B. Lagare  
@Team\_Inquirer

President Marcos has named a former chief legal counsel and compliance officer of Aboitiz Power Corp. as chair of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC), Malacañang announced on Friday.

Mr. Marcos signed on Monday the appointment of Monalisa Dimalanta, who replaces Agnes Devanadera following the latter's retirement on July 10.

Dimalanta will serve a seven-year term until 2029.

## Lawyer, teacher

She is the second appointee who used to be connected with Aboitiz Power. On July 11, the Palace announced that Mr. Marcos had nominated Raphael Lotilla, a former independent director of the power firm, as energy secretary.

Two days later, the Presi-



Monalisa Dimalanta  
—PHOTO FROM ABOITIZ POWER

a firm nod to the recent passing of former President Fidel V. Ramos and reminiscent of his presidency when the Department of Energy and [the] Energy Regulatory Board were headed by energy practitioners."

## 'Tainted'

But Gerry Arances, convenor of the Power for People Coalition (P4P), said Dimalanta's ap-

pointment is "tainted with the interest of private companies. In the midst of unceasing electricity price hikes and inflation, it seems that consumer welfare has been once again neglected."

"We challenge Dimalanta to offer relief to electricity consumers by finally prioritizing affordable and reliable renewable energy sources and putting a stop to the ridiculous attempts by energy and fuel companies to pass on charges despite posting billions of income," Arances said in his statement.

## Power outages, rate hikes

"It's high time for ERC to study energy price cap[s], review all coal and gas contracts, and look into [a] moratorium [on the] fuel cost pass on," he added.

Arances also said his group looks forward to the day when the ERC is headed "by someone completely devoid of any ties to a private entity."

dent named Aboitiz Group CEO Sabina Aboitiz as head of the consultative Private Sector Advisory Council, which Mr. Marcos formed on July 7.

He swore Lotilla into office on July 29—the weekend preceding Dimalanta's appointment. This was the second time Lotilla headed the Department of Energy (DOE), after his stint from 2005 to 2007 under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

An alumna of the College of Law of the University of the Philippines, Dimalanta had earlier served in government as chair of the National Renewable Energy Board, an advisory body of the DOE.

## Mixed reactions

After two years in that post, she returned to private practice as a senior partner at Puyat, Jacinto & Santos Law. She was first connected with that firm in 2001.

She also returned to the Ateneo de Manila campus—where she used to teach at the university's law school—this time as professor at the Ateneo School of Government.

Dimalanta was then appointed to Aboitiz Power early this year before she was called back to public service.

Her appointment drew mixed reactions.

## 'Energy practitioners'

Pedro Maniego Jr., senior policy advisor of nongovernmental organization Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, said in a statement: "With her wealth of knowledge and experience in the energy sector, we look forward to the quick resolution of grave problems plaguing the industry and a just energy transition with nobody left behind."

Maniego also said Dimalanta's selection was a "very important appointment, signifying

Among Dimalanta's tasks in her new job is to look into power outages in the provinces as well as rate hikes being sought by the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) and SMC Global Power Holdings Corp., the power business of conglomerate San Miguel Corp.

## Refund

Early last month, the commission ordered Meralco to refund its consumers P21.8 billion in overcharges.

But the Supreme Court early in July also upheld a 2013 ruling by the ERC which granted Meralco's petition to recover P22.6 billion from consumers through staggered rate hikes. Party list group Bayan Muna has appealed that decision.

The power company supplies electricity to Metro Manila, the provinces of Bulacan, Cavite and Rizal, and parts of Batangas, Laguna, Quezon and Pampanga provinces. INQ