

DATE : 07 APR 2019

DAY : Sunday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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Environment protection: Starting point to uplift the extremely poor

By OLIVER AGONCILLO

Safeguarding the environment and alleviating poverty are closely knitted issues that can be too complex to embrace and act upon. They can be too heavy an undertaking to take on.

Studies have consistently shown that poverty-stricken areas are extremely vulnerable to the adverse impacts of environmental degradation, like air and water pollution, flooding, landslides, drought, and deforestation. The Philippines Poverty Environment Initiative (PPEI), a joint program led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in fact, says that environmental degradation is not only "hugely damaging [to] the poor's livelihood," but also to "the economy as a whole."

Through the coalition Zero Extreme Poverty 2030 (ZEP 2030), our organization Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE) has committed to help the country's poor as the lead of the coalition's Environment cluster.

ZEP 2030, which aims to eradicate poverty in the Philippines by 2030, tackles poverty as a multi-dimensional issue, and has organized itself into clusters corresponding to areas critical to poverty alleviation. These areas are Health, Livelihood, Environment, Education, Agriculture and Fisheries, Housing and Shelter, and Partnerships for Indigenous Peoples.

FPE has long worked with the poor-

est rural communities in the country. In 2011, we introduced our flagship program, called StarTrek, to bring environmental conservation efforts and social enterprises together. We adopted this approach to encourage communities to practice efforts that are centered on reducing the impact of climate change while establishing a stable and reliable source of livelihood for them.

One of the most notable results of this program was implemented by the Palawan Center for Appropriate Rural Technology (PCART), the StarTrek project implementer in Palawan. They taught communities in the municipality of Roxas and San Vicente in Palawan to apply the Kalabaw-Araro-Suyod farming technique and encourage the adoption of organic farming practices in cultivate rice and premium herbs. This technique is conservation trade-off practice that allows the community to have enough produce while applying appropriate farming technologies, supply, and equipment. In return, they have to protect the nearby delineated forest protection area. The scheme has proved to be pivotal in encouraging participants to address challenges on food and income security while protecting a key biodiversity area.

These efforts have resulted in a marked increase in the average income of the participating families, from

P42,000 to as much as P110,000 annually. In addition, the program enhances the sense of responsibility among the communities to protect nearby forest areas, a biodiversity sanctuary.

We helped build confidence within communities to assert their rights and responsibilities as stewards of protected areas when new settlers look their way and explore potential for real estate, agriculture and industrial development, or tourism. Knowing that such development may lead to displacement from their settlements keeps them engaged and participative in the program.

Natural calamities brought by climate change remains a huge threat for these communities as well. For communities near watersheds like Calawis in Antipolo, Rizal, we have partnered with community groups to carry out continuous forest protection and restoration programs to ensure the long-term conservation of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape. These conservation efforts reduce water run offs from the upstream that contribute to the flooding of nearby low-lying areas like Metro Manila and Rizal. We have also worked with the communities to train and educate them on disaster response in the event of flash floods, landslides, and drought.

While our programs are still a work in progress, we can already appreciate the impact of the good they do. We recognize that we can't do this alone, and a lot more has to be done. We need more groups or organizations who have the capacity, resources, and expertise to reach more of the extremely impoverished communities in far-flung areas of the country.

We need more like-minded people to eradicate extreme poverty in the Philippines.

ZEP 2030 is calling on non-profit institutions, corporate foundations, and advocacy groups to join their cause. To know more about ZEP and its activities, please visit <http://zeropovertyph.net/>.

(Oliver Agoncillo is the executive director of the Foundation for the Philippine Environment).



BOC MATAGUMPAY NA PAGKAKAKUMPISKA SA MAHIGIT 757 TARANTULA, PINURI NI CIMATU

PINURI ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang Bureau of Customs (BOC) sa matagumpay na pagkakangumpiska sa mahigit 700 piraso ng makamandag at buhay na tarantula sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport, kamakailan.

"The BOC agents and personnel who discovered the shipment should give themselves a pat on the back for stopping the illegal trade of these wildlife species," sabi ni Cimatu. Ang mga nakumpiskang tarantula na aabot sa halagang P310,000 ay nakitang nakalagay sa loob ng gift-wrapped boxes ng oatmeal,

cookies at tea na nanggaling mula sa bansang Poland.

Naaresto rin ang dalawang katao kabilang na ang consignee ng shipment.

