

DATE : 31 MAR 2019

DAY : Sunday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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EDITORIAL

CARTOON

31 MAR 2019

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# DALUYAN, ESTEROS PATUNGONG MANILA BAY, LILINISIN NG DENR

**NAKATAKDANG isunod para linisin ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang tributaries o daluyan ng tubig patungo sa Manila Bay kasabay ng isasagawang cleanup activities, bukas, Marso 31.**

Ayon kay DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, layunin ng gagawing massive cleanup sa Manila Bay tributaries na tinawag na "Battle for Rivers and Esteros," na maisama ang bawat komunidad na magbibigay ng proteksiyon sa kanilang mga waterways.

"We at the DENR are doing this to mobilize community participation through their barangay executives in the clean-

up, rehabilitation, education and protection activities in the Manila Bay rehabilitation," pahayag ni Cimatu.

Kamakailan lamang ay pinangunahan ni Cimatu ang ginanap na diyalogo ng DENR sa mahigit 200 barangay officials sa Metro Manila na layuning ipaalala sa mga ito ang kanilang kahalagahan sa isinasagawang rehabilitasyon na binansagang "Battle for Manila Bay".

Ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ay nahahati sa tatlong bahagi, ito ay ang mga sumusunod: cleanup and water quality improvement; relocation and rehabilitation at ang huli ay ang protection and sustainment.

Ayon kay Cimatu,

ang unang bahagi ng rehabilitasyon ay kinabibilangan ng paglilinis ng mga esteros at iba pang daluyan ng tubig, pagbaba ng fecal coliform level at ibang discharges mula sa mga establisimiyento, implementasyon ng solid waste management at pagpapalano ng relokasyon ng informal set-

tlers.

"The first activity will involve the regular conduct of cleanup on garbage and debris, removal of silt by dredging, and introduction of bioremediation, infrastructure improvement and other engineering interventions, such as trash traps and silt curtains,"

saad pa ni Cimatu.

Palalawakin din ni Cimatu ang pagpapalaganap ng reduce, reuse and recycle na kilala rin sa tawag na 3Rs, paghiwalay sa mga basura at ang pagsasagawa ng information, education and communication activities.

**BENEDICT ABAYGAR, JR.**



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# The Manila Times



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## On Earth Hour, public urged to curb plastic use

IN observance of Earth Hour on Saturday, Malacañang called on the public to take part in a global movement to call for the cutting down on the use of plastics.

In a statement, Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo noted how Earth Hour was important for Filipinos to participate in over reports showing that the Philippines was among the top contributors of plastic waste in the world.

"This year's observance of Earth Hour  
► **Plastic A2**

### ■ PLASTIC FROM A1

## On Earth Hour

focuses on the issue of single-use plastics, which is a major problem in the country. A United Nations report shows the Philippines as one of the top five contributors of plastic waste in the world's oceans," Panelo said.

"We therefore call on everyone to cut down on the rampant use of plastics as we continue to aspire for a clean, safe and healthy environment," he added.

Earth Hour is a global initia-

tive that began in 2007, encouraging people from all over the world to switch off their lights for an hour to raise awareness on environmental woes.

The Philippines has been an active participant of Earth Hour since 2009, and was consistently one of the environmental movement's biggest advocates.

Last year, Malacañang said climate change was an issue relevant to the Philippines, especially

after the country was identified as among the most vulnerable to the impact of the weather phenomenon in the "2016 Global Climate Risk Index" presented by the German Watch.

"The President has recognized this and has made the protection of the environment a priority during his State of the Nation Address," the Palace had said.

In his State of the Nation Address in 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte warned mining companies that he would "tax them to death" unless they restore the "virginity" of exploited areas.

"You have to come up with a substitute, either spend to restore the virginity of the source or I will tax you to death," Duterte had said.

The President had blamed climate change on Western countries, saying they only called for a global effort to address climate change only after witnessing their actions' impact on the environment.

In March 2017, in spite of misgivings, Duterte signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, a pact to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and keep global temperature increases to below 2 degrees Celsius. **CATHERINE S. VALENTE**



## EDITORIAL

# A CONTINUING COMMITMENT

**W**HEN households nationwide switched off non-essential lights for one hour from 8:30 last night, this country of 108 million displayed—not in the dark but in the gleam of their united thoughts—their determination and commitment to be one with the world in protecting the Earth's biological diversity.

This allegiance, which has been on a roll in this Southeast Asian archipelago for the past dozen years, had its eye focus Saturday at the Globe Circuit Event Grounds in Makati, not far from the

**Manila Standard** office, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., with the actual switch-off at 8.30.

At least 3,000 boy scouts of the Philippines, who raised their formal underprop, were deployed to the historic and public event which featured booths, activities, and performances that honor the planet.

