

DENR to DILG: Ensure garbage collectors protected from virus

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

-April 20, 2020

With the first reported case of a garbage collector having been tested positive for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is reiterating the need to protect them from the dreaded disease.

The DENR expressed alarm on the case, underscoring the importance of having a clean environment as the country struggles with the pandemic.

Local government units (LGUs) and their garbage contractors, hence, should ensure waste segregation at source, and that the garbage collectors who are vulnerable to the disease are wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) during their operation, the DENR said.

Despite the threat of Covid-19, however, it has been observed that garbage collectors are still unprotected, as they go about their work with not even a face mask, gloves, or even an overall suit or coverall for their protection.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu had already asked the help of Interior Secretary Eduardo M. Año.

In his letter-recommendation to Año, Cimatu endorsed seven important measures. These measures are: requiring garbage collectors to wear personal protective equipment; proper segregation of solid waste at source; regular collection of garbage; and, disinfection of garbage bags prior to collection and loading at the garbage truck and upon disposal at the sanitary landfill.

Lastly, Cimatu said no scavenger or unauthorized personnel should be allowed to loiter at the disposal area.

To ensure proper segregation, Cimatu recommended that a color-coding scheme for garbage bags be implemented.

Medical and other health-care wastes including used PPEs, he said, should be placed in the proper storage area prior to collection by the authorized transporter for treatment, he said.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/20/denr-to-dilg-ensure-garbage-collectors-protected-from-virus/>



Tamang pagproseso sa waste disposal ng mga pasilidad na tumatanggap ng COVID-related patients, inilabas ng DOH

April 19, 2020 @ 6:13 PM 12 hours ago

Views: 172

Manila, Philippines – Naglabas na ang Kagawaran ng Kalusogan ng Memorandum 2020-0170 o 'interim guidelines on the management of health care waste' sa mga pasilidad, community quarantine units at temporary treatment at monitoring facilities na may COVID-19 case.

Nakapaloob sa nasabing panuntunan ang tamang procedures sa pagproseso ng COVID-19 waste upang hindi imaging source ng infection o pagkalat ng COVID-19.

Sinanay din umano ang lahat ng health care workers sa tamang handling ng health care waste para sa ibat-ibang setting.

Samantala, sinabi rin ni Usec. Maria Rosario Vergeire na ang mga health care waste naman sa bahay kung saan naka-home quarantine ang isang nagpostibo sa COVID-19 ay dapat din umanong magsuot ng tamang PPEs tulad ng gloves, mask at apron ang mga nangangalaga at nagha-handle sa health care waste ng mga pasyente.

Dapat din umanong nakasuot pa rin ng PPEs habang binabalot ang mga ito sa tamang lagayan.

Kailangan din regular ang disinfection ng kuwarto kung saan namalagi ang isang pasyente habang naka home quarantine.

Payo ni Vergeire, mainam na dalhin sa community quarantine facility o sa hospital upang masiguro na tama ang disposal nito pagkatapos. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

Source: <https://remate.ph/tamang-pagproseso-sa-waste-disposal-ng-mga-pasilidad-na-tumatanggap-ng-covid-related-patients-inilabas-ng-doh/>

Concerns raised over presence of Chinese vessels in Semirara Island

Published April 19, 2020, 11:44 AM

By Tara Yap

ILOILO CITY – Concerns have been raised over the presence of two Chinese vessels at Semirara Island, the coalmine reservation in Antique province where four people have already tested positive for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).



In this video grab, a Chinese vessel is seen at the port of Semirara Island, the coalmine reservation in Caluya town, Antique province. (Courtesy of Bong Sanchez / via Tara Yap)

“The Chinese cargo ships are enjoying the privilege in spite of worry and fear by the community in Semirara, who mix with the coalmine workers,” said Bong Sanchez, president of the environmental group Save Antique Movement (SAM).

A vessel arrived Friday, the same day the Department of Health (DOH) confirmed that Semirara Island registered three new positive cases of COVID-19.

While one of the vessels left Saturday, Sanchez urged that a temporarily ban be imposed on the entry of Chinese ships that transport coal out of the island that is part of Caluya town.

Sanchez told The Manila Bulletin on Sunday that the presence of the two Chinese vessels was against the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), which aims to stop the spread of COVID-19.

“The government made it mandatory for residents to stay home, but it’s OK for the Chinese vessels to come in,” Sanchez pointed out.

Sanchez also reiterated that Antique’s first COVID-19 case was also in Semirara, and raised concerns for more transmissions.

“Better yet, Semirara Island must be in total lockdown. Several more are still awaiting for their COVID-19 test results,” Sanchez added.

The DOH separately confirmed the three new COVID-19 positives had close contact with the first case, a 74-year-old man who flew to Semirara from Metro Manila.

Meanwhile, the local government of Caluya town has been enforcing a policy that Chinese crew members of vessels cannot disembark while the coal was being loaded into the vessel via conveyor.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/19/concerns-raised-over-presence-of-chinese-vessels-in-semirara-island/>

Alarm sounded over Chinese vessels at Semirara Island port

April 19, 2020 | Filed under: [Headlines,News](#) | Posted by: [Tempo Desk](#)

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Miguel De Guzman

Government eyes phased, targeted lifting of COVID quarantine

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 20, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government is eyeing a phase-by-phase lifting of the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine as it considers heeding the advice of the World Health Organization (WHO) against abruptly lifting lockdowns around the world to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Members of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Emerging Infectious Diseases will meet today to discuss possible scenarios and measures to be enforced once quarantine ends.

While the task force has yet to decide whether to extend or lift the quarantine, its spokesman, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, said the Philippines has to consider the WHO's reminder about the risks of lifting lockdowns prematurely.

"We have to follow, if ever, the advice of the WHO, that we cannot be abrupt on this. So one of the options being eyed is phase-by-phase (lifting). Maybe it should be targeted. We have to choose (which establishments) should reopen and what workforce would be allowed to work, what transport systems would be allowed," Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles told radio station dzBB yesterday.

"We have these kinds of guidelines that should be imposed and once they are approved by President Duterte, we would have new dos and don'ts," said Nograles, who heads the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF).

The quarantine started on March 17 and was supposed to end on April 12, but Duterte decided to extend it to give the government more time to conduct tests and strengthen the country's health system.

The government warned yesterday that strict measures would be reimposed if there is a resurgence in COVID cases after the quarantine is lifted.

Nograles assured the public that the government would act swiftly in the event of a resurgence of coronavirus cases.