Ayon kay Cimatu ang pagkakangumpiska sa 757 piraso ng tarantula at pagkakar-esto sa dalawang suspek ay isang tagumpay para sa laban sa illegal wildlife trade. Nangako pa ito na hindi titigil ang mga awtoridad hanggang maubos ang mga "poachers at wildlife traffickers".

"We will never get tired of rescuing wildlife and put their tormentors before the bar of justice so as to teach people a lesson that wildlife species are not commodities for trade,"



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

dagdag pa ni Cimatu.

Ang dalawang suspek at ang tarantula shipment ay dinala na sa Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade o mas kilala sa tawag na Task Force POGI na binubuo ng wildlife enforcers mula sa iba't ibang ahensiya kasama na rito ang Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) ng DENR, National Bureau of Investigation at Philippine National Police.

Ayon kay BMB Senior Ecosystems Management Specialist Rogelio Demellentes, Jr., ang dalawang suspek na kumuha ng padala sa NAIA's Central Mail Exchange Center ay sinampahan ng kasong paglabag sa Republic Act

9147 o Wildlife Resources and Protection Act.

Base sa nakasaad sa batas, ang sinumang mahuhuling nagbebenta, may dala at nagbabiyaha ng wildlife species ay maaaring maparusahan ng pagkakulong ng hanggang dalawang taon at pagmultahin ng P200,000.

Sinabi pa ni Demellentes, nakikipag-ugnayan na ang task force sa Polish government sa posibilidad na pagsasauli ng tarantula shipment.

Sa kasalukuyan, ilalagay sa quarantine area at oobserbahan ang mga tarantula at mananatili sa pangangalaga ng BMB habang wala pang resolusyon sa kaso.



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The wolves at Lobo's gate



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MARLEN V.
RONQUILLO

THE presence of a dredger hopper from China off Lobo town in Batangas is a story of many layers and implications. First and foremost, it is LGU (local government units) power gone amuck. The previous town mayor and council exploiting the LGU powers to the hilt signed more than a decade ago a dredging deal that should not have been done recklessly but done with the proper environmental impact assessments.

What was done at Lobo that exposed LGU overreach, and probably punishable under the "abuse of authority" rules for local government officials?

On Oct. 28, 2008, the municipal council of Lobo, Batangas authorized then mayor Virgilio Manalo to contract out the dredging of a 180,000-square meter portion of the Lobo River. The proposal to "dredge" came from a certain Seagate Engineering and Buildsystems. The dredged sand will then be exported to Hong Kong, supposedly to build an additional runway at Hong Kong International Airport.

It was an international supply deal: sand from Lobo to supply the sand needed for an airport runway in Hong Kong. That means extracting a natural resource asset intended for export to a foreign country.

That alone should have raised the red flags and the town council should have asked this question before it was even presented to the authorities for consideration. Are we not punching above our weight level if we do this thing without consultation on its legal and environmental aspects from authorities in the know? Even the provincial government, according to Batangas Governor Hermilando Mandanas, was not informed about the dredging proposal — and its subsequent approval.

We do not know what sorts of things were discussed during the Lobo council deliberations on the dredging contract to Seagate in 2008. But we can make an educated guess at the moment. The granting of authority to the mayor was probably papered over, made to appear as a routine and simple business of the town council because of either of these reasons: hubris (the mayor and the town council's supreme belief that they were authorized to deal with such things), or the town council did not have a rudimentary understanding of international supply deals that involved resource extraction and within — we discover later — a protected mangrove area at that.

What was the compensation agreed on to be given to the town for every ton of sand dredged and shipped to Hong Kong? What guarantees were written to make sure that the dredging would not go beyond the area prescribed in the contract?

What facilitated the speed and ease by which the sand deal was sealed? What kind of arguments dominated the discussions on Oct. 8, 2008?

The recent newspaper reports said that Seagate was to sell the dredged sand to a certain Synergy Plus Holdings Ltd. for \$2 per metric ton. How much of that amount, if any, would go to Lobo? If *pera* would go to Seagate, would Lobo get the mere *kahon* under the dredging deal?

The second torturous issue raised by the sudden arrival of a Chinese dredging ship off Lobo is this: Is selling of the country's natural resources that easy? Can a local company, fronting for an international firm, go to the mayor of a town and say, "I need sand for an international project and I am here proposing a dredg-

ing contract"? The dredging is the sweetener — the way to extract the sand with a legal cover. The sand to be extracted will not even go to a local project or a provincial project but will be shipped to a project overseas like precious minerals.

