

# Covid-positive BFP employee not in Boracay meeting: DENR

June 18, 2020, 3:12 pm



**MANILA** – The female employee of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) in Western Visayas who tested positive for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) never took part in the meeting of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) held on the island on June 11, an official clarified Wednesday.

“No BFP representative was in the meeting nor was the agency invited to the meeting because it is not a member of the BIATF,” said Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Director Natividad Bernardino, who organized the BIATF meeting in her capacity as general manager of the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG).

Bernardino made the clarification following news reports that the female employee was allegedly part of the BFP contingent that arrived in Boracay for the BIATF meeting led by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año, and Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

“I was given specific instructions by Secretary Cimatu to limit the number of participants in the meeting and to only have a small group,” Bernardino said in a press release.

“Secretary Cimatu also repeatedly emphasized to strictly observe physical distancing. We fully complied with all those,” she said.

Bernardino said there were only 15 persons in the main meeting room, including the three secretaries, although its normal capacity is more than 50 persons.

Bernardino added that strict health and safety protocols were observed from the arrival of the attendees, the actual meeting and when the officials went around the island for site inspections.

“Because we wanted to safeguard the island and its people from Covid-19, we had the participants pass through all protocols and we limited the number of attendees coming in the island for the meeting,” Bernardino said, adding that those who could not be physically present joined through video conference.

Records from the regional health department showed that the BFP employee arrived in Boracay on June 12, or a day after the actual BIATF meeting took place, and stayed on the island until June 14. The following day, June 15, the Department of Health in the region released test results of six Covid-19 cases, which include the BFP employee. **(PR)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1106277>

# Virus-positive BFP employee not in Boracay meeting — DENR

Updated June 18, 2020, 12:40 PM

By Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday clarified that a female employee of the Bureau of Fire Protection-Western Visayas (BFP) who tested positive for coronavirus never took part in the meeting of the Boracay Inter-agency Task Force (BIATF) held on the island last June 11.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

“No BFP representative was in the meeting nor was the agency invited to the meeting because it is not a member of the BIATF,” said DENR Director Natividad Bernardino, who organized the BIATF meeting in her capacity as general manager of the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group.

Bernardino made the clarification following reports that the female employee was allegedly part of the BFP contingent that arrived in Boracay for the BIATF meeting led by DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año, and Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

“I was given specific instructions by Secretary Cimatu to limit the number of participants in the meeting and to only have a small group,” Bernardino pointed out.

“Secretary Cimatu also repeatedly emphasized to strictly observe physical distancing. We fully complied with all those,” she added.

According to Bernardino, there were only 15 persons in the main meeting room, including the three secretaries, although its normal capacity is more than 200 persons.

She added that strict health and safety protocols were observed from the arrival of the attendees, the actual meeting, and when the officials went around the island for site inspections.

“Because we wanted to safeguard the island and its people from COVID-19, we had the participants pass through all protocols and we limited the number of attendees coming in the island for the meeting,” Bernardino said.

Those who could not be physically present joined through video conference, she also said.

Based on the records from the regional health department, the BFP employee arrived in Boracay on June 12, a day after the actual BIATF meeting took place. She stayed in Boracay until June 14.

The following day, June 15, the Department of Health in Western Visayas released test results of six COVID-19 cases, which included the BFP employee.

The gathering of BFP-Western Visayas was conducted before Boracay was even reopened to regional tourists last June 16.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/18/virus-positive-bfpemployee-not-in-boracay-meeting-dnr/>

DENR exec says BFP personnel with COVID-19 not  
part of Boracay meeting

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# DENR exec says BFP personnel with COVID-19 not part of Boracay meeting

By: [Katrina Hallare](#) - Reporter / [@KHallareINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:32 PM June 18, 2020



MANILA, Philippines — An official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday said that the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) personnel tested positive for coronavirus was not part of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) meeting held on the island last June 11.

“No BFP representative was in the meeting nor was the agency invited to the meeting because it is not a member of the BIATF,” DENR director Natividad Bernardino, who also organized the BIATF meeting, said in a statement.

Bernardino made this clarification following reports came out that the female BFP employee from Western Visayas was part of the contingent that arrived in Boracay for the meeting.

The BIATF, which was formed on May 8, 2018, is tasked to supervise and manage the rehabilitation of the island.

Members of the BIATF include DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, Department of Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat and Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año.

The DENR official added only 15 people—including the three secretaries—present in the main meeting room.

Strict health protocols and safety protocols were observed throughout the BIATF meeting, from the arrival of attendees, the actual meeting and when officials went around the island for inspection

“Because we wanted to safeguard the island and its people from COVID-19, we had the participants pass through all protocols and we limited the number of attendees coming in the island for the meeting,” Bernardino said.

The BFP personnel was said to have [roamed around the island](#) while waiting for her swab results, which later came out positive for SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

DENR exec says BFP personnel with COVID-19 not

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It was said that the personnel arrived in Boracay on June 12, along with 27 of her companions from the BFP Western Visayas, where they had a meeting on the island and later partied on.

The test results of the BFP personnel later came out two days later on June 14.

Año later [ordered to sack](#) the regional director of the BFP Western Visayas for command responsibility, as well as the 28 personnel, including the BFP employee, for breaching quarantine protocols.

JPV



## DENR: Tauhan ng BFP na may COVID-19, 'di kabilang sa pagpupulong sa Boracay

June 18, 2020 @ 3:45 PM 17 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nilinaw ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) nitong Huwebes na ang babaeng tauhan ng Bureau of Fire Protection-Western Visayas (BFP) na nagpositibo sa coronavirus ay hindi kabilang sa pagpupulong ng Boracay Inter-agency Task Force (BIATF) na isinagawa sa isla noong Hunyo 11.

“No BFP representative was in the meeting nor was the agency invited to the meeting because it is not a member of the BIATF,” ayon kay DENR Director Natividad Bernardino, na nag-organisa ng BIATF meeting sa kanyang kakayahan bilang general manager ng Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group.

Isinagawa ni Bernardino ang paglilinaw na ito kasunod ng mga ulat na sinasabing bahagi ang babaeng empleyado ng BFP contingent na dumating sa Boracay para sa BIATF meeting na pinangunahan nila DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año, at Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

Aniya pa, sumama ang mga hindi nakapunta sa pagtitipon sa pamamagitan ng video conference.

Batay sa mga ulat mula sa regional health department, dumating ang empleyado sa isla noong Hunyo 12, isang araw matapos ang aktwal na pagpupulong ng BIATF.

Nanatili siya sa Boracay hanggang Hunyo 14.

Noong sumunod na araw, Hunyo 15, inilabas ng Department of Health sa Western Visayas ang test results ng anim na kaso ng COVID-19, kung saan kabilang dito ang empleyado ng BFP. **RNT/MM**

# BFP employee na COVID positive, hindi kasama sa Boracay IATF meeting – DENR

By [Angie dela Cruz](#), [Danilo Garcia](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- June 19, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Itinanggi kahapon ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) na kasama sa kanilang pagpupulong sa Boracay ang isang babaeng tauhan ng Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Western Visayas na nagpositibo sa COVID-19. Ito ang nilinaw ni DENR director Natividad Bernardino na nag-organisa ng BIATF meeting at manager ng Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG) bilang reaksiyon sa ulat na kasama ng BFP delegation na pinangunahan nina Environment Sec. Roy Cimatu, Interior Sec. Eduardo Año at Tourism Sec. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

Ani Bernardino, ang babaeng tauhan ng BFP na napatunayang may COVID-19 ay hindi invited sa kanilang pulong.

Sinabi ni Bernardino na 15 katao lamang ang pinayagang dumalo sa pulong kabilang na ang tatlong kalihim kahit na ang normal na bilang ng mga dumadalo dito ay mahigit sa 200 katao. Aniya, mahigpit ang ipinatutupad na "health and safety protocols" mula sa pagdating ng mga kalahok, aktuwal na pulong at maging sa pag-iikot sa isla para sa site inspection upang matiyak na ligtas ang isla sa virus.

Base sa ulat ng Regional Health department, dumating sa Boracay ang BFP employee noong Hunyo 12, isang araw matapos ang BIATF meeting, namalagi ito sa isla hanggang Hunyo 14. Hunyo 15 nang maglabas ng test result ang Department of Health at dito ay anim ang nagpositibo sa COVID-19 kabilang na dito ang BFP employee.

# DENR warns public vs. online illegal wildlife trade

By Marna Dagumboy Del Rosario June 18, 2020, 6:16 pm



**ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE.** The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Luzon warns the public against the selling of wildlife through social media. Paquito Moreno, executive director of DENR in Central Luzon, said transporting and trading of wildlife without the necessary permit and proper documentation is prohibited under Republic Act No. 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001. *(Photo courtesy of DENR-Central Luzon)*

**CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga** – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office here warned the public against the buying and selling of wildlife through social media.

This, after operatives of the DENR and the Bureau of Customs (BOC) seized last week a juvenile bearded dragon estimated to be worth some PHP8,000, which was found and reported by a shipping company at the Clark International Airport, this province.

Based on the shipping manifest, the bearded dragon was sent by an online pet seller based overseas to the consignee who had no import permit on record.

Authorities discovered upon the opening of the shipped package that the animal had died during transport, as it was shipped in a lidded plastic bowl without food, water, or appropriate padding inside the container.

Paquito Moreno, executive director of DENR-Central Luzon, said transporting and trading of wildlife without the necessary permit and proper documentation is prohibited under Republic Act No. 9147, the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

“Our citizens should obtain proper permits and not disregard the regulatory processes required in importing wildlife,” Moreno said in a statement.

He also said that the laws are in place to protect wildlife and ensure its proper and safe transport, as well as to protect the nation’s ecosystem.

Moreno thanked the BOC and Clark International Airport for their vigilance and support against illegal wildlife trade.

“We have tightened our watch on wildlife trafficking even during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in our airports and seaports in the region, since these are potential gateways for illegal wildlife trade,” he said.

The DENR has placed Clark and Subic Freeport Zones under tight watch as their strategic locations make them irresistible to smugglers attempting to transport wildlife poached from other countries and parts of the Philippines such as Aurora and Palawan.