“There is a caveat... If the numbers increase, if there is a new spike or surge or resurgence or second wave or relapse, whatever terminology will be used, the bottom line is if we see another increase in the number of cases, we have to be prepared. The government has to decide quickly,” he said.

“We need to be strict again, implement again the enhanced community quarantine, either as a whole or in particular localities. Our action should be swift,” he added.

The IATF spokesman said the task force is expected to discuss today which industries and sectors would be allowed to resume operations, whether the quarantine should still cover the entire island of Luzon or only selected areas.

The government, according to Nograles, will consider five parameters in deciding whether to lift or extend the quarantine: the epidemiological curve or the acceleration or deceleration of COVID-19 cases; health aspects, including capacity to test, isolate and treat patients, and facilities; social aspect; economic aspect and security aspect.

“We do not know yet what will happen (today). Hopefully, we will arrive at a consensus. Whatever recommendations to be presented, ultimately, it will be President Duterte who will decide,” he said, adding that regardless of the post-quarantine scenario to be implemented, the wearing of face masks, constant disinfection and social distancing would still be required.

The government is also expected to ramp up the testing of patients under investigation and patients under monitoring tomorrow because of its improved testing capacity, according to the task force spokesman.

Expanded meeting

Sen. Bong Go yesterday confirmed that Duterte will decide this week whether or not to extend or totally or partially lift the quarantine after April 30 amid the continued rise in COVID-19 cases in the country.

Go, chairman of the Senate committee on health, said Duterte is scheduled today to preside over an expanded meeting with IATF members, including health secretaries of previous administrations and other experts.

The senator said the IATF meetings of late were being conducted through Zoom as many officials of the task force have been found positive of the disease. It was not yet clear how the meeting today with Duterte would be done.

“Our situation is really difficult; Filipinos are now pinned down, but I think we must be really strict in the next 11 days until April 30, and I think the President will decide this week whether or not to extend it or loosen it,” Go told dzBB in Filipino. “The coming days will be crucial... The people’s lives and livelihood are at stake.”

If he were to be asked, the senator said he would lean toward “saving lives” even as he admitted that the urgent need to jumpstart the economy is just as compelling.

Go, a member of the joint congressional oversight panel on the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, said he continues to monitor the situation of many Filipinos affected by the quarantine in Luzon as well as in many parts of the country.

Sen. Sonny Angara said he is in favor of “relaxing” the quarantine for specific areas or barangays.

“I suggest a barangay-based quarantine while other establishments, like businesses and industries, transportation, could be opened,” Angara told dzRH.

He said essential retail establishments should also be allowed to open.

The senator, however, said mass testing must be ramped up so that the government can determine which areas are safe from COVID-19.

He cited the case of some parts of northern Japan, where quarantine was lifted and saw a second wave of infections.

Dr. Anthony Leachon, special adviser to the IATF, said the National Task Force on COVID-19 led by Secretary Carlito Galvez, is looking at three scenarios after April 30: a modified community quarantine relaxing measures for “essential workers;” “rolling” lifting of community quarantine by local government units (LGUs) or localized lifting, depending on certain health parameters; and status quo, meaning, extending the quarantine until May 15.

“I believe the second option gives better specificity and is nuanced per LGU. For each LGU, there are massive implications for coping and building capacity to execute. I think a combination of the first and second, if properly timed and well-executed, may address both flattening the curve and getting the economy moving,” Leachon said.

‘Is health system ready?’

For Vice President Leni Robredo, the preparedness of the country’s healthcare system to deal with COVID-19 cases must be among the things that the government must consider in lifting or easing the Luzon-wide quarantine.

“The question is: are we ready to deal (with the virus)? Are hospitals ready, is the government ready, is the healthcare system ready?” Robredo said in her weekly program over dzXL yesterday.

She added that COVID-19 cases could rise again when the lockdown is lifted, according to data.

The Vice President said the government should have used the quarantine, which started on March 17, to prepare the country’s healthcare system for the pandemic.

The WHO had earlier set six conditions for ending a lockdown against COVID-19: the disease transmission is under control; health systems are able to “detect, test, isolate and treat every case and trace every contact;” hot spot risks are minimized in vulnerable places such as nursing homes, schools, workplaces; other essential places have established preventive measures; the risk of importing new cases “can be managed;” and communities are fully educated, engaged and empowered to live under a new normal.

Robredo, however, said the government must also weigh in the impact of the prolonged lockdown on small businesses.

“The business sector is suffering, even the big companies are suffering too,” she said.

Presidential adviser for entrepreneurship and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion has proposed a selective quarantine at the barangay level.

Community quarantine, he said, should be extended for barangays with high rates of infection to enable the police and the military to focus on areas most affected.

No total lockdown nationwide

Meanwhile, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año has dispelled claims that the national government will impose a total lockdown over the entire country amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Año said that while expanding the quarantine to areas outside Luzon is “an option,” there would be no total lockdown nationwide.

In an interview with ABS-CBN News Channel, he said it is too early to say what move will the government be taking as it needs more data.

A recommendation to the President is expected to be submitted on April 25 or by the end of the week.

Last week, Duterte threatened that he would impose martial law-like discipline following thousands of quarantine violators tallied by the police.

Año said authorities would not impose martial rule, but they would be deploying additional uniformed personnel to ensure strict implementation of the quarantine. – **With Paolo Romero, Edit Regalado, Helen Flores, Romina Cabrera, Evelyn Macairan**

DILG: Prepare for the ‘new normal’

April 19, 2020 | Filed under: [Headlines, News](#) | Posted by: [Tempo Desk](#)

By CHITO CHAVEZ

Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año yesterday asked the public to prepare for the “new normal” in which wearing of face masks, social distancing, and prohibition of mass gatherings will be mandatory.

With the current situation, Año said the country is bound to face extreme difficulties in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the year.

He also denied reports that the government intends to enforce martial law in the country but said that a “martial law-style” implementation of enhanced community quarantine measures may be imposed in areas where there is great number of violators.

Año also shrugged off claims that a “total lockdown for the entire country” is in the offing, explaining what is intended is to implement the existing measure “on a very strict mode.”

President Duterte had earlier warned that martial law-like lockdowns over COVID-19 quarantine violations may be imposed, stressing that the people should be made aware of the seriousness of the health crisis situation.

Leading to the strict implementation of ECQ regulations, Duterte has ordered the increased deployment of the police and the military in the days leading to the end of the lockdown on April 30.

Año noted that a recommendation on what action will be taken after the end of the extended Luzon-wide ECQ may be submitted to the President this Saturday.