The case of Lobo says it is that easy. The former town mayor and members of the council greenlighted the deal and were fully convinced on the "merits" of the dredging contact without consultations and public hearings. Just like that. Approved without much deliberation. And that LGU overreach would seamlessly pave the way for the entry of a Chinese dredging ship in a river that is supposed to be a protected area.

That sent chills and worry across Lobo. The move is seen as

part of China's plan to literally militarize the West Philippine Sea and send all those research vessels to the Benham Rise. And build all those useless dams at terms that are simply onerous and disadvantageous to Filipinos.

The next big question that is uppermost in the minds of many concerned Filipinos is this: Was Lobo the first town in the Philippines whose LGU has demonstrated that kind of misplaced audacity? Or, are there other LGUs that have been trading away part of the national patrimony using dubious covers such as "authority to dredge?"

Or phony extraction permits?

Many LGU leaders in the country operate with a mindset that the devolution law has given them the power to overreach. They sign multimillion



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peso loans without sufficient feasibility study. They provide lending banks with spurious documents and projections to argue their borrowings. They issue land zoning rules to favor developers and which often lead to the conversion of A-1 irrigated lands into residential developments.

But nothing is as worrisome as the abuse of LGU power in Lobo, Batangas. The wolves are at bay because of the hubris of that town mayor and his pliable town council. The facilitator of the dredging contract, Seagate Buildsystems, had previously defied orders to move the Chinese dredger out of Lobo because of its belief that LGU overreach was legal and binding. Overreach plus shiploads of gall and chutzpah.



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Burying it when it's alive and digging it up when it's dead



MIRRORLESS

**ROLLY G.
REYES**

Who said Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu is afraid of China?

In an order dated April 3, he suspended the environmental clearance certificate (ECC) of Seagate Engineering and Buildsystems, the company linked to the dredging vessel that docked off Lobo, Batangas.

The company was issued two ECCs on the condition that it would submit to the department all the required permits and clearances from other concerned government agencies within 60 days before it could begin any project.

— DENR's chief has no patience playing *mah-jong* or Chinese checker.



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Mt. Banahaw still closed to trekkers – DENR

Mt. Banahaw remains closed to trekkers and pilgrims, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has reminded the public.

“After 15 years of restricted access to the public, the Mt. Banahaw-San Cristobal Protected Landscape has shown signs of improvement, but has not yet fully recovered... Certain areas... that were set by the park’s management board as these fall within the strict protection zone will continue to be closed,” Maria Paz Luna, DENR-Calabarzon regional executive director, said.

She said the closure order would remain in effect until

concerned local officials are “fully prepared, trained and ready to handle visitors, able to implement the carrying capacity of frequently visited areas and capable to handle disaster risk reduction management and trail hazard assessment.”

Park superintendent Sally Pangan said representatives of various mountaineering groups volunteered to help prevent visitors from “slipping” into restricted areas of Mt. Banahaw this Holy Week.

– Rhodina Villanueva



BANAHAW PARK AREAS TO REMAIN RESTRICTED

AFTER 15 years of restricted access to the public, the Mts. Banahaw-San Cristobal Protected Landscape has already shown signs of improvement, but has not yet fully recovered, Environment Regional Executive Director Maria Paz Luna said.

Luna said certain areas of the park will continue to remain closed to the public as these fall within the Strict Protection Zone.

The Protected Area Management Board for MBSCPL, she said, has decided to impose the closure order until such time that the barangays concerned are fully prepared, trained and ready to handle visitors and are able to implement the carrying capacity of the areas frequently visited.

The concerned local government units must also have the capability to handle disaster risk reduction management and trail hazard assessment.

The board in 2004 issued a resolution declaring specific areas in the protected area closed to the public, starting from the different sacred places of Barangay Kinabuhayan—Kristalino Falls, Dungaw, Tatlong Tangke—then back to Kinabuhayan on the side of Dolores, and from Barangay Bugon which covers Pagbuga up to Dulong Ilaya in Barangay Concepcion-Pinagbakuran and Concepcion-Banahaw on the Sariaya side, both in Quezon province.

In March 2006, public entry was restricted in five more areas in Laguna, namely Barangay Bukal in Nagcarlan; barangays Ilaya Sungi and Novaliches in Liliw; and Bukal and Taytay in Majayjay.

In 2013, Mt. Cristobal was completely closed due to a fire incident.