The one-hour pitch darkness suggested strongly the solidarity Filipinos have with millions round the world who did the same in this grassroots movement for the environment.

Earth Hour, a charitable organization based out of Singapore whose mission is to unite people to protect the planet and an open source movement organized by World Wide Fund, has been for 12 years an annual event, with millions of people and thousands of business worldwide turning off lights and shutting down most electrical appliances to celebrate sustainability.

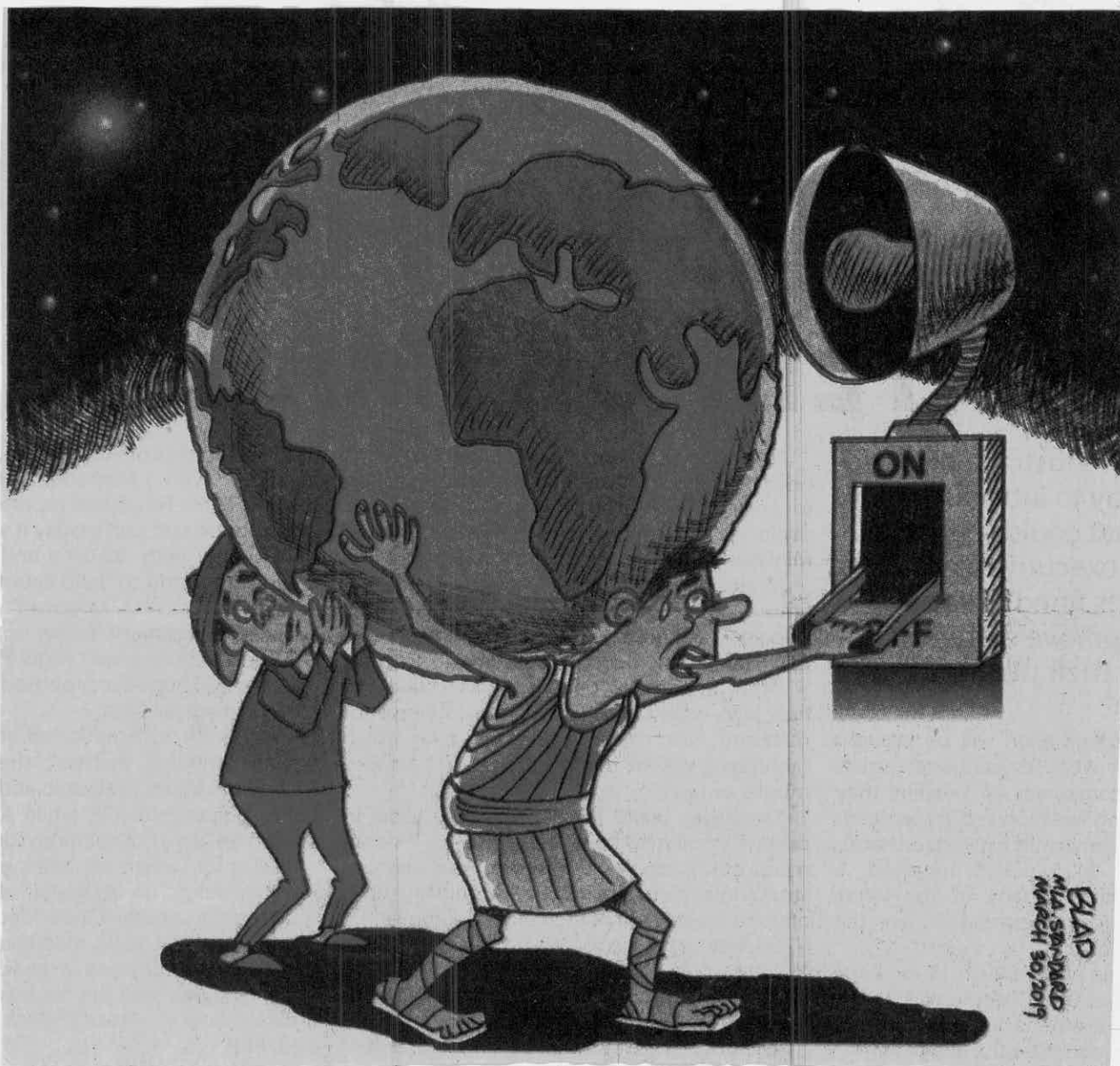
By participating in the event, they show—as we did—their support for strategies that hopefully will help solve the problem of global warming.

But it's not enough that we had the switch-off during the weekend.