Intensified wildlife protection and conservation have resulted in DENR’s confiscation of a total of 311 species of reptiles, birds, and mammals since 2015. **(PNA)**



The DENR has placed Clark and Subic Freeport zones under tight watch following reports of smugglers attempting to transport wildlife poached from other countries and parts of the Philippines such as Aurora and Palawan.

[twitter.com/DENROfficial](https://twitter.com/DENROfficial)

## DENR warns vs illegal online wildlife trade

[Ric Sapnu](#) (The Philippine Star) - June 19, 2020 - 12:00am

SAN FERNANDO CITY, Pampanga, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) warned the public against the sale of wildlife through social media after authorities seized an endangered species of rare lizard called the bearded dragon.

Operatives of the DENR and the Bureau of Customs (BOC) intercepted a dead juvenile bearded dragon reportedly worth over P8,000 when alive, which was found by employees of a shipping company at the Clark International Airport in Pampanga.

A bearded dragon (*pagona vitticeps*) is a type of lizard native to the deserts of central Australia with beard-like skin on its chin that extends when the reptile gets excited. The lizard can grow up to 60 centimeters in length with a life expectancy of 10 years.

Pet enthusiasts are fond of keeping this reptile because it is easy to maintain with a diet consisting of a wide variety of food, the study said.

According to the shipping manifest, the wildlife was sent from an online pet seller based overseas to the consignee who had no import permit on record. The reptile apparently died during transport.

The DENR has placed Clark and Subic Freeport zones under tight watch following reports of smugglers attempting to transport wildlife poached from other countries and parts of the Philippines such as Aurora and Palawan.

DENR had seized 311 species of reptiles, birds and mammals since 2015.

Paquito Moreno, executive director of DENR Central Luzon, explained that transporting and trading of wildlife without the necessary permit and proper documentation is prohibited under Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.



He said these laws are in place to protect the wildlife and ensure its proper and safe transport, as well as to protect the country's ecosystem.

"We have tightened our watch on wildlife trafficking even during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in our airports and seaports in the region, since these are potential gateways for illegal wildlife trade," Moreno said.

The Asian Development Bank pegs the illegal wildlife trade in the Philippines at P50 billion a year (about \$1 billion).

This includes the market value of wildlife and its resources, their ecological role and value, damage to habitats incurred during poaching and loss in potential ecotourism revenues.

# Pagkalbo sa bahagi ng mangrove area sa Puerto Princesa, iniimbestigahan

Rex Ruta, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 18 2020 06:01 PM



Halos umabot umano ng anim na ektarya ng mga bakawan ang kinalbo at sinunog sa Barangay Iwahig at Bucana-Matahimik sa Puerto Princesa. *Kuha ni Rex Ruta*

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Palawan - Binisita Huwebes ng umaga ng mga representante ng iba't ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan, kasama ang ilang sundalo, ang kinalbong bahagi ng mangrove area sa Barangay Iwahig at Bucana-Matahimik sa lungsod na ito bilang bahagi ng kanilang imbestigasyon.

Inangkin diumano ang nasabing lugar ng kasisibak lang na hepe ng pulisya sa lungsod na si Col. Marlon Balonglong. Sinibak sa pwesto si Balonglong at iniimbestigahan matapos ang pambubugbog at pag-aresto noong nakaraang linggo sa grupo ng forest guards at mga tanod na nagsasagawa noon ng assessment sa mga bakawang pinasok ng informal settlers.

Ayon kay Forester Felizardo Cayatoc, officer-in-charge ng City Environment and Natural Resources Office, kailangan sumailalim sa assessment at imbestigasyon kung paanong nakalusot ang pagsunog at pagkasira ng halos nasa anim na ektaryang bakawan.

"Mayroong activity na ganyan, nag-i-encroach sila. Pero itong particular na area na ito na adjacent areas ay napakabilis. Of course, starting March 17, hindi na nakalabas ang mga tao natin hanggang katapusan ng April. Pero ito, naging buffer nila yung mga bakod. Kahit nasa highway siya, hindi mo mapapansin na may nangyayari dito sa loob," sabi ni Cayatoc.

Sabay sa pagbisita sa lugar ay ang paggiba sa ginawang bakod at muhon. Katuwang rito ang demolition team ng city government.

Nauna na ring giniba ang nasa mahigit 70 inabandonang istruktura at mga binakod na pwesto na pasok sa timberland o pagmamay-ari pa ng gobyerno.

"Pati maliliit na species ng mangrove ay i-a-account kasi ang timber, mayroon pong definition ang timber, yung sukat. Pero, yung mangrove species ho, kahit kaliit-liitan na sukat, considered na timber po yan," saad ni Forester Eriberto Sanos ng Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office.

Kailangan anilang alamin ang kabuaang danyos ng nasirang bakawan, at ang lawak ng epekto nito sa mga buhay ilang at kalikasan.

Mahigit 200 kabahayan na rin ang binigyan ng notice to vacate sa loob ng isang buwan.

Ayon sa Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, malaking hamon sa probinsya ang pagpasok ng maraming immigrants na walang sariling lupa, at paglipana ng professional squatter dahil maraming mangrove area at kagubatan ang nasasalaula.

Pagkalbo sa bahagi ng mangrove area sa Puerto

June 19, 2020

TITLE: Princesa, iniimbestigahan

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“May problema tayo sa ating human settlements at may problema tayo sa ating migration practices. Pag may magpasok na ibang tao galing ibang probinsya, ibang siyudad, tapos walang matirhan, ay magsi-settle yan kung saan may i-o-offer, or maghahanap ng ibang pwesto sa mga mangroves, sa mga timberland natin. Kaya marami tayong nakikitang mga sirang forestland natin,” ani Atty. TJ Matta, executive director ng PCSD.

Maliban sa kasong administratibo ay handa na ring ihain ng awtoridad ang mga kasong paglabag sa Forestry Code at Fisheries Code of the Philippines laban kay Balonglong at mga kasabwat nito.

Aminado naman ang CENRO na malaki ang kanilang pagkukulang kaya muling naulit ang malawakang pagsira ng bakawan sa lungsod.

“This is a senseless destruction of biodiversity. Kung itsetsek ninyo ang background ng interview ninyo, you can hear the sound of birds in the background. Ibig sabihin, nagpapakita ang area na talagang very rich in biodiversity,” sabi ni Atty. Carlo Gomez ng CENRO.

“But apparently, doon sa hanay ng kapulisan, kagaya ni chief Balonglong, wala sa kanyang vocabulary ang biodiversity,” dagdag ni Gomez.

Marapat lamang din umano na maideklara si Balonglong na persona non-grata dahil sa pang-aabuso sa kalikasan at paggamit ng dahas sa kapwa empleyado ng gobyerno.

Magkakatuwang ang Inter-Agency Task Force on Environment sa pagbuo ng mga plano kung paano mapapanumbalik ang mayabong na bakawan.

**NATION**

# 'Give land to true landless'

Published 3 hours ago on June 19, 2020 04:20 AM

By [Andrio Atienza](#)



A Puerto Princesa councilor wants the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) in Manila to turn over authority to the Puerto Princesa City Government to distribute the troubled lands for the landless in Barangay Iwahig, Puerto Princesa City and put a stop to illegal selling of land by syndicated groups.

Puerto Princesa City Councilor Victor Oliveros said it was about time to “give the land to the true landless individuals of the city” since he became the City Council’s committee chair of landed estate and urban development in 2013.

“From the time I sat as (committee) chairman of the landed estate, we have seen nothing but problems in the distribution,” he said, adding that the City Government would be more competent to administer the land distribution.

Proclamation Order 718, signed by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2004, separates the vast land of Iwahig to be given to the landless, however, the non-distribution of the land has led to several issues on ownership among professional squatters from the barangays where the land straddles on.

Danny Malonzo, president of Palawan Landless Association, was supposed to represent the landless people in the City Council’s committee, but was beset by a series of allegations that he himself had been engaged into selling Certificates of Eligibility for Lot Allocation (CELA) containing 200 square meters of land to some moneyed individuals in the city.

The City Council had decided to invite Malonzo for the question hour during the regular session on Monday 22 June 2020.

Questions on the Barangay Iwahig land ownership came into light following the incident when former Puerto Princesa City police chief Col. Marion Balonglong mauled a personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and placed several others under unlawful arrests when the group was about to conduct a survey inspection on the reported illegal cutting of mangrove trees in the Sitio Bocana, Barangay Iwahig.

Balonglong was allegedly claiming ownership of a three-hectare lot along the national highway, which he reportedly had fenced and cut the mangrove trees within it.

While Balonglong was relieved from his post for the mauling incident, his alleged involvement in the illegal land sale and “ownership” of several Palawan properties were put into question.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Palawan Office also revealed to the Daily Tribune that Balonglong figured with SPO4 Rommel Mayo, PCapt. Mark Allen Palacio, Felix Noli Vivero, and a certain “Ayco” to be members of a syndicate that was involved in shady deals in the selling of lands in Puerto Princesa City, El Nido, San Vicente and Apurawan, Aborlan, Palawan.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/19/give-land-to-true-landless/>

# DENR-2 welcomes first woman chief

By Corie C. Corpuz Published on June 18, 2020



***In her acceptance speech, Director Gwendolyn C. Bambalan announced her policy direction to strengthen the priority programs of the DENR under the leadership of Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.***

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan, June 18 (PIA) - - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Cagayan Valley welcomed recently Director Gwendolyn C. Bambalan as its new Regional Executive Director (RED).

Bambalan took over the leadership from Atty. Antonio A. Abawag who is designated as OIC, RED of DENR in the Bicol Region.

The virtual change of command was held on June 16, 2020 officiated via Zoom application by Undersecretary for Field Operations, Enforcement and Muslim Affairs Jim O. Sampulna.

Undersecretary Sampulna appealed to all DENR Region 2 employees to support Bambalan as he asked the latter to give her utmost affection to the employees. He also enjoined them to focus in one direction and to the priority programs of the Department.

In her acceptance speech, Bambalan announced her policy direction to strengthen the priority programs of the DENR under the leadership of Secretary Roy A. Cimatu. "But we will do some refocusing of our efforts where it is most critical and impactful to the people of Region 2," she said.