He added that the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases is expected to meet again today to discuss the latest on the COVID-19 epidemiology situation.

During the meeting, Año said the IATF members will consider the recommendation and conclusions that will be presented in the meeting.

He added that these will be consolidated with “our health system capacity at the present, looking into the economic factors and also social factors” and other similar considerations.

“So, we’re thinking of coming up with a recommendation to the President probably, maybe, on the 25th. And then, of course, it’s going to be the President who shall decide whether the ECQ will be lifted, or modified, or partially lifted, or even extended,” he added.

Año also said that expanding the ECQ in other parts of the country is also an option.

He added that severely-affected areas outside Luzon where there are local transmissions of the disease such as Sitio Zapatera in Cebu City are currently being monitored extensively.

With the stricter implementation of the lockdown, Año warned the public of more arrests for violators of quarantine measures especially those “engaging in other activities like drinking and gambling.”

Año expressed frustration over the apparent lack of concern by some people “as if they just don’t care.”

The DILG chief has also asked the local government units to approve ordinances and resolutions that would punish violators.

Source: <http://tempo.com.ph/2020/04/19/dilg-prepare-for-the-new-normal/>

Trump calls Duterte to discuss COVID-19 response cooperation

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Apr 19, 2020 10:39:03 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 19) — US President Donald Trump called President Rodrigo Duterte to discuss bilateral cooperation on the COVID-19 response, Senator Christopher “Bong” Go said Sunday.

Go, who was once Duterte’s long-time aide before becoming a senator, still enjoys wide access to the President.

Further details on the conversation between the two leaders have yet to be released.

The Philippines has the highest number of COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia, with 6,259 cases. Of that number, 409 have died and 572 have recovered.

The US, meanwhile, has the highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths worldwide, with 735,366 people who have contracted the viral disease and 39,095 deaths because of it.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/19/Duterte-Trump-COVID-response-bilateral-cooperation-.html>

Ex-DFA chief urges PH to protest China's creation of
TITLE: new districts in South China Sea

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April 20, 2020
DATE

Ex-DFA chief urges PH to protest China's creation of new districts in South China Sea

By [Xave Gregorio, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Apr 19, 2020 10:51:23 PM



PHOTO FROM CSIS/AMTI

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 19) — Former Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario is urging the government to protest China's creation of new districts that cover features in the South China Sea, including the Philippine-claimed Spratly Islands, Scarborough Shoal and Fiery Cross Reef.

Del Rosario said just as the Philippines protested China's reported sinking of a Vietnamese fishing vessel, it should also protest its declaration of the new districts.

He added that these recent incidents involving China in the disputed waters should keep Filipinos vigilant, even as the world faces the coronavirus pandemic, which started in Wuhan, China.

"These show that China has been relentless in exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic as it continues to pursue its illegal and expansive claims in the South China Sea to the prejudice of Filipinos, the ASEAN states and the international community as a whole," Del Rosario said.

Chinese State-owned China Global Television Network [reported](#) Saturday that China has established two new districts covering Paracel Islands, Zhongsha Islands, which is home to Scarborough Shoal, Woody Island, Spratly Islands, and Fiery Cross Reef.

The report said Xisha district will administer the Paracel and Zhongsha islands and its surrounding waters, while its government will hold office on Woody Island, which is claimed by both China and Vietnam.

The Paracel Islands are both claimed by China and Vietnam. The entirety of Zhongsha Islands is both claimed by China and Taiwan, while Scarborough Shoal is also claimed by the Philippines.

The CGTN report also said that another district, called Nansha, will be governing the Spratly Islands and its surrounding waters. Its government will hold office on Fiery Cross Reef.

China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan have overlapping claims over Spratly Islands. Fiery Cross Reef, meanwhile, is claimed by China, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan.

Xisha and Nansha districts are both part of Sansha City, which administers the Paracel, Zhongsha and Spratly islands.

CGTN described the city as covering two million square square kilometers, but only covering 20 square kilometers of land. It also said some 1,800 people live in the city.

Ex-DFA chief urges PH to protest China's creation of
TITLE: new districts in South China Sea

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China has so far put up two research stations, and sank a Vietnamese fishing boat in the South China Sea amid the coronavirus pandemic.

While these actions were widely seen as China taking advantage of the global health crisis, "none of these [incidents] are new," [according to Washington-based think-tank](#) Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative.

"There's nothing different today that China wasn't doing six months ago," AMTI director Gregory Poling said in an online forum hosted by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines.

"It has been steadily increasing its presence... it's been steadily increasing the frequency of harassment of Southeast Asian oil and gas operations, fishing operations, etc.," Poling said, adding that China is showing no signs of stopping in order to establish control of contested waters.

"I think people are a little more scandalized. They have assumed that amid the global pandemic, we would see a calming and that hasn't happened," he added.

President Rodrigo Duterte has nurtured ties with China despite its continued aggression in the West Philippine Sea — areas Manila claims and occupies in the South China Sea.

A 2016 ruling by a Hague-based arbitral tribunal backed by the Permanent Court of Arbitration voided China's sweeping claims over virtually the entire South China Sea based on so-called historical rights, but Beijing continues to reject this decision.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has convinced Duterte to "shelve differences" to make way for joint oil and gas exploration.

Do your ECQ share, public urged

Published 4 hours ago
on April 20, 2020 03:30 AM
By **Francis Wakefield**



Cabinet Secretary and Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) Spokesperson Karlo Nograles urged the public to step up and do its share to contain the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak and curb the number of infections in the country.

Nograles said with 6,000-plus confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country — 766 of which are health workers — there is a need for the public to stay home and comply with the social distancing guidelines set by the government under the enhanced community Quarantine (ECQ) in the whole of Luzon.

He said that based on data submitted by the Department of Health (DoH), a total of 766 healthcare workers in the country are confirmed to have COVID-19, 339 of which are doctors and 242 nurses.

Of the figure, the Palace official said 22 Philippine health workers have already succumbed to the disease.

As of 18 April, there were 209 new COVID-19 cases in the country, with 10 new fatalities and 29 new recovery.

This also brings the total number of cases in the country to 6,087 with a total of 516 recoveries and 387 deaths.

“This is just another somber reminder for all of us to do our part to contain this outbreak,” Nograles said.

“These are not just numbers. They represent real people — people who have families, loved ones, friends. Each loss cannot be quantified; they hurt us all,” he added.

Nograles, at the same time, said that the people are not powerless against this disease and all of us can do something about it.

“We can prevent the painful losses among our health workers and our countrymen,” Nograles said.