More importantly, beyond the D-hour on Saturday, there must be a continuing commitment and effort to harness, as the World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines has repeatedly underlined, the power of social media and help share their commitment to start changing the planet for the better by sharing stories and photos of their sustainable living actions.

Along this line, we join WWF Philippines in its hope to create awareness on the dangers of single-use plastics, ignite conversations, change mindsets and habits of consumers, as well as urge business to operate more sustainably and influence policy.

Now, back to switching on the lights.







## EARTH HOUR: LESSEN USE OF PLASTICS

MALACAÑANG on Saturday called on Filipinos to cut down the use of plastics as the world celebrated Earth Hour, with this year's theme focusing on the issue of single-use plastics.

"A United Nations report shows the Philippines as one of the top five contributors of plastic waste in the world's oceans. We therefore call on everyone to cut down the rampant use of plastics as we continue to aspire for a clean, safe and healthy environment," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

"March 30 tonight, we will join the rest of the world in switching off our lights for Earth Hour," he said.

Earth Hour 2019, with its campaign "#Connect2Earth," aims to build mass awareness on why nature is important and create an unstoppable movement for nature similar to when the world came together to tackle climate change.

The Earth Hour, which started as a symbolic lights out event in Sydney in 2007, is now the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment, inspiring millions of people to take action for our planet and nature.

Since then, it has grown to engage more than 180 countries and territories worldwide. **Turn to A2**

## EARTH HOUR:...

From A1

Conservation group World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines spearheaded in Makati City, near the **Manila Standard** office, the Philippines' main 2019 Earth Hour celebration, which aims to further draw public support for legislation on plastic waste management to help address environmental degradation and biodiversity loss from plastics pollution.

Meanwhile, local advocates for a zero waste and toxics-free society joined a growing chorus of voices seeking effective solutions to the global plastic pollution crisis.

In a press statement coinciding with the observance of the Earth Hour, the EcoWaste Coalition enjoined the government, industries and citizens to switch off tonight in solidarity with the worldwide efforts to protect the environment from single-use plastics—the focus of the Earth Hour this year.

"To halt the chemical and plastic contamination of our water bodies, particularly the oceans, the government has to adopt sweeping policy changes that will address the problem at source, incentivize single-use plastic reduction and disincentivize single-use plastic production," said Aileen Lucero, national coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition.

"The government has to get a ban on single-use plastics in place this year as our country's contribution to the global drive to protect the oceans from further plasticization," she said in a press statement.

"A National Ban on Plastic and Plastic Products Act will be required to phase out single-use disposable plastics and usher in sustainable resource use. A National Action Plan will be needed to move our society away from our addiction to throw-away plastics," she said.

"As for the industries, especially for manufacturers of fast-moving consumer goods, we urge them to fast track the replacement of single-use plastic packaging with alternative product delivery systems, like refill and reuse, with a clear plan and timeline," she said.

"As for our citizens, we urge them to minimize, if not stop, the reckless use and disposal of single-use plastics, and to adopt consumption choices and habits that will lessen the generation of plastic garbage. We ask every waste generator to manage their discards responsibly to prevent plastics and other wastes from entering the marine environment," she added.

The EcoWaste Coalition also stressed the importance of effectively enforcing the country's key environmental laws such as RA 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act), RA 9275 (Clean Water Act) and RA 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act) to prevent chemicals and plastics from spilling into the oceans.

These pollution prevention laws, the group stressed, were enacted to protect the environment, including marine waters, from dumping and other environmentally-damaging acts.

According to the UN report "Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics," "80 percent of all pollution in the sea comes from land, including some eight million tons of plastic waste each year, that have cost the lives of one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals. Moreover, it causes \$8 billion in damage annually to marine ecosystems." **With PNA**



## EARTH HOUR OBSERVANCE Zero plastics use pushed

Malacañang on Saturday called on the public to lessen or totally avoid the use of plastics after a United Nations report tagged the Philippines as one of the top five contributors of plastic waste in oceans.

The appeal was made as the Philippines joins in the observance of Earth Hour 2019 even as presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo stressed the significance of the activity in raising awareness on the importance of biodiversity.

"This year's observance of Earth Hour focuses on the issue of single-use plastics, which is a major problem in the country," Panelo said.

"We therefore call on everyone to cut down the rampant use of plastics as we continue to aspire for a clean, safe and healthy environment," he added.

Malacañang last night joined the world in observing the 2019 Earth Hour as it took part in switching off the lights from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., which was participated in 188 countries.

Environment and Natural Resources undersecretary and spokesman Jonas Leones, on the other hand, said Earth Hour aims to make people aware of the importance of caring for the environment.