The new Cagayan Valley environment chief stressed out participatory governance within and outside the DENR. She also enjoined the DENR employees to "always adhere to the core values of Discipline, Excellence, Nobility and Responsibility."

"As a civil servant, it has been my advocacy also to influence DENR colleagues and fellow civil servants to become E-CHAMPS (Excellence, Collaboration, Honesty, Accountability, Managing Ability, Participation and Simple Living)."

Bambalan is designated by virtue of Special Order No. 2020-191 issued by Secretary Cimatú on June 5.

Prior to her assignment in Region 2, she was the Assistant Regional Director for Management Services in DENR National Capital Region. From 2015-2018, she also assumed the post as Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services in Region 1 where she was a regional winner of the Civil Service Commission's Pagasa Award.

Before the implementation of the Rationalization Program of the Department, the lady director served as Regional Technical Director for Protected Area, Wildlife and Coastal Zone Management in MIMAROPA from 2012 to 2015.

The regional environment chief held the designation as Officer-In-Charge, Finance and Administrative Division at the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) for seven years. She is a Doctor of Public Administration graduate from the University of the Philippines–Diliman.

Bambalan first joined the DENR in 1981 as Agronomist in the then Bureau of Forest Development (BFD). In 1985, she became the Project Development Coordinator under the Integrated Social Forestry Division of the BFD.

The lady director is a champion of gender responsiveness and equality in the organization and program implementation with decades of active involvement in community forestry all over the country.

She is the board secretary of the DENR Association of Career Executives, member of the National Union of Career Executives, president of the Save Coconut Foundation, Incorporated, and faculty in-charge at the University of the Philippines Open University.

A Director III by position, Bambalan is a Career Executive Service Eligible. ALM/PIA-2/Corie C. Corpuz, DENR-2)



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRIO ATIENZA FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE

**Tourism boost** In a bid to revive tourism in Puerto Princesa City following various stages of lockdowns, local government officials visited the Crocodile Farming Institute and the Gintong Butil Agricultural Farm to check their newest tourist offerings following their reopening.



# DOT tightens health, safety protocols in Boracay

Share it!

Updated June 18, 2020, 7:35 PM

By Hanah Tabios

The Boracay quarantine breach has created a negative impact on the supposed resumption of businesses in the island.

Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat revealed Thursday that only seven tourists visited the island on its reopening date in the immediate aftermath of the incident.



This photo taken on June 17, 2020 shows a policeman standing guard along the empty famous white beach of Boracay Island, as community quarantine against COVID-19 still continues throughout the country, with foreign tourists still banned on beaches. (Photo by Ernesto CRUZ / AFP / MANILA BULLETIN)

This is opposite to what the tourism department has been expecting since locals from the region expressed excitement upon learning that the world-famous local travel destination will now be taking in guests from selected provinces.

“Nakakapanghinayang lang kasi lahat excited na magbukas ang Boracay,” Puyat said in an interview with the Manila Bulletin. (“It’s regrettable that this happened because many people were excited about the reopening of Boracay.”)

A staffer from the Bureau of Fire (BFP) Protection Western Visayas tested positive for COVID-19 while staying in Boracay from June 12 to June 14.

The infected person was with 24 other BFP personnel colleagues who went to the island at the time that the DOT was conducting an inspection to ensure that adequate health and safety protocols had been put in place.

In light of the reported violation, Puyat said she immediately ordered the revocation of the involved establishment’s DOT certificate to operate.

She also directed the tightening of the island’s pre-entry screening procedures, where tourists will also have to declare if they had undergone COVID-19 tests in the past and divulge the results as well to ensure safety for all.

The tourism chief could not hide her frustration over the incident as she said the establishments went the extra mile for the reopening. In fact, workers, including drivers, were very grateful that they would finally be able to resume work after a 3-month hiatus due to the prevailing health crisis.

The Malay local government unit clarified that they allowed the entry of the BFP personnel as they declared in their manifesto that they will be in Boracay for a “conference.” The said “conference” was the same event where the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force members, were present.

But Puyat said the illegal entry happened hours after they left Boracay at around 1p.m. The group arrived between 5 p.m to 6p.m. reports said.



She said the authorities later confirmed with her that the group threw a “despedida party” to one of its members in a 3-star hotel and resort. This was also heavily criticized on social media following the controversial “mañanita” involving some police officials.

Still fuming with anger, she said: “Three points lang ‘yan. They weren’t there for a conference, Boracay was still closed at that time, the hotel allowed them to stay. When you’re a government official dapat maingat ka talaga dahil you are the ones following the law.”

Meanwhile, according to a police report obtained by the Manila Bulletin, there was an attempt to cover up that the violator who tested positive for the coronavirus disease did not enter Boracay on the said period. There was no document also proving that she filled out a health declaration form at the hotel where they stayed.

“It is understandable that said person and the BFP will cover up this fact because she is supposed to be under quarantine in Iloilo City due to her history of travel from Cebu,” the police report read.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, who has been closely coordinating with the Malay police, also warned about the filing of cases against the BFP Western Visayas when it was later found out that the said person was not in her quarantine room.

“The BFP simply said she left and returned, not divulging any details where she went,” it added.

At present, all the alleged violators are now in quarantine, including the composite team formed by the DOT that was tasked to conduct an ocular inspection at Boracay.

All 24 staffers of the hotel and its other workers are now also undergoing a mandatory 14-day quarantine and the whole building is subjected to repeat decontamination.

# Personnel ng BFP-6, nag-party pa umano sa Antique bago pumunta sa Boracay; health protocols ‘di nasunod

By [Bombo Radyo Iloilo](#)

-June 19, 2020 | 2:22 AM

ILOILO CITY – Hindi pa natatapos ang kontrobersiyang kinasasangkutan ng Bureau of Fire Protection Region 6 kasunod ng pagtago umano sa kanilang firewoman na nagpositibo sa coronavirus disease 2019 o covid-19 at pag-party sa isla ng Boracay kasama ang nasabing pasyente.

Base sa imbestigasyon na isinagawa ng Local Government Unit ng Iloilo, Hunyo 5 ng dumating sa lungsod si patient 144 mula sa Cebu kung saan sinundo ito ng kanyang boyfriend na isang Fire Officer 1.

Hunyo 6 hanggang Hunyo 7, sumama ang boyfriend ng pasyente sa iba pang personnel ng ahensya kasama din ang dating regional director sa isang private beach house sa Bayo Pequeño, Anini-y, Antique kung saan nag karaoke ang mga ito at uminom ng alak.

Mayroon ding mga pictures na nakalap kung saan makikita na hindi sinunod ang health protocols kabilang na ang pag obserba ng physical distancing a pagsuot ng facemask.

28 BFP Region 6 personnel in Boracay trip relieved”

TITLE: DILG chief

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June 19, 2020

DATE

# 28 BFP Region 6 personnel in Boracay trip relieved : DILG chief

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 18 2020 01:09 PM | Updated as of Jun 18 2020 01:15 PM

MANILA - Some 28 personnel of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) in Region 6 have been relieved, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said Thursday, after attending a supposed conference that turned out to be a "despedida" party on Boracay Island in breach of quarantine protocols.

This followed the Department of Tourism's disclosure Wednesday that the BFP personnel had attended a party on the island last week despite restrictions on mass gathering. One of them was later diagnosed with COVID-19.

“They were just relieved of their current positions. They are placed in floating status while undergoing investigation,” Año said in an interview on ANC’s Headstart.

The region's fire chief was earlier relieved over the incident.

Año said Fire Chief Supt. Roel Jeremy Diaz will head the investigation and go to Iloilo to determine the extent of participation or accountability of each personnel who was with the group.

The fire officer who tested positive for COVID-19 used to be assigned in Cebu, Año said. The area is among those considered hotspots of the virus.

She underwent RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) testing on June 6 and was supposed to go on 14-day quarantine but went to Boracay on June 12, breaking isolation.

“She was formerly assigned in Cebu and she arrived at the headquarters of the Bureau of Fire Protection in Iloilo on June 5. She was subjected for PCR testing the next day and supposedly she should undergo home quarantine for the next 14 days,” said Año.

“The officer is really a PUI or a PUM (person under investigation or person under monitoring) that’s why she was subjected to testing. She did not wait for the quarantine to finish or even wait for the result of the PCR test and then she violated the quarantine period and her seniors or authorities tolerated it,” he said.

He said the officer’s positive COVID-19 result came out on June 14, when she had already gone to Boracay with several fellow officers.

As a result, the DILG chief said a total of 197 people are now under quarantine. The group of 28 who were on the island with the coronavirus-positive fire officer will be subjected to PCR testing.

A total of 24 staffers of the hotel they stayed in and also boatmen who had ferried them to and from the island were also placed under quarantine.

“Because of one incident it caused a lot of inconvenience and put risks on the lives of these people,” said Año.

Meanwhile, Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said they already revoked the authority to operate and the DOT accreditation of the hotel where the group stayed for 2 days.

She explained that the group came to the island for unofficial business and stayed in the hotel that was still not allowed to operate at the time. The island [reopened](#) for tourism operations on June 16 only for travelers from within Western Visayas.

“We immediately removed the certificate to operate. Ironically, they received their certificate to operate Monday. We revoked that already. We also removed their accreditation. They cannot do business at all,” she said.

Puyat said they were already busy preparing to open Boracay by deploying 4 teams to do ocular inspections of hotels to see if they comply with health protocols.

28 BFP Region 6 personnel in Boracay trip relieved”

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“This is what makes me angry because we were rushing to open. Now, the team that did an ocular inspection in that particular hotel is now under quarantine also so nabawasan kami (we have less personnel),” she said.

“Napaka-iresponsable (It was so irresponsible). When we talked to our lawyers removal na talaga ‘yan (that's already basis for removal), not only they did not have the certificate, authority to operate, tanggal ang accreditation (removal of accreditation),” she said.

## MGA TAUHAN NG BFP-6 'DI LANG SA BORACAY NAG-PARTY, SA ISANG RESORT DIN SA ANTIQUE

written by Jennelyn Valencia- Burgos June 19, 2020



Hindi lang sa Boracay nagawang magkasiyahan ang mga tauhan ng Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) Regional Office 6, kun'di maging sa isang resort sa bayan ng Anini-y sa Antique.