COVID-19 assessment, adjustment & action NOW!

Published April 20, 2020, 12:05 AM

#ASKGOYO

By **ATTY. GREGORIO LARRAZABAL**

The number of COVID-19 cases in ASEAN countries continues to rise. Of all the countries in the region, the Philippines has the highest number of COVID-19 cases. As of Thursday, April 16, 2020, there were 5,660 official COVID-19 cases in the Philippines. Breaking down the numbers:

Philippines	5,660	362	435	106.7 M
Indonesia	5,516	496	548	267.7 M
Malaysia	5,182	84	2,766	31.5 M
Singapore	4,427	10	683	5.6 M
Thailand	2,672	46	1,593	69.4 M
Vietnam	268	0	177	95.4 M



Atty. Gregorio Larrazabal

I'll be citing some data and numbers here, and it might get a bit confusing, so kindly refer to the table above. When you look at the numbers above, what's startling is not only the fact that the Philippines has the most OFFICIAL number of COVID-19 cases, but also the very high mortality rate. Malaysia was next in rank in terms of COVID-19 cases, but was replaced by Indonesia late last week. There's just a small difference between the Philippines and second-place Indonesia, but a big gap over between Indonesia and third place Malaysia. If the projections are correct, by the time you read this, Indonesia will have passed the Philippines as the country in ASEAN with the highest number of COVID-19 cases.

What is more worrisome is the official mortality rate numbers of the Philippines. There is also the concern that some hospitals might not be declaring deaths as caused by COVID-19, because of non-swabbing of people who died with COVID-19 symptoms. The only country worse than the Philippines in terms of deaths is Indonesia. Another stat which is even more worrisome than the infection numbers and mortality rate is the recovery rate. The world recovery rate is about 23.4%. Ours is considerably lower. However, late last week, our numbers significantly improved, and the number of recoveries has now surpassed the number of deaths.

As a whole, what do these numbers mean? On the surface, the numbers of the Philippines look bad. We're way off the mark. Only Indonesia is doing worse. But more than dwell on the numbers, planners and experts should look at the cause of those numbers. Why are we doing so bad? Let's not only identify the problems, but more importantly, find solutions to it. THAT's imperative.

This is where data scientists, statisticians, doctors, and planners come in. They have to look at ACCURATE data. What's the cause of these numbers? To begin with, they can extrapolate the data, and cross reference it with information from those in the medical facilities which submitted the data. We have to get to the bottom of it. Many experts will say that the coronavirus, or its mutations, will be here for a couple of years. Now is

the time for ACTION with FOCUS. Productive action necessitates a viable action PLAN. There has to be sufficient planning on what to do. SOME suggestions are (listed just a few to get things started):
Short Term – April-June, 2020

Getting our healthcare workers and frontliners the much-needed equipment they have been asking for. Provide sufficient healthcare for the COVID-19 patients.
Make sure people who died who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, but were not tested when they were still alive, are tested before they're buried or cremated.
Due to the high medical cost, some who might be suffering from the virus chose not to go to the hospital, and instead stay home. Some have died. How do you test those people to make sure they did not die because of the virus?
Looking at and seriously studying the various options available to be used for testing. A combination of PCR Test kits and Rapid Test Kits, to be used by the qualified personnel all over the country.
The IATF should assist the LGUs by issuing a clarificatory statement regarding the use of funds by LGUs to purchase Rapid Tests Kits pursuant to DOH guidelines and protocols.
Implement a national healthcare registration system which allows the government to determine the status of medical personnel, to allow monitoring and determination on how the healthcare community is coping and how to manage deployment of medical personnel. One design was done by Dr. Samuel Yrastorza (my relative). It would be a good idea to study ideas like this.

Mid-term – 2020-2021

What programs and plans are in place to ensure the healthcare system can handle cases once the lockdown /Enhanced Community Quarantine is lifted and there's a surge of patients? Based on the proposal by some leaders in the business community, it will be the barangay officials who will have more responsibility in the new phase of the war against the virus. Are they ready for it?
If a quarantine is to be declared in the future, what are the parameters and guidelines to be followed before it will be imposed?
How will the national government monitor the programs to be implemented by the LGUs?
What structure is in place in case patients are diagnosed later this year or in the succeeding waves?
How is the government going to efficiently implement the stimulus package to re-start the economy, and help businesses get back on its feet?
How do you re-tool factories for industries which may not recover in time?
How do you re-purpose workers to maximize their capabilities?
Is there a plan to order sufficient medical supplies when the expected second wave hits? Many of the countries doing good now had a headstart because they not only planned early, but also placed orders for supplies early. Plus, it's cheaper to buy supplies when the demand is not high.

Long Term – 2022 and beyond

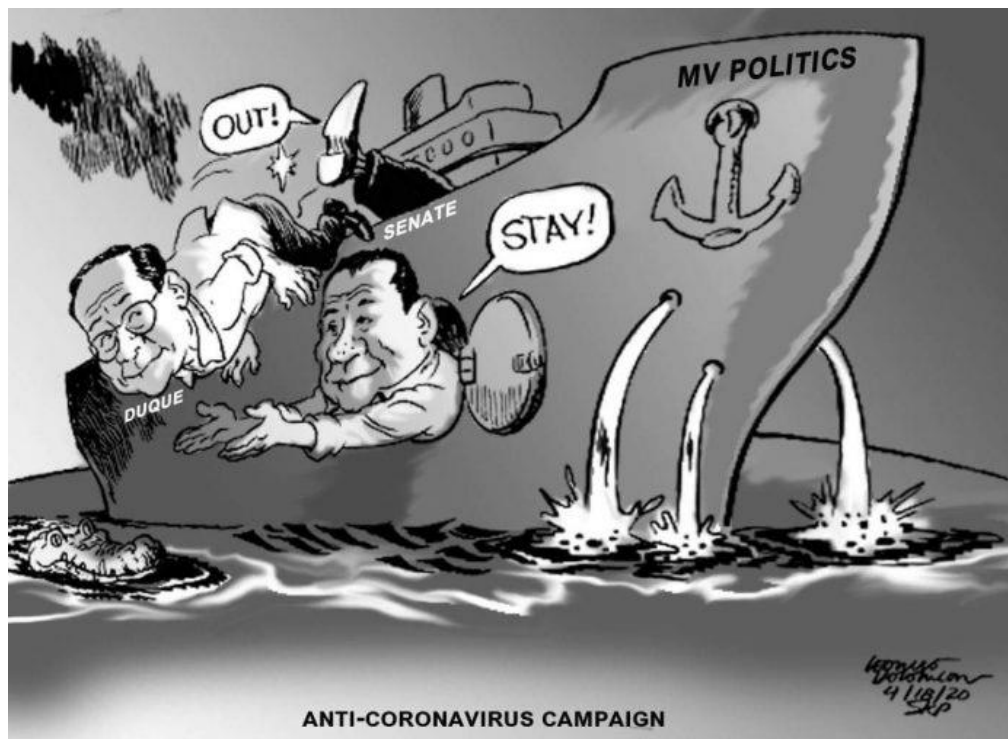
1. We have to ask ourselves..How do you fix the healthcare system in the Philippines?
2. Is there a system where plans are institutionalized to ensure a more science-based approach to solving problems in the future? A pro-active approach.
3. I suggest looking at Taiwan as a model we can study. News reports quote the country started to prepare after the SARS outbreak. Debunking the argument that no country prepared for this scenario.
4. How do you strengthen the medical community? Not only with supplies, but fostering a stronger educational system to deal with future health crisis?