In a separate interview, Leones said the observance of Earth Hour is a symbolic gesture

to spread awareness that there is a dire need to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

"We all should be mindful and careful of our actions regarding our environment because there is always an effect with it," Leones said.

### **Earth Hour aims to make people aware of the importance of caring for the environment.**

"We are urging the public to commit to simple gestures like turning off appliances when not in use as this act will have a great impact (in helping) the environment," he added.

Leones noted Earth Hour may just be 60 minutes, but the impact is greater when more people join hands not just to save on electricity but show solidarity for environmental protection. **ENManuel** 



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## PAGGAMIT NG SINGLE USE PLASTIC IWASAN-PANELO

UMAPELA ang Malakanyang sa publiko na maging makakalikasan at iwasan ang paggamit ng mga single use plastic na isa sa pangunahing problema ng bansa.

Panawagan ito ng Malakanyang sa publiko sa paggunita ng Earth Hour na ginanap kagabi na kung saan ay kabilang ang Filipinas at iba pang bansa sa buong mundo sa pagpatay ng mga ilaw ng isang oras upang ipakita ang pakikiisa sa pagsusulong ng pangangalaga sa kalikasan.

Ani Chief Presidential Legal Counsel at Presidential Spokesman Secretary Salvador Panelo, ang tinututukan nga-

yon ng Earth Hour ay ang pagbabawal sa paggamit sa mga single use plastic na isa sa pinakamalaking problema ng buong mundo hindi lamang ng Filipinas.

Tinukoy ni Panelo na base sa report ng United Nations, isa ang Filipinas sa top 5 na bansa na pinakamaraming plastic wastes na naitatapon sa karagatan.

Dahil dito, hinikayat ni Panelo ang publiko na kung maaari ay iwasan na ang paggamit ng mga single use plastic at maging mulat sa negatibong epekto nito sa kalikasan.

**EVELYN QUIROZ**



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## Palace urges Filipinos to cut use of plastics

Malacañang yesterday called on Filipinos to cut down the use of plastics as the world celebrates Earth Hour, with this year's theme focusing on the issue of single-use plastics.

"A United Nations report shows the Philippines as one of the top five contributors of plastic waste in the world's oceans. We therefore call on everyone to cut down the rampant use of plastics as we continue to aspire for a clean, safe and healthy environment," presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said.

Panelo enjoined Filipinos to participate in the Earth Hour. "March 30 tonight, we will join the rest of the world in switching off our lights for Earth Hour," he said.

Earth Hour 2019, with its campaign "#Connect2Earth," aims to build mass awareness on why nature is important and create an

unstoppable movement for nature similar to when the world came together to tackle climate change.

The Earth Hour, which started as a symbolic lights out event in Sydney, Australia in 2007, is now the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment, inspiring millions of people to take action for our planet and nature.

Since then, it has grown to engage more than 180 countries and territories worldwide.

Conservation group World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines spearheaded the Philippines' main 2019 Earth Hour celebration in Makati City which sought to further draw public support for legislation on plastic waste management to help address environmental degradation and biodiversity loss from plastics pollution. **(PNA and Argyll Geducos)**





## "MERCURY FOCAL POINTS" INTER-AGENCY COORDINATING GROUP PAMUMUNUAN NG DENR

NOONG ika-20 ng Marso, binasa ni Undersecretary Atty. Jonas R. Leones ang mensahe ni Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ukol sa Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) report.

Base sa MIA report, ang pangunahing pinanggagalingan ng mercury sa bansa ay mula sa mga aktibidad ng mga tao partikular na ang labis na paggamit ng "energy sources" na sinundan ng produksiyon ng mga tinatawag na "virgin metal" kabilang na rito ang pagmimina ng ginto at ang pagkuha ng minerals na nagiging dahilan upang dumumi at masira ang kapaligiran.

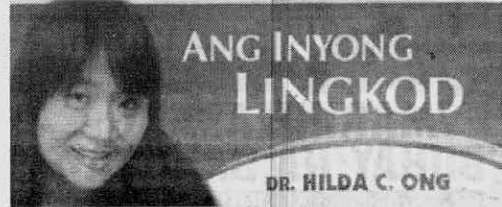
Ang mercury inventory ay isa sa mga importanteng paraan upang mabawasan ang epekto ng mga toxic pol-

lutants sa kapaligiran.

Lumalabas sa ulat na apat na lugar sa bansa ang kumirmadong kontaminado ng mercury kabilang na dito ang Palawan Quicksilver Mines, Mambulao River sa Camarines Norte, Mabuhay Vinyl sa Lanao del Norte at Lumang-gang Creek sa Compostela Valley.