Ito'y matapos makarating kay Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas ang larawan ng mga tauhan ng BFP Office 6 na nagkakasiyahan sa nasabing resort.

Patuloy ang imbestigasyon na isinasagawa ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Iloilo City sa mga tauhan ng BFP Region 6 matapos magpositibo sa coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) ang isa sa mga tauhan nito.

Una nang nakumpirma ang despedida party ng mga ito sa Boracay.

Source: <http://www.dwiz882am.com/index.php/mga-tauhan-ng-bfp-6-di-lang-sa-boracay-nag-party-sa-isang-resort-din-sa-antique/>

# 'Di lang sa Boracay: Mga tauhan ng BFP Region 6, namasyal din sa Antique

Joyce Clavecillas, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 18 2020 08:12 PM

ILOILO CITY - Nakarating kay Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas ang larawan ng mga tauhan ng Bureau of Fire Protection Regional Office 6 habang nagkakasiyahan sa isang resort sa bayan ng Anini-y sa Antique.

Patuloy ang imbestigasyon na isinasagawa ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Iloilo City sa mga tauhan ng BFP Region 6 matapos magpositibo sa COVID-19 ang isa sa mga tauhan nito. Nauna nang nakumpirma na pumunta rin ang grupo sa Boracay para sa isang despedida.

Base sa nakuhang mga impormasyon ng city government, lumalabas na sakay ng barko ang babaeng kawani ng BFP mula sa Cebu pero hindi kasama ang kaniyang pangalan sa manifesto.

Sinundo ito ng kaniyang nobyo na isang Fire Officer 1 (FO1) at isa pang babaeng opisyal ng BFP 6 at dinala sa isang quarantine facility sa Iloilo City at nanatili doon hanggang Hunyo 8.

Noong Hunyo 6, sumama sa grupo ng mga tauhan ng BFP 6 ang nobyo ng nagpositibong BFP personnel. Nagpunta ang grupo sa isang pribadong beach house sa Anini-y, Antique, kasama ang kasisibak pa lamang na regional director ng BFP 6 na si Fire Senior Supt. Roderick Aguto.

Nanatili sa Antique ang grupo mula Hunyo 6 hanggang Hunyo 7. Makikita sa mga larawan na hindi sumunod sa physical distancing ang grupo habang nag-iinuman at wala rin silang mga suot na face mask.



Nakarating kay Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas ang larawan ng mga tauhan ng Bureau of Fire Protection Regional Office 6 habang nagkakasiyahan sa isang resort sa bayan ng Anini-y sa Antique. *Larawan mula sa Iloilo City Mayor's Office*

Noong Hunyo 8, dinala na sa BFP Regional Office ang babaeng personnel at nanatili doon hanggang Hunyo 11.

Noong Hunyo 12, pumunta sa Boracay ang babaeng personnel kasama ang iba pang kasamahan sa BFP. Nanatili sila sa isang hotel hanggang Hunyo 14.

Noon din bumalik sa Iloilo City ang babaeng personnel matapos malamang nagpositibo siya sa COVID-19. Nauna nang naiulat na sumailalim ito sa COVID-19 test unang linggo ng Hunyo at dapat sana'y naka-quarantine ng 14 araw, pero sumama ito sa Boracay ilang araw lang ang nakaraan.

Mismong si Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat na ang nagkumpirma na nagkaroon ng "despedida party" si Aguto sa Boracay bago pa man binuksan ang isla sa mga turista noong Hunyo 16.

Ikinagalit ito ng opisyal dahil tahasan itong paglabag sa quarantine regulations. Kinailangan din i-quarantine ang halos 200 taong nakahalubilo ng grupo noong nasa isla, habang binawi ang accreditation ng hotel kung saan sila tumuloy.

Sa panayam ng ABS-CBN News kay Treñas sa telepono, ang mga nakalap na impormasyon at mga larawan ay kabilang sa mga ebidensyang isusumite para sa reklamang isasampa ng city government laban sa mga personnel ng BFP 6.

‘Di lag sa Boracay: Mga tauhan ng BFP Region 6,  
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Pinaiimbestigahan rin ni Treñas ang ilang empleyado ng Iloilo City Planning and Development Office dahil pumunta rin ang mga ito sa beach house na pinuntahan ng mga taga-BFP.

Hunyo 13 naman nang pumunta ang mga ito sa Antique.

Minabuti ng alkalde na ipasailalim ang mga ito sa RT-PCR test upang makasiguro na walang sakit ang mga ito.

A6 NEWS

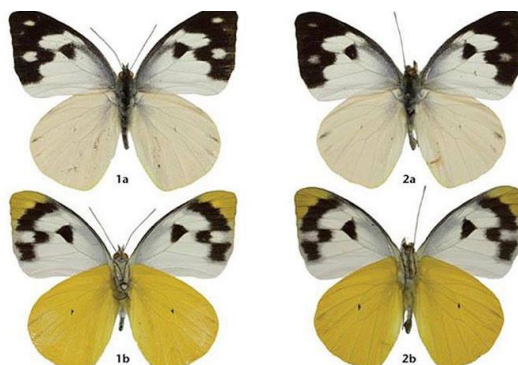
Friday, 19 June 2020  
Daily Tribune



ERNESTO CRUZ/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Clean as whistle Boracay's famous White beach is devoid of any life as the tourists avoid crowded places due to the ongoing pandemic.





## Bagong subspecies ng paru-paro, nadiskubre ng Pinoy biologist sa Negros

June 18, 2020 @ 6:22 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Walong taon mula nang nag-hiking ang biologist na si Jade Badon sa Bundok Talinis sa Negros Oriental at nakakolekta ng dalawang paru-paro sa lawa.

Hindi niya alam, magiging bagong pagtuklas sa mundo ng siyensya ang mga ito.

Endemic sa bansa, bihira at matatagpuan sa matataas na lugar ang species na *Appias phoebe*, ayon sa artikulong inilathala sa buwang ito ng German entomological journal NEVA.

Napansin ni Badon ang mga paru-parong nasa paligid ng Lake Nailig, isang crater lake malapit sa summit.

Dinala ang specimens sa McGuire Center for Lepidoptera & Biodiversity sa Florida, US, kung saan kumukuha si Badon ng kanyang master's degree sa ilalim ng scholarship program.

Agosto lamang noong nakaraang taon nang mapagtanto ng biologist na bagong subspecies ng *Appias phoebe* ang kanyang natuklasan.

“I attended the annual Philippine Biodiversity Symposium at the Visayas State University in Leyte. I scanned the pages of my book again and saw that my discovery looks different than the ones I saw from other publications. So I did my research and found that there is no collection of that subspecies,” ayon kay Badon.

Pinangalanan niya itong *Appias phoebe nuydai* — isang pagkilala sa contemporary painter at lepidopterist na si Justin “Tiny” Nuyda, na sinasabing may pinakamalaking koleksyon ng mga paru-paro sa bansa.

Hindi ito ang unang beses para kay Nuyda dahil pinangalan din sa kanya ng mga banyagang siyentipiko ang ilang paru-paro dahil sa kanyang kontribusyon.

Ibinahagi ni Badon na sinorpresa niya si Nuyda sa balita nitong Miyerkoles, sa kabila ng engkwentro nila noong Pebrero. “He had a collection of that butterfly species and I asked to see it. He asked me why I was interested, but it was already in the process,” ani Badon.

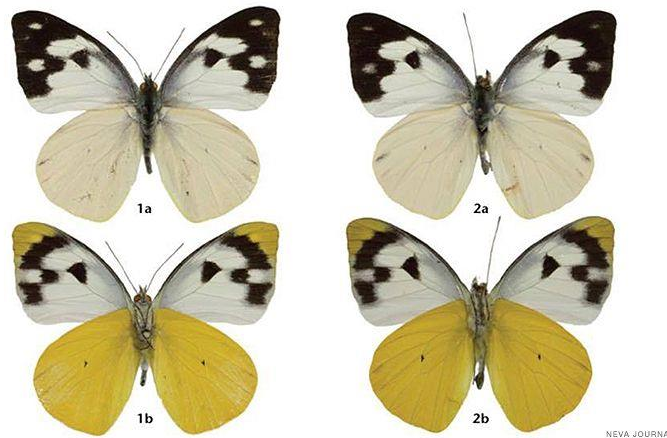
“Jade Badon is a friend of ours. We support his work. We are very happy for his research effort and his dedication to science. Something you rarely see in the Philippines due to the difficulty of producing income... My father is very happy that a young Filipino scientist shares the same level of interest for our winged jewels. This is a rare situation,” ayon sa anak ni Nuyda na si Ayni. **RNT/MM**

Source: <https://remate.ph/bagong-subspecies-ng-paru-paro-nadiskubre-ng-pinoy-biologist-sa-negros/>

# New butterfly subspecies discovered by Filipino biologist in Mount Talinis, Negros Island

By [Chesca Buencamino, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Jun 18, 2020 3:20:33 PM



**Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, June 18)** — It was eight years ago when biologist Jade Badon hiked Mount Talinis in his home province Negros Oriental and collected two butterflies puddling in a lake.

Little did he know that the creatures would become a new discovery in the scientific world.

Endemic to the Philippines, the species *Appias phoebe* is rare and found only in high elevations, according to the [article](#) published this month on German entomological journal NEVA.

Badon said he noticed the butterflies lying around Lake Nailig, a crater lake near the summit, situated more than 1,500 meters above sea level.

The specimens were brought to the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera & Biodiversity in Florida, US, where Badon was taking his master's degree under a scholarship program.

It was only in August last year when the Dumaguete-based biologist realized that his findings were a new subspecies of the *Appias phoebe*.

"I attended the annual Philippine Biodiversity Symposium at the Visayas State University in Leyte. I scanned the pages of my book again and saw that my discovery looks different than the ones I saw from other publications. So I did my research and found that there is no collection of that subspecies," Badon told CNN Philippines on Thursday.

He named it *Appias phoebe nuydai* — a homage to contemporary painter and lepidopterist Justin "Tiny" Nuyda, who is said to hold the largest Philippine butterfly collection in the country.