There are other very good ideas which the medical community has. Important now is not just the planning, but the systematic and strategic implementation of the plans and programs.
STAY HOME. STAY HEALTHY. STAY SAFE.

Truly caring for our health workers

By [Malaya Business Insight](#)

-April 20, 2020



SINCE the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the nation has continuously heaped praises on Filipino health workers — physicians, nurses, medical technologists, etc. — who are in the frontlines of the life-and-death battle against spread of the virus.

The media, the government, business sector, even children and poor vendors joined the chorus in elevating the healthcare professionals, called frontliners, to the level of heroes.

Over the weekend, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire disclosed the sad news that there were already a total of 766 healthcare workers who contracted the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes the disease COVID-19. Of this number, 339 are doctors, while 242 are nurses.

The new figures mean that in just nearly two weeks, the number of healthcare workers infected with the new coronavirus almost doubled to 13 percent of all recorded cases nationwide. As of last Saturday, the COVID-19 cases in the country totaled 6,087 with the death toll at 397 and recovered patients, 516.

Compassion and platitudes heaped by Health Secretary Francisco Duque on the fallen heroes at the forefront of the fight are not enough. Duque said: "I know that you are exhausted. Most of you no longer get adequate sleep and some are falling ill. I wholeheartedly thank your for your service to our country."

These words are good to hear, but these ain't enough. The Department of Health should walk the talk, first by providing adequate personal protection gear to all health workers, food, enough rest time and accommodation, transport facilities, etc.

It is important that the DOH has embarked on emergency hiring of doctors and nurses. But more important is the protection of the health professionals already in the frontlines from the disease itself.

It should not be very hard to grant the request of the Alliance of Health Workers (AHW) that mass testing must be implemented among their ranks regardless of whether nurses and doctors and other health practitioners have exhibited symptoms of COVID-19. The AHW demanded this because the DOH in a statement last Tuesday said that only patients and healthcare workers who exhibit mild, severe, and critical symptoms would be prioritized in the expanded mass testing.

Let us not dance around. If this request by the AHW is granted, then the government is sincere in treating the frontliners as genuine heroes.

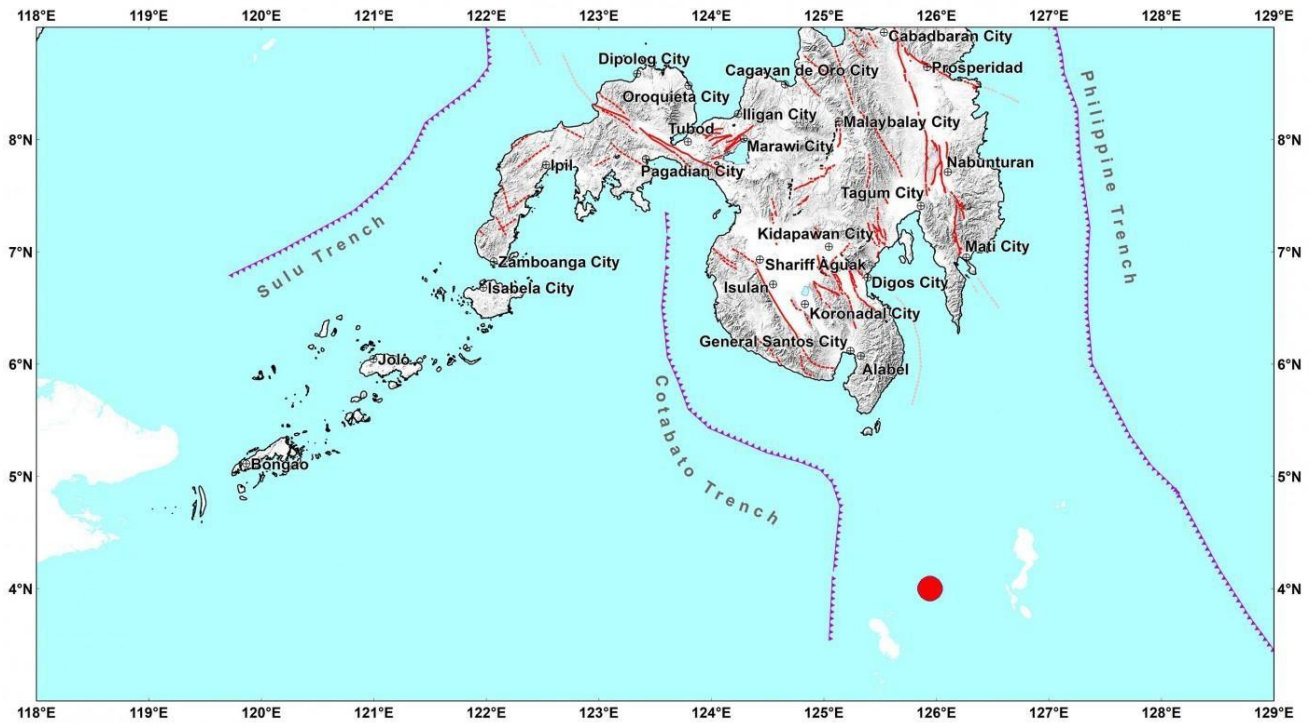
If not, everything is just hollow talk.

5.2 magnitude quake jolts Davao Occidental

Published April 19, 2020, 11:04 PM

By MB Online

A magnitude 5.2 earthquake struck Sarangani, Davao Occidental Sunday evening, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.