Pinaghihinalaan din na posibleng kontaminado na ng mercury ang labing-isang lugar sa bansa na kinabibilangan ng Mercauayan River, Manila Bay, minahan sa Camarines Norte at Masbate, landfills sa Barangay Inayawan sa Cebu City, Consolacion sa Cebu province, Naboc River sa Davao at T'boli sa South Cotabato.

Ang iba pang lugar na pinaghihinalaang kontaminado ng mercury ay ang Agusan



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

del Sur sa Caraga region, Bulawan Mine ng Philex Gold sa Negros Occidental, municipalidad ng Sipalay at Hinoban sa Negros, Sitio Dalico sa Itogon, Benguet at ang municipalidad ng Licuan-Baay sa Abra.

Nakasaad pa sa MIA report na ang Pilipinas ay sumusunod sa Article 16 ng convention na tumutukoy sa kalusugan. Noong 2008 nang maglabas ng Administrative Order No. 2008-021 ang Department of Health (DOH) na nag-uutos na tanggalin ang mercury sa lahat ng health care facility at institutions sa bansa. Upang matiyak ang implementasyon ng Minamata Convention, inirekomenda sa ulat ang pagbuo ng inter-agency coordinating group na binubuo ng "mercury focal points" mula sa iba't-ibang

sangay ng gobyerno at private agencies na pamumunuan ng DENR.

Inirekomenda rin ang pag-aaral sa mga kasalukuyang polisiya at regulasyon sa paggamit at pangangasiwa ng mercury bukod pa rito ang pagkakaroon ng batas na suportang maipagbawal ang pagmimina ng mercury sa bansa base na rin sa pag-sunod sa Article 3 ng Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Nagbabala na rin ang World Health Organization (WHO) na maaaring makapinsala ang mercury sa ating nervous, digestive, respiratory, endocrine at immune systems. Maaari din nitong maapektuhan ang ating pan-dinig, paningin, magdulot ng pagka-paralyse, maapektuhan ang ipinagbubuntis at paglaki ng mga bata.



# 'MAY YOUR TRIBE INCREASE': A SARANGANI

## SEND-OFF FOR 84 BABY TURTLES

By Edwin O. Fernandez  
@inqmindanao

GLAN, SARANGANI—"May your tribe increase," marine conservationists in Sarangani province said on Wednesday as they bade goodbye to the 84 olive ridley turtle hatchlings they released at Barangay Cablalan here to their natural habitat.

James Gravidez, an officer of the Glan municipal environment office, Dr. Roy Mejorada of the Sarangani Environmental Conservation and Protection Center (ECPC) and Pinky Placer of the local environment group Sarangani Climate Change helped the hyperactive little turtles find their way home.

Freddie Mongkalong, a Bantay Dagat volunteer of Glan town, found the hatchlings' mother sea turtle, or "pawikan," on Jan. 28 as it looked for a site where it could lay its eggs.

After laying 85 eggs in her sandy nest at Purok Islam, Barangay Cablalan, the marine turtle returned to the sea.

Trained to protect marine life, Mongkalong secured the

nest with makeshift barriers to protect the eggs from predators like dogs and monitor lizards that frequented the sandy beach.

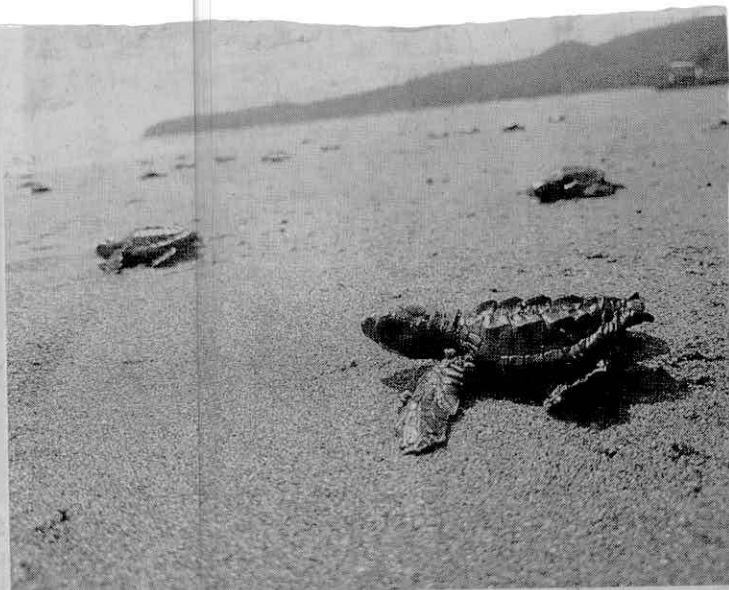
With the help of neighbors and other Bantay Dagat volunteers, Mongkalong checked on the nest in regular intervals, making sure the eggs were safe in the nest.