**NEW BUTTERFLY SUBSPECIES DISCOVERED BY FILIPINO  
BIOLOGIST IN MOUNT TALINIS, NEGROS ISLAND**

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This is not a first for Nuyda as foreign scientists have already named butterflies after him for his contributions to the field. He has described and discovered more than 200 species and subspecies of local butterflies, according to his daughter Ayni.



Badon shared that he surprised Nuyda with the news on Wednesday despite their encounter in February when the publication was already in progress. "He had a collection of that butterfly species and I asked to see it. He asked me why I was interested, but it was already in the process," Badon recalled.

"Jade Badon is a friend of ours. We support his work. We are very happy for his research effort and his dedication to science. Something you rarely see in the Philippines due to the difficulty of producing income... My father is very happy that a young Filipino scientist shares the same level of interest for our winged jewels. This is a rare situation," Ayni told CNN Philippines.

The *Appias phoebe nuydai* is among six subspecies under the *Appias phoebe*, which was first collected in the mountains of Luzon in 1861. The other subspecies were found in South and North Luzon, Northwest Mindanao, North Negros, South Palawan, and Mindoro.



News5

Yesterday at 6:01 AM

Welcome home 🏠

Ibinalik na ng Galapagos National Park at Galapagos Conservancy ang 15 giant tortoises sa Española Island matapos ang mahigit limang dekadang captive breeding program para mailigtas ang kanilang lahi.

📍: Galapagos Conservancy



Source:

[https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=2040039392819471&id=163550757135020&fs=0&focus\\_composer=0](https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2040039392819471&id=163550757135020&fs=0&focus_composer=0)

# Provide opportunities for BP2 beneficiaries – Go

Published 15 hours ago on June 18, 2020 03:56 PM

By **TDT**



With the preparations for the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP2) Program in high gear, Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go has expressed his full support on various local government units (LGU) in Mindanao for their groundwork for the initiative.

In a statement, the senator said that he is urging various Mindanao LGUs to ensure the availability of economic opportunities in local communities to boost regional development, which is consistent with the long-term goals of the program that is set to be fully implemented after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis.

Go also noted that in order to successfully implement the BP2 program it is important for national agencies to conduct proper coordination with LGUs to ensure that health protocols are in place and local communities will be capable of providing economic opportunities to their constituents.

Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) chairman Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, disclosed that the BP2 Council member agencies recently concluded a series of consultations with various LGU officials mayors in preparation for those who wish to relocate to the provinces.

The government is establishing resettlement villages in Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte; Sergio Osmeña, Zamboanga del Norte; and Kalawit, Zamboanga del Norte and Piñol hopes the three villages will serve as a template for future communities once the BP2 program is fully implemented.

Each community will be composed of 200 families from Metro Manila which will also undertake a common production activity: organic broiler chicken and vegetables production (in Kauswagan); high-value vegetables and free-range chicken (Sergio Osmeña); and tree farming with cacao and coffee intercrop and free-range chicken production (Kalawit).

“There are still hundreds of hectares of agricultural lands and unlimited water resources that can be utilized for livelihood in the provinces. Agriculture and food security play a big role in regional development,” said Go.

Piñol, on the other hand, clarified that the BP2 Program Council’s decision to postpone subsequent rollouts of the program will give the concerned local governments more time to prepare.

The Kauswagan village, he continued, is expected to open in early September of this year as the BP2 program has almost 90,000 enrollees as of 17 June 2020.

The BP2 Program Council, meantime, is currently doing necessary ground preparations for subsequent roll outs, such as close coordination with the receiving local government units to give them more time to prepare for the arrival of BP2 beneficiaries who expressed willingness to relocate to their provinces for good.

According to National Housing Authority General Manager and BP2 Program Executive Director Marcelino Escalada, Jr., the government is prioritizing various “Hatid Tulong” initiatives for locally stranded individuals.

Go, on the other hand, noted that government synergy will be a key factor in helping Filipinos recover from the crisis and the success of BP2 Program will also depend on the widespread and active participation of key government agencies in boosting economic opportunities in the provinces.

The senator earlier proposed the BP2 upon realizing that congestion in Metro Manila has been a perennial roadblock for development and is one of the key factors in the very high number of COVID-19 infection cases.

The BP2 Program Council, which was created under Executive Order 114 issued by President Rodrigo Duterte, is presently crafting policies that will accelerate countryside socio-economic development.

The EO came after Go authored Senate Resolution No. 380 which was adopted by the Senate during its plenary session on 4 May, urging the executive department to formulate and implement the BP2 program.

According to the EO, the BP2 Program will bring “balanced regional development and equitable distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunities through policies and programs that boost countryside development and inclusive growth.”

# Duterte to join virtual Asean summit on June 26

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos June 18, 2020, 3:51 pm



**VIRTUAL ASEAN MEETING.** President Rodrigo Roa Duterte gives his intervention as he joins other leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) member countries, the Republic of Korea, People's Republic of China and Japan during the special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on Covid-19 video conference at the Malago Clubhouse in Malacañang on April 14, 2020. Malacañang said Duterte will join again his fellow Asean leaders in a virtual conference hosted by Vietnam on June 26. *(Presidential photo by Ace Morandante)*

**MANILA** – President Rodrigo Duterte will join his fellow Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) leaders in a virtual conference hosted by Vietnam on June 26, Malacañang confirmed on Thursday.

*“Kinu-kumpirma ko po na dadalo po [si President Duterte] dahil ito po ay online meeting ng Asean (I am confirming that President Duterte will be joining the online Asean meeting),”* Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said in a virtual presser aired on state-run PTV-4.

Asean leaders were supposed to hold their 36th annual summit in April this year but the meeting was postponed due to the global threat posed by the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

There was also a proposal from Vietnam, this year's chair of the 10-man regional bloc, to hold the 36th Asean summit in Hanoi, Vietnam on June 27 and 28.

However, the final decision was to resort to a virtual summit on June 26 as the Covid-19 pandemic remains a threat in the region.

Roque said he was not privy to the issues Duterte would raise during his virtual meeting with his fellow Asean leaders.

*“Next week pa naman po iyan, siguro po pupwede nating isapubliko yung agenda ng iba’t ibang mga Asean meeting (It will be held next week so perhaps, the agenda of the Asean meetings will be made public before the conduct of the virtual conference),”* he said.

Asean leaders have held several virtual meetings with their dialogue partners in an effort to plot a strategy to overcome the Covid-19 crisis that has gripped the region.

In April, Duterte said Asean members must work together to counter the adverse social and economic impact of Covid-19 pandemic in the regional bloc.

Containing the spread of the novel coronavirus is the current priority of the 10 Asean member-states.

Apart from the Philippines and Vietnam, other Asean members include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Thailand.

Indonesia has the highest number of Covid-19 infections among the ASEAN member-states, reporting a total of 41,341 cases.

It is followed by Singapore (41,216), the Philippines (27,238), Malaysia (8,515), Thailand (3,135), Vietnam (335), Myanmar (262), Brunei (141), Cambodia (126), and Laos (19). **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1106302>

**LATEST**

# Duque remains—Rody

Published 10 hours ago on June 18, 2020 09:29 PM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



Despite allegations thrown against him and the many controversies currently surrounding the department he is handling, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III continues to have the trust of President Rodrigo Duterte, according to Malacañang’s spokesman.

In a virtual press briefing at the Palace, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque also said the Chief Executive is confident that Duque can answer all the allegations being hurled against him, particularly the investigation that will be conducted by the Office of the Ombudsman on him and possibly other Health officials.

“The President has time and again expressed his continuing trust and confidence po kay Sec. Duque and kampaante naman po ang Presidente na masasagot po ni Sec. Duque lahat po iyang mga alegasyon sa Ombudsman,” Roque said.

“Malinaw po ang polisiya ng Presidente ‘no. Habang hindi po pina-fire, may kumpiyansa po ang ating Presidente; at iyong mga panawagan, dapat po ang sumagot diyan ay si Secretary Duque mismo,” said Roque.

“But as far as the President is concerned, he remains. He remains because he has faith and confidence still with Secretary Duque,” he added.

With regards to Dr. Tony Leachon’s criticisms against the DoH (Department of Health) which casted doubts on the integrity of the agency’s data reporting on COVID-19, Roque said the Palace is confident that such criticism will not affect the credibility of the agency and its officials in leading the fight against the pandemic.

“Wala naman po. Until presumed guilty they are presumed innocent po—until found guilty they are presumed innocent, so tingin ko wala naman po. At kung mapapansin ninyo naman po, ang IATF (Inter-agency Task Force on Managing Emerging Infectious Disease) talaga ay lahat po ng departamento – it’s a whole of government approach, it’s not just the DOH although the DOH of course has the position of leadership,” Roque said.

At the same time, Roque also answered one of the points that Dr. Leachon raised on Wednesday that the government seemed to be making decisions based on outdated or late data and they decide on quarantine measures based on it.

“Alam ninyo po, hindi po natin tinatago kapag late ang data kaya nga po sa reporting natin, mayroong fresh at mayroong late ‘no. So alam po natin at sinasapubliko po natin iyan, hindi po natin tinatago iyan. Now ang problema po talaga, repository of information ang DoH ‘no, ang mga nagsa-submit po diyan lahat ng ospital, lahat ng local government units ‘no at lahat ng mga regional offices at laboratoryo,” Roque said.



“So siyempre po nagkakaroon ng late kung ang laboratory eh late mag-submit ng kanilang forms ‘no. It’s a simple form that they fill up kapag mayroong positive ‘no. So hindi naman po lahat naipapadala kaagad. So mayroon na pong solusyon diyan ‘no, iyong COVID KAYA app na dini-develop na po. We’re hoping to automate it para mawala na po iyong log pagdating sa reporting – at na-automate na rin po iyong verification ha! Ino-automate na rin po natin iyong verification para masigurado na walang isang tao na doble iyong na-record sa database,” he added.

Roque insisted that the government, particularly the IATF is not relying on old data to decide on quarantine measures.

“Not at all po, kasi nakikita naman natin ang mga figures, we are on GCQ in Metro Manila; majority of the Philippines is MGCQ. So, kung mali po iyong mga assumptions natin, we would be as bad as other countries but we’re not. In fact, doon nga po sa sinabi ni Asec. Lambino ‘no, we’re number 6 as far as resiliency ‘no,” Roque said.