(PHIVOLCS/MANILA BULLETIN)

The quake, which was tectonic in its origin, was traced 168 kilometers (km) southeast of Sarangani (Davao Occidental) and occurred at 9:09 p.m. It had a depth of 132 km.

Instrumental intensities were registered in these areas:

Intensity II – Malungon, Sarangani

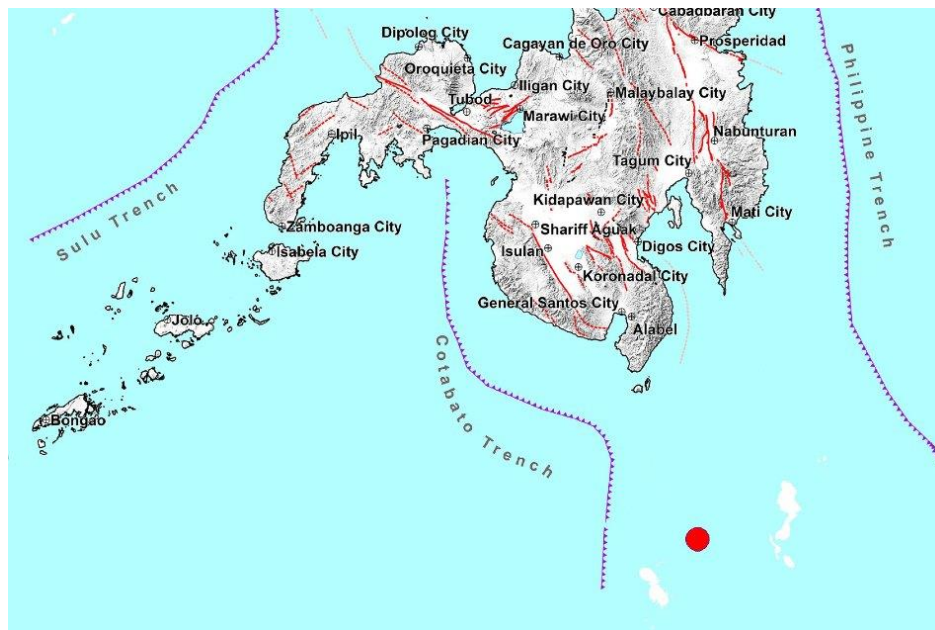
Intensity I- Alabel and Kiamba, Sarangani; Koronadal City and Tupi, South Cotabato

Aftershocks are expected from the tremor.

Magnitude 5.2 quake rocks Davao Occidental

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 19 2020 11:52 PM



MANILA—A magnitude 5.2 earthquake jolted Davao Occidental on Sunday night, Phivolcs said.

The tremor happened at 9:34 p.m., 168 kilometers southeast of Sarangani town.

It was tectonic in origin and had a depth of 132 kilometers, according to Phivolcs.

Instrumental Intensities II and I were reported in Malungon, Sarangani and Alabel and Kiamba in Sarangani, and Koronadal City and Tupi, South Cotabato, respectively.

The tremor was expected to cause aftershocks. No damage has been reported so far.

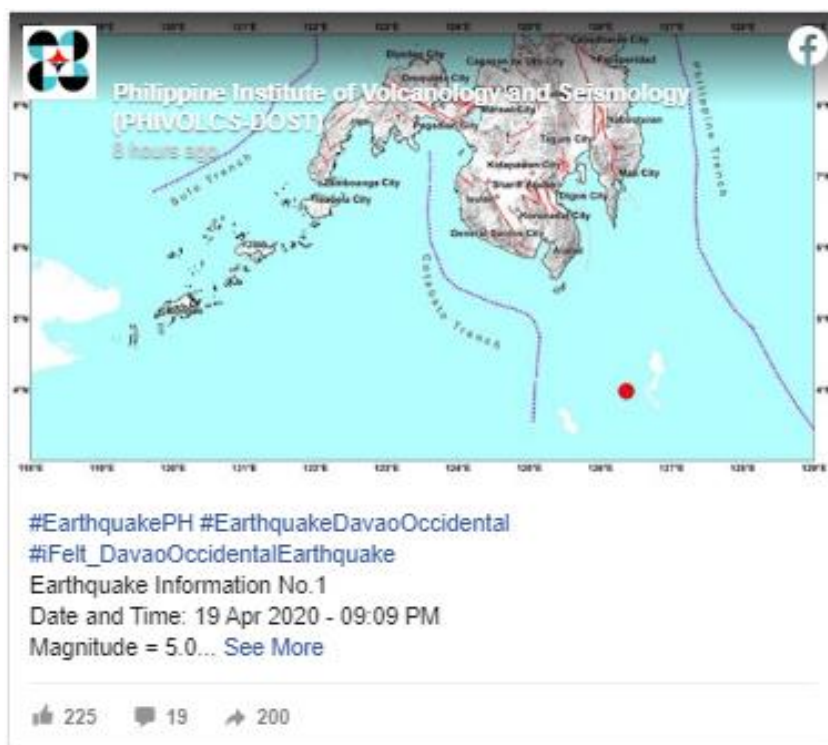
PHIVOLCS records 5.0 quake off Sarangani

Published April 19, 2020 11:32pm

A magnitude-5.0 earthquake was recorded off Sarangani on Sunday night, PHIVOLCS reported.

According to the agency, the quake struck at 9:09 p.m., about 190 kilometers south of the province.

Intensity II was felt in Malungon, Sarangani, while Intensity I was felt in Alabel and Kiamba, Sarangani; Koronadal City; and Tupi, South Cotabato.



— BM, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/734695/phivolcs-records-5-0-quake-off-sarangani/story/?fbclid=IwAR1gEiMnIrMRD1G5lDeYLqLEjKWlEslzWUHKpkpFmBKoC3roIeJHtmCG5xI>

Pushing low carbon transport in the new normal

By [Thomas M. Orbos](#)

-April 20, 2020

WE are all talking about the new normal, referring to the life we will face once the pandemic subsides. And judging from all the discussions, it seems everyone is prepared to embrace it. But are we? The new normal is not just about adjustments to a new world. It is about leaving the pre-Covid practices, actions or policies of our society that either contributed to the causes, as well as the spread, of this virus and future pandemics.

Take the case of transportation. Given the porous world we live in, the transport sector, maybe on a par with the medical and the food sector, is crucial to the new world we will be entering. Global policies on transport will have to be reviewed as they can spell the difference between spreading the virus and containment. Even social distancing, at its very core, is not just about human interaction— but physical human to human contact that can only be possible through a transport and travel experience.