On Wednesday, he happily informed the Glan environment office and the Sarangani ECPC that the eggs had hatched and that the baby turtles were already eager to head for the water.

### Natal homing

Mejorada's team assisted in the release of the turtles and then conducted a briefing to educate people in the area about the importance of helping the government preserve marine life.

"The turtles' release shows Sarangani's continuing conservation programs and the support it gets from the communities," Mejorada said. "We help in educating the community about the importance of marine turtles in the ecosystem, the importance of keeping their natural habitat healthy."



SPRINT TO SEA Some of the 84 olive ridley turtle hatchlings released in Glan, Sarangani, rush to the sea while still in their "infantile frenzy" stage. —PHOTO COURTESY OF SARANGANI ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION CENTER

During the release, environmentalists performed "natal homing," a natural process in which the hatchlings are allowed to crawl from their nest and into the sea.

"It will ... [make] the hatch-

lings [remember] where they come from, so they [need to] get familiar [with] the grains of sand, the smell of the area and its orientation with reference to the magnetic north," Mejorada explained.

"These smells and the envi-

ronment will be remembered by the turtles [when] they return to the area in the future to lay eggs," he added.

Mejorada couldn't contain his happiness and the feeling of fulfillment in realizing that somehow he contributed to environmental conservation in his own little way.

"Accompanying that excitement, though, is worry—what will happen to the hatchlings in the wild, because there they face a lot of threats," Mejorada said. "What I'm really worried about are the man-made threats such as pollution and resource degradation."

### Artificial environment

The shores of Barangay Cablalan and the nearby communities are nesting sites for sea turtles, he said, "thus the need to educate the people."

"We are happy they are supportive and cooperative," he added.

Turtle hatchlings, he explained, should be released immediately to the wild because keeping them in artificial environments like tubs, plastic pails

and other containers would have a negative impact on them.

He quoted an advisory from Dr. Arnel Yaptinchay, founder of Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines, who said that "hatchlings should enter the marine environment 30 minutes after their emergence from the nest."

### Quick release

"They must be released immediately because after 30 minutes, their vigor starts to wane," Mejorada said.

Environmentalists say hatchlings are in an "infantile frenzy," wherein they try to move out of their nest quickly to escape predators, using just enough strength to reach the water and swim in the wild.

A day before the hatchlings' release in Glan, Gravidez, engineer Arvel Lara, Glan Menro and some residents rescued an adult female olive ridley turtle that got stranded on the coast of Purok Panaghiusa, Barangay Burias, in Glan.

Ecologists believed the turtle may have laid eggs the night before, but they could not find the nest. INQ



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Phil underscores reality of climate change

have six hours of water supply a day," he pointed out.

He advised water companies to plan ahead for natural calamities like El Niño, a natural phenomenon experienced every two to seven years.

"Scientists have not yet decided what is the impact of climate change to the El Niño cycle but it looks like it will be intensified instead of having just a weak El Niño. With climate change, we will have the stronger types of El Niño," he said.

As a conservation measure, he proposed a socialized scheme in water distribution—one that would depend on the ability of a family or a household to pay.

"If I belong to a poor family, this is my allocation – P300 just like anybody else, but if I consume more than that, there should be a penalty," he said, stressing that the scheme could make consumers aware that water is a finite resource.

David pointed out that while "water is a basic right...no person has the right to waste water beyond what is accorded."

"It says in the Constitution that each and every person has the right to access clean and potable water. Everyone has the right to this particular amount of water, and you have no right to waste water beyond what is accorded to you. After a certain volume of water is provided to you at a low price, and beyond that, you wasted water, you have to pay for it," he explained.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture has warned that aside from Metro Manila, Northern Luzon where a significant portion of the local farm sector is located may also be affected by the dry spell.

"Northern Luzon, including Central Luzon and Metro Manila, could face a serious water supply crisis unless something is done about the massive deforestation which results in the drying up of creeks and rivers," Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said.

Piñol recently flew over Cagayan and nearby areas where he saw heavily silted and drying up rivers, waterless creeks and denuded mountains.

"I also saw the very low water level at both La Mesa Dam, which provides water to Metro Manila, and the Magat Dam which is the source of irrigation water for Cagayan Valley," he said.

Piñol recommended long-term solutions to avert a much worse water supply issue in the future, including a national program to locate and identify headwaters to be declared as protected areas and the reforestation of denuded mountains.

"There should also be legislation to require all local government units, with the support of national government agencies, to establish water catchments, small water impounding and mini-dams," he said.