### **On Survey**

On survey showing that 83% of Filipinos said that their lives has gotten worst, Roque said they agree with that especially with COVID-19 affecting the people and economy.

“Well, it should be a 100%, because there is COVID and the economy was closed,” Roque said.

“Hindi po kami nasosorpresa diyan, it should in fact be 100% dahil minimum 2 months tayo complete lockdown. Lahat po talaga tayo nahihirapan at kinikilala po iyan ng ating Presidente,” he added.

*p: wjg*

National ID target: 5M heads of poor families by

June 19, 2020

TITLE: fourth quarter

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## National ID target: 5M heads of poor families by fourth quarter

By: [Ben O. de Vera](#) - Reporter / [@bendeveraINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 06:52 PM June 18, 2020

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) will register at least five million heads of poor families in the fourth quarter of this year in its bid to fast-track implementation of the national ID system.

Claire Dennis Mapa, national statistician and PSA head, said at an online seminar put together by the Makati Business Club (MBC) that the COVID-19 pandemic “warrants a stable and systematic distribution of social assistance to the vulnerable sector—the poor and low-income families.”

Being a priority program of the government the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) and its implementation sought to “help address this area of concern by providing valid proof of identity to Filipinos,” Mapa said at the online seminar on Thursday (June 18).

“In relation to financial inclusion, the national ID is designed to be a strong mechanism to aid in channeling cash assistance seamlessly to the vulnerable sector,” Mapa said.

“The issuance of the national ID to low-income household heads will directly address the lack of documentation barrier in opening financial accounts for the distribution of the cash aid,” Mapa added.

The target to register heads of poor families first will “ensure that at least one member of the identified household has a valid ID and can open a bank account,” Mapa said.

“This strategy aims to ease the opening of bank accounts so beneficiaries would simply receive their assistance digitally, and to prevent fraud and duplication,” Mapa explained.

Mapa said the PSA was closely working with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to identify heads of low-income households.

The PSA, she added, is also in close coordination with the Land Bank of the Philippines for the start of registration in the fourth quarter.

She said mobile registration could be conducted in select Land Bank branches “for the convenience” of ID holders who would open accounts.

Mobile registration teams would also go to villages while fixed registration centers would be put up in provincial offices of the PSA, Mapa said.

Under the PhilSys roadmap, Mapa said the PSA aims to register at least 40 million Filipinos in 2021, and then 42 million more in 2022.

Also by 2022, the PSA plans to start the transition from physical IDs to mobile IDs, Mapa said.

By 2023, the PSA seeks to register the entire population of more than 100 million in PhilSys and assign IDs through birth registration.

Last May, the PSA said mass registration for the national ID system before yearend came one step closer as it started bidding for its systems integrator.

In a statement, the PSA said at least 56 prospective bidders expressed interest to become the systems integrator for PhilSys.

The PSA held what is called the expression of interest conference for the bidding last month.

“The systems integrator will serve as the link to ensure the seamless interconnection of all components of the PhilSys,” Mapa said.

National ID target: 5M heads of poor families by

June 19, 2020

TITLE: fourth quarter

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Mapa said these would “serve as the ‘glue’ that will bind all separately procured components into an end-to-end solution.”

The systems integrator, Mapa said, is part of four blocks of procurement needed for PhilSys.

The others are 5,000 registration kits, production of cards and biometric identification systems which is considered as “the brain of PhilSys.”

Procurement of the kits and biometrics system has been completed, Mapa said.

The systems integrator, Mapa said, would provide “cutting edge technologies that will ensure seamless integration” for the registration kits, biometrics and card production.

Mapa said the PSA seeks to award and sign the contract with the winning bidder “not later than August, in time for the start of the registration in the fourth quarter of this year.”

While the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act eased procurement processes, Mapa said the PSA “maintains stringent eligibility requirements for prospective systems integrator bidders.”

“As a priority project, the national ID cannot be delayed any further,” he said.

“That is why we have proposed alternative ways of complying with documentary requirements in compliance with pertinent resolutions issued by the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB),” Mapa said.

“We will focus on the track record of the bidders and evaluate their suitability against the determined eligibility criteria as with all other competitive bidding,” he added.

Also, Mapa said “opening the bidding to both foreign and local eligible firms will further drive competition that would ensure the best value for Filipino citizens, and increase the likelihood of getting a high-quality, world-class, and secure systems integrator for PhilSys.”

To prepare for national ID registration amid the COVID-19 threat, Mapa said the PSA will use “the next few months to finish the required procurement and delivery of components that will allow the government to safely conduct mass registration by the last quarter of 2020.”

“The PSA is also developing registration protocols that are strictly adherent to health measures prescribed by the Department of Health (DOH), including physical distancing, sanitation of areas and equipment, and provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) to registration staff,” Mapa said.

The national ID was piloted last year, and the PSA had planned to start mass registration this year.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, President Rodrigo Duterte had expressed frustration that PhilSys was not fully implemented in time for the distribution of aid to the poor during the health crisis.

This was the reason that full implementation of the national ID law was one of the President’s marching orders to acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua when he replaced Ernesto Pernia at the state planning agency National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) last April.

As Neda chief, Chua sits on the PSA board.

Edited by TSB

Source: <https://business.inquirer.net/300260/national-id-target-5m-heads-of-poor-families-by-fourth-quarter>



## MIRACLE RICE NOON, MIRACLE EDUCATION NGAYON

June 19, 2020 @ 1:29 AM 7 hours ago

LABIS na hinahangaan ng ULTIMATUM ang nasubaybayan nitong mga magsasaka na natututong magtanim ng palay nang maayos at produktibo sa pakiking lamang ng radyo o panood ng telebisyon.

May kakambal pa ang mga aralin na pagpapaluwal ng pamahalaan ng mga binhi, abono, makinarya at puhunan sa pagtanim.

Buhay na buhay sa alaala ng ULTIMATUM ang noo'y mga palay na itinatanim nang may mga sukat at daanan ng mga makina o imbentong gamit ng mga magsasaka para sa maayos na pagpatay sa mga damo nang hindi nasisira ang mga palay.

At lalong naging masipag ang mga ito sa pagpapaunlad ng kanilang mga kaalaman sa agrikultura nang lumusong sa kanilang mga bukirin ang mga teknisan ng pamahalaan upang ipakita kung paano isagawa ang modernong pagtanim, pag-aani at wastong pag-aalaga ng mga ani hanggang paratingin nila ang kanilang mga produkto sa mga palengke.

At sa huli, para rin sa kanilang mga kapakinabangan ang lahat.

Pero ang kasaysayang ito ay naganap noong panahon ni dating Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos at pinangalanan nitong Masagana 99 ang programang pampalay.

### MIRACLE RICE

Pinaghalo-halo noon ang nasa 38 uri ng butil ng palay para makagawa ng butil na IR8 ang International Research Institute na itinayo sa mahal kong Pinas, partikular sa University of the Philippines, Los Baños, Laguna.

Tinawag ang IR8 na Miracle Rice dahil nakapagbibigay ng ani na umaabot sa 9 tonelada o nasa 180 kaban bawat ektarya sa halip na 1 tonelada o 20 kaban lamang.

Kabilang sa mga butil na ineksperimento ang pandak na palay mula sa Taiwan at ang matangkad ngunit matibay sa mga peste na palay ng Indonesia.

Sa Miracle Rice, 130 araw lang ang buong panahon ng pagtanim hanggang pag-aani kumpara sa 160-170 araw para sa mga dating butil.

Dahil sa napaigsing panahon ng buhay ng palay, nagkaroon ng dalawang beses na pagtanim at pag-aani sa isang taon kumpara sa tradisyunal na palay na minsan lang ang pagtanim at pag-aani sa loob ng isang taon.

Naging masagana nga ang ani dahil nagtayo na rin ng mga dambuhalang dam gaya ng Magat Dam at Pantabangan Dam ang pamahalaan noon na pampatubig sa mga sakan.

Inasahan na ang Miracle Rice na solusyon sa kakapusan ng bigas sa sandaigdigang noon.

## ARAW NG COVID-19

Ngayong mga araw ng corona virus disease-19, muling naungkat ang kahalagahan ng mga radyo at telebisyon para naman sa edukasyon ng mga kabataang mag-aaral.

Kung labis na naging mahalaga ang mga telebisyon at radio noong panahon ni Manong Ferdie para sa edukasyon ng mga magsasaka, hindi maikakaila na magiging mahalaga rin ang mga ito para sa ating mga kabataan.

Kaya naman, itinutulak natin mismo ang programa ng Department of Education na gamitin ang mga ito ngayon para sa pag-aaral.

Maganda ring tingnan ang kahalagahan ng information technology na dagdag na paraan para sa edukasyon.

Lalo na kung isipin na ang IT ay modernong mukha ng mga telebisyon at radio.

‘Yun nga lang, mahal ang mga gamit para sa IT gaya ng mga laptop na nagkakahalaga ng P20,000 pataas at kompyuter na P15,000 pataas at buwanang pagbabayad ng internet o wifi na pundasyon ng IT na libo rin ang halaga buwan-buwan.

Hindi katulad ito ng radyo at telebisyon na bukod sa libre, mura lang ang radyo na may presyo pang P300 bawat isa at P2,500 naman ang lumang telebisyon.

## PAANO ANG IBA PA?

Binanggit nating may kasamang mga teknisyen ang Masaga 99 at Miracle Rice Program, kasabay ng pagtatayo ng mga higanteng dam at irigasyon at suportang pinansyal sa mga magsasaka.

Ano ang mga katumbas ng mga teknisyen, dam at suportang pinansyal sa kasalukuyang panahon?

Paano gagawing magaan sa mga nabibigatan sa Covid-19 na mag-aaral at kanilang pamilya ang paggamit ng IT bilang mahalagang sangkap sa epektibong pag-aaral?

Alalahaning milyon-milyon o halos lahat ng mga mag-aaral at pamilya ay bagsak ang kabuhayan ngayon. kaya naman mabigat ang pagpapaaral gamit ang IT.