It is good that even our local transport policy-makers are looking at policies that will discourage the spread of the virus. At the onset of the pandemic, the Department of Transportation issued a directive aimed at pushing for mandatory social distancing and ensuring the sanitation of passengers and cargo in all modes of transport—rails, roads, air and maritime. The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board issued a timely directive of requiring public transport drivers to wear facemasks and provide alcohol or similar disinfectants to their passengers, aside from the mandatory social distancing. Our airport managers, following IATA guidelines— maintained their passenger and cargo disinfection processes despite the confusing recommendations of the World Health Organization. Both the maritime and the rail sectors conducted massive disinfection regularly to bring that much-needed safety confidence to the public.

These are all definitely good, but as we are learning more about the virus, we also know that these will not be enough. Post-Covid transport policies will have to put primary importance on safety of passengers and cargo, even sacrificing economic considerations. On a higher plane, transport will play a bigger role—not just in the containment of the spread of coronavirus and other future pathogens, but more important in long-term prevention. How can this be?

We know that Covid-19 attacks our respiratory system, which then leads to other complications. We also know that transport is one of the leading causes of carbon emissions leading to a third of respiratory deaths globally. Overlooked, especially among us who live in urban centers, is the fact that our respiratory resistance is weakened due to our daily exposure to carbon emissions. There are scientific studies proving such a correlation. But that is not even necessary. Logic dictates that moving forward in the new era, we need to instill practices to give us a better chance of defending ourselves.

In this regard, there is a pressing need to overhaul our dependency on fossil fuels. The move to save our environment by moving into alternative fuel and low carbon emission is now being given a more heartfelt meaning. Timelines to drastically implement this need to be hastened. Transport and urban planners must be given the needed support in changing our city landscape to deliberately allow more greenways and bikeways. Private car ownership must be discouraged, and low carbon public transport be encouraged. Incentives must now be given to such low carbon vehicles, while penalties must be effectively imposed on those that insist on fuel fed transport despite the presence of whatever political considerations that prevented such implementation before.

It is not just about the clearer skies and the cleaner air we breathe now that we want to carry on to the new normal. It is about ensuring that our future generations will have a greater fighting chance against this virus and other future, and possibly more deadly viruses. It is time to really take care of our environment with the needed changes in transport policies. Moving forward to the new normal is not just the end to our old harmful practices but the assured rebirth of our species.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/20/pushing-low-carbon-transport-in-the-new-normal/>

How the old 'normal' caused the pandemic

'Our lives are too small, our minds so closed, our interests so shallow, our existing social and political ideologies too narrow, to recognize that we invited this non-living thing into our lives, into our normal'

Maria Isabel Garcia

Published 11:00 AM, April 19, 2020

Updated 11:00 AM, April 19, 2020



In quarantine, we are mourning the impending loss of life as we knew it. But what we should really grieve over is ourselves – for letting this happen. We really cannot get back to the old normal because the old normal is what got us here. That is why this is not a war, but a reckoning.

As a reckoning, it is a settlement of, a coming to terms with, the consequences of our own actions. War distinguished between civilians and military targets, between the able-bodied and those especially vulnerable, it had rules of engagement. It even distinguished between those who had the resources and the wile to be on the good side of the enemy and those who resisted. War is when the enemy is a discrete “other” with motives who also think we are the “enemy” with our own set of motives. War is not when the enemy is ourselves.

This thing that most of us think we are at war with is a molecular string that floats and invades cells – whoever they may belong to – as long as those cells have what this [coronavirus](#)’ own make-up can latch on to. It has no brain, no battle plan, and no command center. It is part of nature, long before our human ancestors were here. It used to live in the cells of other animals in places where humans were not main residents of. They had [natural hosts in those habitats](#). But we eventually came, we saw, we liked, we took selfies, and we conquered those habitats. Humans arrived and the viruses lurking and losing many of their natural hosts [“saw” us as another host](#).

And we did not arrive on tiptoe. We came with bulldozers, transformer excavators, and lots and lots of us. Over 7.5 billion of us are now being carried by a single lone planet, but together, [we are all living like we have almost 2 whole planets](#). We have taken over [66% of the planet’s landmass and altered 75% of our marine environment](#). Over a [third of the planet’s land surface and nearly 75% of all its freshwater](#) are devoted to feeding humans. The [towns and cities](#) that have settled after we have bulldozed natural habitats in the name of “progress” are now almost two-thirds of the planet. Our plastics, our heavy metals, our solvents, have produced [“dead zones” in our oceans](#) with a total area that is half of that of the United Kingdom. We did a slow, [silent massacre of 60% of the world’s animals since the 70’s](#). We did that because we could – the only animal who could. We did that because we are so human an animal.

And this new invader – this coronavirus, just like its other fellow stringed entities – is not an animal. This non-animal, this non-living thing has arrived on the scene and conquered the entire world in just a few months. And our lives are too small, our minds so closed, our interests so shallow, our existing social and political ideologies too narrow, to recognize that we invited this non-living thing into our lives, into our “normal.” So we are now its own normal. And we will be for many other viruses.

So how do we reckon with the consequences of these actions?

We acknowledge, we transform, and we restore at the same time.

We acknowledge that each of us, regardless of our bank account or consumption level, has contributed with our own FOMOs (fear of missing out) and YOLOs (you only live once) and our own narrow “live life to the fullest” interpretations, to this pandemic. The more you have – individual, company, city, town, or country – you are exponentially more accountable. (READ: [\[OPINION\] The coronavirus: A warning to care for our common home](#))

We transform by looking at conservation as not just another advocacy but our second nature. All of us are guilty. We should now all see everything – health, economics, security, happiness, education – as DIRECTLY grounded on the Earth and thus should all be pursued connectedly. I could not agree more with 2008 Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman said when he stunned his interviewer at CNN International when asked what he thought of the rise and fall of the stock market in pandemic times. He said that the stock market is not a measure of anything meaningful in terms of our humanity in these times. We should transform our old, lame, extremely narrow yardsticks for genuine wealth.

We restore. We do not do anything unless there is a matching, measured act that restores nature. All of us should do restoration work wherever we are and whatever we do. That will give us jobs, meaningful jobs, and it will thread our common humanity and the only home this humanity knows. That other planet we are currently consuming does NOT exist. [The temporarily “restored” nature](#) that you see on videos with most humans at home is not a silver lining. It is a benchmark of the amount and kind of restoration we should do when we can finally go out again.

Say goodbye to the old normal? We should have a long time ago.

It could have changed the ending.