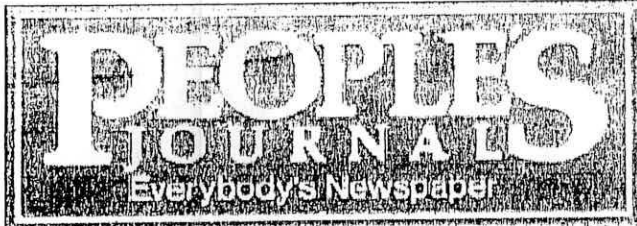
He also called on the government to invest in the construction of more dams not only for irrigation purposes but also for water supply reservoirs for urban areas.

"This task will not be easy and the results will not be quick. Trees will not grow and cover the mountains in just two to three years. But this is not about today but the future and the next generation of Filipinos," he added. – **With Rhodina Villanueva, Louise Maureen Simeon**





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## Climate change awareness

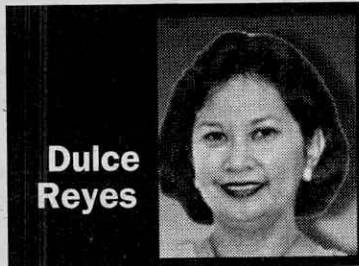
AFTER the once again successful Earth Hour last night, participating countries, institutions, and individuals worldwide are indeed getting conscious of how we can help each other when it comes to issues regarding our environment.

For one hour last night, specifically from 8:30 p.m. till 9:30 p.m. local time, many of us shut down our lights. In many countries, buildings and historical sites also shut off their lights. The world became somewhat dark even for an hour.

This is to just remind us here on earth that if we do not get our acts together, with resources dwindling as years go by, we just might go back to the dark ages. We indeed live in one world and we are all connected, especially in this age of state-of-the-art means of communication. So there we were and the feeling was somewhat surreal. For the month of April, there will be another awareness raising campaign when we come together for Earth Day.

At this time, we should not just limit our awareness of preserving our natural resources to just these two major activities. We should be conscious of helping our mother earth throughout the year with our acts of helping out, no matter how trivial. Gone are the days when we can just leave our faucets on all the time while we are doing our bathroom tasks. Gone are the days when we just leave

### WOMEN TALK



Dulce Reyes

our lights on when we leave our rooms for an hour or more.

And gone are the days when we just waste our fuel. When it comes to climate change and how it is affecting our daily lives with all these natural calamities pummeling us all the time, we must be united in helping with solutions rather than be the cause of the problem of neglect.

Even young school children are being made aware of the importance of climate change. We are even asked to be more aggressive in planting trees and caring for those already grown and productive. We just now cannot cut trees arbitrarily. If you cut one tree, I was told you must plant at least 10 more. We are asked to be consistent in planting wherever there is space.

We now even have the so-called urban farming. If we think that by just settling in crowded urban areas we cannot do anything, we are wrong. We

can even grow vegetables in pots, by our windows.

And when torrential rains come causing massive flooding, well, we then realize that this is a result when we abuse nature. Summer is now here. The effects of El Nino are being felt daily. Extreme heat especially during noontime has become intolerable.

I can just admire our workers out there wrapped in clothes to protect their skin from the scorching sun as they go about earning for their daily wag. And how are we making use of the sun's heat? Are we now into solar powered electricity.

Some buildings and more houses are being installed with solar panels to harness the sun's heat to run their electrical requirements. We are all being encouraged to get these, if only these panels are within the reach of the middle and lower classes.

In our country, we just experience extreme heat, and not below zero coldness. We are being bombarded with how to prevent heat strokes by drinking more water and going to shaded areas more often.

To do that we need trees. We are also harnessing the wind by building windmills. So you see, we are not yet that hopeless when we can still make use of what nature is offering us no matter how we humans abuse the environment. But we have to do our share to preserve what we have. We still have a lot to be thankful for.



# PDEA reports ₱46.6-B illegal drugs destroyed since 2008

By **CHITO A. CHAVEZ**

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) reported that some ₱46.69 billion worth of illegal drugs were destroyed by the agency since 2008.

PDEA Director General Aaron N. Aquino said that a total of 19,622 kilograms, or 18.29 tons of solid illegal drugs, and 6,020.32 liters of illegal drugs were destroyed through thermal decomposition from 2008 to 2018.

"These are part of the dangerous drugs that were seized during high-impact anti-drug operations conducted by PDEA combined with those turned over and endorsed with corresponding documentation to PDEA by other partner drug law enforcement agencies and Regional Trial Courts (RTCs) in nearby cities and provinces for destruction," Aquino said.