Makakayanan bang itulak ng DepEd at ng Commission on Higher Education ang mga telephome company na gawing libre o affordable sa mga mahihirap ang paggamit ng internet at wifi?

Alalahaning ang mga telco na nakatayo ay nasanay nang magsamantala kahit bagsak sa buhay ang mga mamamayan kaya naman naisipan tuloy ng pamahalaang Duterte na magtayo ng ikatlong player bilang panimpla sa pagkaganid ng mga ito ngayon.

## MIRACLE EDUCATION

O kayo sa DepEd at Ched, paano nga ba mabigyan ang lahat ng mga mag-aaral ng pagkakataon na maipagpatuloy o matapos ang kanilang edukasyon sa gitna ng salot na Covid-19?

Kaya ba nating isulong ang Miracle Education na katumbas ng Miracle Rice noon na nagpaunlad ng husto sa ating bansa?



## TAMA BANG IPILIT ANG PAGPASOK SA ISKUL NGAYON?

June 18, 2020 @ 9:05 AM 24 hours ago

PUKPUKAN na ang enrollment para sa mga mag-aaral mula kinder hanggang kolehiyo kahit pa walang katiyakan sa pagiging ligtas sa coronavirus disease-19 ang mga ito.

Pinaghalo-halong estilo ng enrollment ang ginagawa: online, drop box sa mga barangay o eskwela o direktang pagpunta ng mga bata sa iskul.

Meron na ngang mga titser na nanghihingi ng ayuda para sa brigada eskwela na nangangahulugang may papapasuking mag-aaral sa mga iskul.

Ang iba naman, pinipilit ang mga mag-aaral na bumili ng mga laptop o kompyuter para umano sa online na edukasyon.

Naghahalo ang paningin ng mga magulang o pamilya ng mga mag-aaral sa enrollment sa kasalukuyan na maaaring ikatigil ng maraming mag-aaral.

### HIRAP SA ONLINE

Nagbabadya ang pagtigil sa pag-aaral ng maraming estudyante dahil sa pagpipilit ng Department of Education na maging online ang pag-aaral.

Una, napakamamahal ang mga gadget na laptop o personal computer na may kasamang obligasyon sa pagbabayad buwan-buwan ng wifi o internet.

Hindi naman uubra ang mga ordinaryong laptop at personal computer sa lebel ng pag-aaral na nakabase sa mataas na antas kaya ang mga nagkakahalaga ng halos P30,000 ang kailangan para sa laptop at nasa P15,000 pataas naman ang pinakamababang kakailanganin para sa personal computer.

Kung pipiliting maglabas ng ganitong kalalaking halaga ang mga pamilya, lalo na sa mga mahihirap, ayon sa nakakausap nating mga magulang, mas mainam na titigil na lang sa pag-aaral ng mga bata.

Pahirap umano ang ganitong sistema ng DepEd lalo na ngayong walang pinagkakakitaang matino ang halos lahat ng mamamayan.

### SA MGA LALAWIGAN

Ayon sa mga titser mismo sa mga lalawigan, sa antas ng junior at senior high school na nagmumula sa iba't ibang barangay ng isang bayan, hindi lang pahirap sa kanila kundi pahirap din sa mga mag-aaral ang blended learning na isinusulong ng DepEd.

Ang klaro umano sa estilong ito, mga Bro, ang mga malalapit lang sa iskul ang makadadalo sa mga face-to-face na sistema na akma lang sa patakaran ng social distancing.

Pero ang sistemang module na idedeliber sa mga bata sa kani-kanilang barangay at pag-monitor o pagsubaybay sa pag-unlad ng mga bata ang malaking gastusin ng mga guro at wala umanong badyet ang DepEd para rito.

Magiging personal na gastos umano ito ng mga guro at maging ang pagpaparami ng kopya ng mga module na lagpas sa badyet ng DepEd.

Wala umanong gaanong problema kundi nakapapagod lang naman nang husto sa mga guro ang blended learning sa antas ng elementarya dahil mas maliit na lugar ang kanilang iikutan.

Pero sa kanilang pag-iikot, walang insentibo umano ang DepEd para sa mga guro.

### **ANAK NG TRICYCLE DRIVER**

Sa antas ng kolehiyo, may traysikel driver na nakakayanang iraos ang pag-aaral ng kanyang dalawang anak.

Parehong pumapasok ang mga kolehiyala niya sa magkahiwalay na State Universities and Colleges dahil libre na ang tuition fee.

Ang kinikita niya sa maghaponing pamamasada ay pilit niyang pinagkakasya para sa pag-aaral at pangangailangan ng buo niyang pamilya.

Ngayon ay paiiralin sa SUC sa kanilang lugar ang online education.

Nag-iisip siya ngayon kung ibebenta niya ang traysikel para pambili ng laptop at buwanang pagbabayad ng wifi o internet.

Sa huli, napagdesisyonan na niyang patigilin muna ang mga estudyante, lalo na ngayong nanghina nang husto ang kita sa pamamasada dahil sa social distancing sa mga pasahero sa traysikel.

### **400 ISKUL MAGSASARA**

Ayon naman sa samahan ng mga pribadong eskwela, tinataya nilang magsasara ang marami, nasa 400 na eskwela sa kanilang hanay.

Ang mga dahilan ng Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations of the Philippines (COCOPEA), maaaring lilipat ang kalahati ng kanilang enrollees sa mga pampublikong paaralan.

Kaya naman, sa liit ng bilang ng mga estudyante nila, hindi na nila makakayanan ang gastos sa operasyon nila at pampasahod sa mga guro.

Aabot naman sa nasa 370,000 guro ang apektado rito na maaaring tuluyan nang mawalan ng trabaho o magtitiyaga sa no work, no pay na kondisyon.

### **HINTAYIN ANG BAKUNA**

Para kay Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, pinakamainam na hintayin ang panahong may saktong gamot o bakuna na laban sa COVID-19 bago isagawa ang buong programa ng pag-aaral.

Ito'y para maging normal, kahit may halo pang abnormalidad, ang pagpasok ng mga bata sa iskul.

Para sa atin, ito ang pinakamarapat na gawin.

Tingnan ninyo ang ginagawa sa China ngayon.

Sinubukan na sa Beijing ang pagpasok nang buo ng mga bata o face-to-face na pag-aaral ngunit may mga social distancing, may mask at may face shield.

Pero binuwag agad ng pamahalaan ang sistemang ito nang may mga bagong nagpositibo sa kanilang mga iskul at komunidad.

Naka-lockdown ngayon ang napakalaking parte ng Beijing at kasama sa lockdown ang mga iskul at lahat ng establisimyento at opisina ng pamahalaan.

Paano kung biglang aatake sa mga iskul ang COVID-19 dahil sa katigasan ng ulo ng mga taga-DepEd sa pagpipilit na isulong ang pag-aaral kahit wala pang gamot at bakuna laban dito?



APEC urges “greener new normal”, adoption of  
circular economy

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# APEC urges “greener new normal”, adoption of circular economy

June 18, 2020, 6:51 pm



**JAKARTA** -- Plans for recovery from the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic must not only help improve public healthcare, but also build environmental sustainability, an APEC Policy Support Unit researcher said, urging member nations to work towards a "greener new normal".

Researcher Satvinderjit Kaur Singh made the appeal in a written statement issued by the APEC Policy Support Unit, which was received here on Wednesday.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), unhealthy environments --due to contaminated air, soil, and water-- cause an estimated 12.6 million deaths on a yearly basis.

A major source of these pollutants is the global waste crisis which threatens millions of businesses and livelihoods, especially in developing economies.

Tearfund, an international poverty charity, estimates that between 400 thousand and one million lives are lost in developing economies due to poor waste management.

"Hence, it is important that we work towards a greener and cleaner future in our new normal," Singh said.

She added an effective way to tackle the waste crisis is through the adoption of the circular economy, a system in which resources are used to their maximum extent before being disposed of.

"The circular economy minimizes waste by reusing, repurposing, remanufacturing, and recycling used products. This allows consumed resources to re-enter the production chain. Through better management of resources and reducing waste, over-extraction and over-production of goods can be prevented," she said.

The waste issue is pertinent in the APEC region as well, she added.

Data from the World Bank projects a 36-percent growth in solid waste generated in APEC economies between 2016 and 2050.

An average resident in the region is expected to generate 1.1 kilograms of waste daily by 2050. This problem is further aggravated as the majority of waste in APEC is mismanaged and ends up harming the environment, industries, and livelihoods.

Singh said the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the waste crisis.

Surplus food produced is often dumped, single-use items have become prevalent, and use of takeaway food packaging has skyrocketed due to lockdowns, she said.

"Nevertheless, the pandemic has also given us an opportunity to rethink our ways. We cannot go back to business as usual. Continuing to deal with each impending crisis with the same unsustainable economic model is a recipe for disaster," she added.

She further explained that while short-term fiscal measures will help soften the impact, long-term shocks to the system will continue to test our capacities.

APEC urges “greener new normal”, adoption of  
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Threats to the environment are far more permanent and deep, hence sustainability strategies for the future should not take a back seat despite the challenges posed by Covid-19, she cautioned.

Circular practices are already in place to deal with supply-chain disruptions. For example, businesses are repurposing scrap fabrics to manufacture personal protective equipment, and the food and beverage sector is working with other organizations to redirect surplus food to the needy.

Similarly, innovations continue to support current shortages and future green transitions. For instance, technology is being used to decontaminate N95 masks and responsible packaging innovations continue to provide for sustainable options during home delivery spikes.

Therefore, it is important for economies to recognize the threats of the waste crisis and develop recovery packages that can deliver on both environmental and economic goals, Singh said.

"The circular economy should be built into the 'new normal' to enhance the region's sustainability and resilience. APEC considers the circular economy to be an important factor in pursuing sustainable development in the region," she said.

"While the pandemic has become our foremost concern this year, APEC should still pursue long-term priorities like environmental sustainability, which will be key in rebuilding a stronger economy after the health crisis subsides. More work in this area will help build a healthier environment for all," she added. **(ANKARA)**

# Vatican: Pandemic makes environment's care ever more urgent

*Associated Press* / 07:46 PM June 18, 2020

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis' impassioned appeal to protect nature is increasingly urgent as the global pandemic alters lifestyles and makes painfully plain the fragility of life, the Vatican said Thursday.