Earth Day beckons. Reply. Now. – [Rappler.com](#)

National Geographic gears up for Earth Day 2020

AFP Relaxnews / 07:26 PM April 19, 2020



National Geographic will mark 50 years of Earth Day, which was first celebrated on April 22, 1970. Image: courtesy of National Geographic via AFP Relaxnews

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, the international television network has pulled out all the stops to offer a comprehensive range of politically committed documentaries on the environment, which notably includes “Before the Flood” presented by Leonardo DiCaprio. On Wednesday, April 22, National Geographic will be taking an expansive look at the status of the planet. For the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, the TV network has planned a 24-hour marathon of non-stop natural history programming wholly focused on the environment.

The schedule will include such documentaries as “Before the Flood”, a 2016 film produced and presented by Leonardo DiCaprio. In the 96-minute feature, the American actor and fervent environmental activist talks with Barack Obama, Elon Musk and even Pope Francis about the means available to mankind to take action before it is too late.

Another eagerly awaited documentary is “Jane Goodall: The Hope” which will simultaneously air on National Geographic and National Geographic WILD. The two-hour show offers an immersive exploration of the world of Dame Jane Goodall, a primatologist and activist who has tirelessly promoted the cause of environmental conservation around the world for several decades.

“The need to protect our planet has never been more urgent, and we’re using Earth Day’s 50th as an opportunity to inspire viewers through the wonders of our planet and its incredible species for viewers around the world,” explains Courteney Monroe, president of National Geographic Global Television Networks in a statement.

“With the Earth Day takeover across all of our networks and platforms, we are able to reach the largest audience possible to celebrate this momentous day and ensure that viewers fall in love with our planet and act to protect it,” Monroe said.

The extensive programming schedule will be particularly welcome in the current period of lockdown, when audiences are more eager than ever to explore the natural world through the medium of television. **JB**

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/98491/national-geographic-gears-up-for-earth-day-2020#ixzz6K6HC4X95>

The Earth's call to #ActNow

posted April 19, 2020 at 07:20 pm

by [Manila Standard Showbiz](#)

As the COVID-19 situation remains uncertain, countries all over the world continue to take precautionary measures to keep each one safe such as use of masks, social distancing, and extending community quarantines.



Be reminded of the beauty that animals and nature bring into our world in the most immersive wildlife media experience in 'Epic Earth' as it premieres on Animal Planet and Discovery Channel.

There's a silver lining to the world's current situation. With people confined in their homes, the concentration of NO₂ fell dramatically in China, Italy, Spain and other countries around the globe as well.

Our world is home to the most fascinating animals, and with climate change happening, not only does it affect us, but also them as well. If there is one thing we can learn from the community quarantine, it's that the actions of mankind greatly impact the world from environmental pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and depletion of natural resources. This is seen in how some bodies of water have cleared up during the quarantine and how air pollution has lessened in cities.

The scale of challenges facing our planet can seem daunting, but with the upcoming celebration of Earth day on April 22, let us all be reminded of every action, whether small or big, can help make a difference to our world.

The #WorldIsOurs and it is up to us to #ActNow and do our part to save it. Earth Day can serve as a reminder on how human action—and inaction, for that matter—impacts nature and other animals. Furthermore, it can be a time of reflection and reconnection for what you can do for the planet. Be reminded of the beauty that animals and nature bring into our world in the most immersive wildlife media experience you'll ever have in Epic Earth as it premieres on Wednesday, April 22, at 9:00 p.m. only on Animal Planet and Discovery Channel.

Ten years after huge US oil spill, fears of offshore drilling persist

Updated April 19, 2020, 6:34 PM

By Agence France-Presse

On April 20, 2010, the explosion of BP's Deepwater Horizon drilling platform claimed the lives of 11 workers and unleashed a torrent of more than four million barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.



The Deepwater Horizon oil-drilling platform is shown in flames in the Gulf of Mexico two days after an explosion killed 11 workers on the rig (US Coast Guard/AFP/File / MANILA BULLETIN)

A decade later, the practice of deepwater drilling remains widespread off the lengthy coasts of the United States.

While government oversight was tightened in the wake of the environmental disaster, conservationists say the risks of a new leak could be growing as falling prices may lead to staffing cuts by the big producers.

Today, oil rigs continue drilling off the shores of Alaska and California, but the vast majority (nearly 1,900) are in the Gulf of Mexico, off the coasts of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

– 17% of US crude production –

Around 17 percent of the country's crude oil and five percent of its natural gas comes from this huge maritime zone, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Offshore drilling rigs, their productivity steadily increasing due to technological advances, have long been considered as the most profitable way for the United States to ensure energy independence.

AFP/File / Paul ELLIS

It took BP nearly three months to halt the Deepwater Horizon leak, which fouled beaches, damaged tourism and killed millions of sea creatures

“Deepwater was drilling deeper than almost any well available at the time,” said Phil Flynn, an energy analyst with the Price Futures Group. “It was the equivalent of landing a man on the moon.”

But in recent years deepwater drilling has lost some of its shine as new techniques for hydraulic fracking — injecting liquid deep into the earth to release natural gas at relatively modest cost — have gained ground.

Mining accident kills 9 in Sumatra

posted April 19, 2020 at 07:45 pm

by [AFP](#)

Nine people were killed by a landslide at an illegal gold mine in Sumatra, an Indonesian official said Sunday.

The accident happened Saturday in South Solok in West Sumatra province when a group of 12 people were digging for gold at an abandoned mine.

The area has several abandoned mines from the colonial era.

“Eight men and one woman went in to dig and were buried by a landslide. We evacuated their bodies early this morning,” district spokesman Firdaus Firman told AFP.

Three people keeping watch reported the accident to local officials when the group failed to emerge from the mine.

The victims were local farmers digging the gold without proper equipment or protective gear.

The location and the rainy weather also hampered rescue efforts.

“All victims are accounted for and there’s no more missing,” Firman said, adding that police and the local disaster agency are investigating.

Illegal and unlicensed mines are prevalent across mineral-rich Indonesia and the scene of frequent accidents.

In early 2019 at least 16 people were buried alive when a mine collapsed in the Bolaang Mongondow region of North Sulawesi, where five miners were killed a few months earlier in a similar accident.

Mask distribution in Indonesia

Chaideer Mahyuddin, AFP

Posted at Apr 19 2020 05:30 PM



An Indonesian soldier puts a face mask amid concerns over COVID-19 in Darul Imarah, Aceh province on Sunday. Indonesia recorded more than 6,000 COVID-19 cases with 535 deaths according to local reports.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/multimedia/photo/04/19/20/covid19-indonesia-mask-distribution>