The destroyed confiscated illegal drugs which are no longer needed as evidence in court include methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), liquid shabu, marijuana, ephedrine, cocaine, liquid cocaine, diazepam and ecstasy.

Since 2008, PDEA has presided over 25 destruction activities regularly done by third parties with chemical treatment facilities accredited by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). These facilities are the Integrated Waste Management, Inc. (IWMD) in Barangay Aguado, Trece Martirez City, Cavite, and Clean Leaf International Corporation in Barangay Maysilo, Malabon.

In July 2011, Holcim Philippines, Incorporated, a registered treatment,

storage and disposal facility for hazardous waste in Barrio Matictic, Norzagaray, Bulacan, allowed PDEA to use the company's facility to destroy the seized dangerous drugs, free of charge, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program.

Aquino explained that "Thermal Decomposition" or thermolysis, is the method of decomposition or breaking down of chemical by heat.

Key officials of PDEA and other law enforcement agencies, representatives from the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), the Public Attorney's Office, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), local barangay officials and media witnessed the destruction ceremonies.

From July 1, 2016 up to present, a total of ₱21,995,510,000 worth of dangerous drugs has been destroyed.

Majority of the destroyed shabu were confiscated from big anti-drug operations. Among those operations were the record haul of over 700 kilos of shabu in Subic, Zambales in May 2008; the Christmas Day raid in a game fowl farm in Lipa, Batangas in 2013 where ₱420 million worth of shabu were discovered; lawful searches in two storage facilities in San Fernando, Pampanga in September 2014, and two warehouses in Valenzuela City in May 2017 where more than a ton of shabu were seized; more than 180 kilos of shabu that were dug up in a beach resort in Claveria, Cagayan in July 2016; and inside a farm in Ibaan, Batangas which resulted in the confiscation of a total of 4,200,600 ml. of liquid shabu in 2018, to name a few.





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# Lake Lanao critical because of El Niño

By **ALI G. MACABALANG**

**C**OTABATO CITY — El Niño is taking its toll on Lake Lanao in Lanao del Sur, the country's second largest inland body of water.

Marawi City residents on Friday

expressed concern after the lake's water level went below the critical 698 meters. They said the level is lower than the 699m during the 2016 El Niño episode.

The lake's normal level is 701.54m.

Some residents posted on Facebook three comparative photos of the official lake water level marker near the mouth of Agus

River, the lake's lone outlet.

"We urge the NPC and other responsible agencies like DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) to look into this (record low water recession) and find remedy or alternatives," Drieza Lininding said in one Facebook post.

Lininding warned fellow residents

in Marawi and Lanao del Sur of severe consequences if the lake's dwindling water supply is unaddressed.

Marawi and 15 of the province's 39 towns are located around the lake.

The lake has five watersheds with rivers and tributaries totaling 431 km. Water from the rivers and tributaries drain into the

lake and exit through the Agus River that flows southwest into Iligan Bay through the Maria Cristina Falls, the largest waterfall in the country, and Linamon Falls.

Seven dams serving as hydroelectric plants have been installed along the Agus River, generating 727 megawatts that is distributed across Mindanao.



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# Desalination to boost water supply – Ilarde

**F**ORMER senator Eddie Ilarde on Saturday urged the government to explore desalination of sea water to help solve the water shortage experienced in parts of Metro Manila and Rizal.

In a statement, Ilarde warned that a long dry spell or El Niño meant depletion of water from ground water sources.

"Even now Angat Dam, La Mesa Dam and other sources are nearing critical low level. Angat Dam is on top of an earthquake fault," he said.

Laguna de Bay, the biggest inland fresh water lake in Southeast

Asia, he noted, was on the throes of drying up due to its shallowness and pollution, exacerbated by the dry spell.

"But due to the crisis we face, it can still be tapped for treated water supply by the concessionaire water companies. Treating such polluted water might be too expensive, that is why they are looking at abandoned deep wells," he said.

"We suggest desalination of water from Manila Bay, which, due to a concerted effort of Department of Environment and Natural Resources, to clean it, can supply any quantity for desalination," Ilarde said.

The Philippines should also solicit advice and help from friendly gulf state Middle East countries such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and others, also Barcelona, Spain about the best procedure in conserving desalinated water and its distribution, he said.

"These places depend mostly on desalinated water. Second-hand

desalination equipment donation shall be most welcome. The government can do no less than purchase the same for our needs," Ilarde said.

Ilarde, a pioneer environmentalist in Congress, has studied the condition of Laguna de Bay, Pasig River and Manila Bay, and has recommended how these waterways can help the people. He is founding chairman of Maharlika Movement for National Transformation and an active supporter of the rehabilitation of Manila Bay, Pasig River and Laguna de Bay.