The worldwide COVID-19 outbreak struck as various Vatican departments were well into drafting a document calling on the faithful to carry out concrete local actions to mark the fifth anniversary of Francis' encyclical that denounced the environment's exploitation and strongly recommended caring for the Earth.

The coronavirus crisis, the Vatican said in Thursday's anniversary appeal, "renders ever more evident, five years from its publication, the value" of the pope's encyclical.

The 227-page anniversary document says that while the poor "are the least responsible for global warming, they are the most vulnerable in respect to its effects." Decrying widening gaps between rich and poor, the Vatican said that the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the need to rethink political policies that have been aimed at reducing welfare programs. It didn't identify specific countries.

The document says that, provoked by the pandemic, "the health emergency, the solitude, the isolation to combat contagion, have put us suddenly face-to-face with our fragility as finite creatures." The pandemic "reminds us to discover or rediscover that which is essential in our lives," the Vatican said.

Essentially, the document takes stock of how Catholics worldwide have responded to the pope's encyclical. It is thick with examples of concrete projects and grass-roots initiatives taken in recent years by local churches, charities or parishes to prevent environmental damage or save natural resources.

Tiny Vatican City State's own measures are held up by way of encouragement, including recycling water flowing through monumental fountains and having Holy See employees bring their own mugs or cups to use in the Vatican cafeteria instead of throwaway plastic drink containers.

Vatican officials pointed out on Thursday that solar panels have been installed at the Holy See's astronomical observatory in Arizona, in the United States.

# Policymakers urged to sustain low pollution levels

By Kris Crismundo June 18, 2020, 6:55 pm



**MANILA** – Lockdowns around the world due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) have suspended transportation and factories, reducing pollution levels.

With the economic slowdown during the Covid-19 pandemic, the International Energy Agency (IEA) projected that 2.6 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) will not be emitted into the environment. This is equivalent to a reduction of 8 percent of annual emission, the single largest reduction in history.

In a paper by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), this type of reduction is required year after year to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degree Celsius.

Two Degrees Group principal Jennifer Leisch, one of the paper's authors, presented the study in a session of virtual Asia Clean Energy Forum 2020 of the Asian Development Bank happening this week.

Leisch said while the economic slowdown has cut the carbon emission, policymakers should look into making policies that will maintain the pollution reduction.

She cited that the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila has improved the air quality in the National Capital Region.

"There was 45-percent reduction in nitrogen dioxide due to transportation slowdown and declining power demand," Leisch said.

The challenge for the government is to maintain this temporary emission slowdown so as not to return to the previous levels of pollution as economic activity rebounds.

"Policymakers and regulators can act to preserve pollution reduction by linking clean energy deployment and air quality improvements through future policies and regulations," the USAID and NREL study said.

The paper said there will be a growing demand for clean energy as many cities experience the improvement in air quality during the pandemic.

It also called for increased investment and transition to renewable energy as part of governments' recovery plan around the world.

"There is an opportunity to tap into a clean energy transition as part of the recovery process as countries reopen for business and governments investigate longer term economic reform measures," it read. **(PNA)**

COVID-19 makes air pollution a top concern

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# COVID-19 makes air pollution a top concern worldwide—report

Agence France-Presse / 03:29 PM June 18, 2020



Tourists visit The Taj Mahal under heavy smog conditions in Agra on December 28, 2019. (Photo by STR / AFP)

At least two-thirds of people in countries home to a fifth of the world’s population support stricter laws and enforcement to tackle air pollution, the Clean Air Fund said Wednesday.

Researchers from the consortium of philanthropic groups analyzed YouGov polling data from India, Britain, Nigeria, Bulgaria and Poland, the first survey across multiple countries on air pollution in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In India — where air pollution killed roughly 1.2 million people in 2018 — nine in 10 respondents said that they “wanted to see air quality improved in their area,” researchers noted.

“Citizens are becoming more aware about how air pollution contributes to other public health challenges,” said Arunabha Ghosh, the Chief Executive Officer Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

“The pandemic-induced lockdown has also given us a glimpse of blue skies. To make blue skies permanent, we cannot wait for public health crises.”

Worldwide, air pollution causes around seven million premature deaths every year, according to the UN.

The most deadly forms of pollution come from burning fossil fuels, which is also the main driver of global warming.

## ‘Higher risk of COVID mortality’

Researchers have established a robust statistical correlation between exposure to air pollution and the likelihood of dying from COVID-19.

In Italy, for example, mortality was almost three times higher in the most polluted regions compared to the rest of the country, although other causes and contributing factors could not be excluded.

Researchers at Harvard comparing different areas in the United States found that every additional microgramme of small particle pollution per cubic metre corresponded to an eight percent increase in the likelihood of dying from COVID-19.

As countries across the northern hemisphere imposed strict lockdowns in March and April — shutting down most non-essential work and travel — air pollution nose-dived, falling by about one-third in comparison with previous levels, the report said.

COVID-19 makes air pollution a top concern

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With pollution levels rising again, so too has the public demand for tackling the problem, according to the Clean Air Fund's director Jane Burston.

"As lockdowns are eased and economies restarted, people are clear that they do not want a return to toxic air," she said. "That would simply replace one health crisis with another."

"Solutions already exist but they are not being scaled, copied or adapted with sufficient speed or focus," she added.

"Governments must harness this widespread public support for actions to clean our air, and use post-COVID recovery packages to protect our health and environment."

Governments should include air pollution targets in their economic stimulus packages, she said. The World Bank has calculated that air pollution costs the global economy \$225 billion (200 billion euros) each year in lost labor costs.

# Threatened mangrove forests won't protect coasts

Rising tides driven by global heating could swamp the mangrove forests – bad news for the natural world, and for humans.



Mangroves in Batangas in the Philippines. Image: Lynn Tang/ Conservation International

By Tim Radford, Climate News Network  
June 18, 2020

If sea levels go on rising at ever higher rates, then by 2050 [the world's mangrove forests could be obliterated](#), drowned by rising tides.

[Mangrove forests](#) cover between 140,000 and 200,000 square kilometres of the intertidal zones that fringe more than 100 tropical and subtropical countries, and have become among the richest ecosystems of the planet.

They are estimated to store at least 30 million tonnes of atmospheric carbon each year, and a couple of sq kms of this saltwater forest can harbour nursery space for [what could become 100 tonnes of commercial fish catch](#) every year.

They also provide shelter for a huge range of creatures, including an estimated [500 Bengal tigers in the vast Sundarbans mangrove forests](#) along the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta.

And while most of the 80 or so species of mangrove tree can keep up with an annual sea level rise of around 5mm a year, they seem [unlikely, on evidence from the past, to be able to survive a 10mm rise](#). Right now, the world is heading for the higher end of the scale.

## ***Sheltering people***

A second and separate study finds that, importantly for humans, along with coral reefs, the mangrove forests [provide vital natural protection from tropical storms](#) for 31 million very vulnerable people in North and Central America and the crowded archipelagos of Indonesia and the Philippines.

Researchers from Australia, China, Singapore and the US report in the journal [Science](#) that they looked at the evidence locked in the sediments in 78 locations from the last 10,000 years, to work out how mangrove forests have – through the millennia – responded to changes in sea level.

At the close of the last ice age, sea levels rose at 10mm a year and slowed to nearly stable conditions 4000 years ago.

“This research therefore highlights yet another compelling reason why countries must take urgent action to reduce carbon emissions,” said [Benjamin Horton of Nanyang Technical University](#) in Singapore, one of the researchers.

“Mangroves are among the most valuable of natural ecosystems, supporting coastal fisheries and biodiversity, while protecting shorelines from wave and storm attack across the tropics.”

As so often happens in research, confirmatory evidence of the importance of mangroves had been published only days earlier, in the Public Library of Science journal [PLOS One](#).

US researchers found that – in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, off the coasts of east Africa and in the Indo-Pacific – a total of 30.9 million people lived in regions vulnerable to powerful tropical storms such as [Typhoon Haiyan](#) and [Hurricane Harvey](#).

Of these, more than 8 million people were offered severe weather protection by shoreline mangrove forests and coral reefs, both of which absorb wave energy, reduce wave heights and keep coastal settlements safer.

### ***Not enough protection***

But only 38 per cent of mangroves and 11 per cent of coral reefs along the vulnerable coastlines are protected, they found.

A 100-metre screen of shoreline mangrove forest can reduce wave heights by as much as two-thirds. By 2100, coastal floods could be [costing the world's nations US\\$1 trillion a year](#) in economic damage.

Geographers have argued for decades that [natural protection is the most efficient way of saving lives and settlements](#) from the storm surges and flooding associated with tropical cyclone extremes.

“Simply put”, said [Holly Jones of Northern Illinois University](#), who led the research, “it’s much cheaper to conserve a mangrove than build a sea wall.”



Watch: Wombat, koala become best friends after sharing enclosure at zoo

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## WATCH: Wombat, koala become best friends after sharing enclosure at zoo

By: [Cha Lino](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 08:03 PM June 18, 2020



Hope the wombat (L) and Elsa the koala. Image: Instagram/@australianreptilepark

In what has been viewed as an unlikely bond, a wombat and a koala apparently turned into best friends after sharing the same enclosure at a zoo in Australia.

The wombat named Hope and Elsa the koala “bonded during isolation,” according to Australia Reptile Park’s YouTube channel on June 2. The two creatures snuggled while they were both being carried by their caretakers.

The zoo also showed the “[cute] friendship duo” via Instagram last Tuesday, June 16.



Watch: Wombat, koala become best friends after  
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The zoo reopened to the public on June 1 after being closed since March due to the COVID-19 crisis. Its staff has been working through the lockdown by taking care of the animals, as per its Facebook post on May 24.



Koalas and wombats have some similarities. Both are mammals and herbivore creatures, *National Geographic* noted. Both creatures are also marsupials, which means they have pouches to carry their young ones. [Koalas](#) are, however, considered as “[vulnerable](#)” creatures, especially after the bushfires affected the ecosystem in Australia. Common [wombats](#) have been classified under the bracket of “least concern” as its population is currently stable. **JB**