For this Holy Week, MBSCPL Park Supt. Sally Pangan said more than 200 mountaineers from various local groups volunteered to provide extra manpower in regulating the movements of pilgrims and visitors to prevent anyone from "slipping" into restricted areas.

"We will be patrolling the whole protected area throughout the Holy Week, in cooperation with the local government units, the police force, volunteer groups, radio groups and many more," Pangan said.



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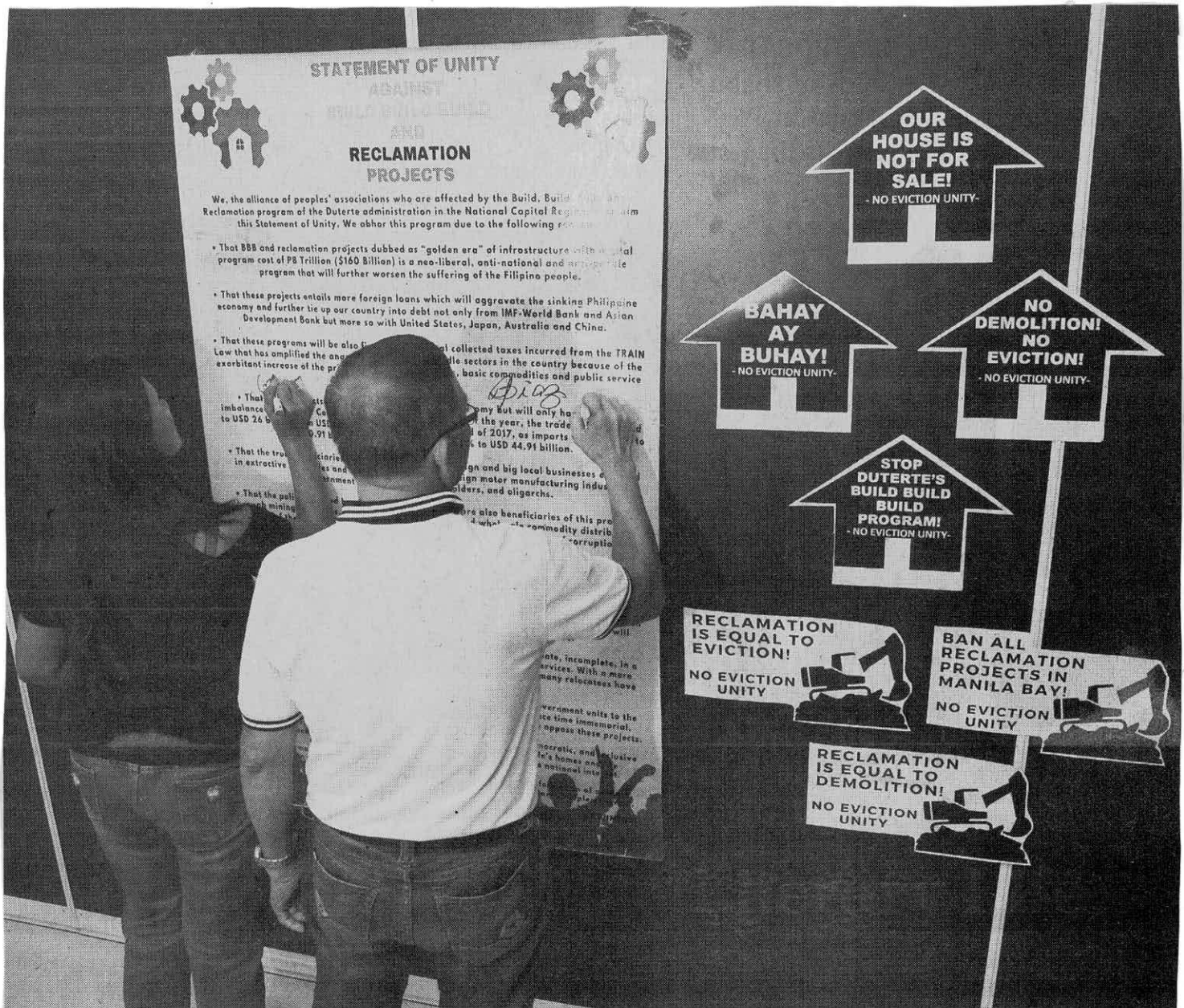
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NO TO RECLAMATION Manila residents sign a statement opposing reclamation projects in Manila Bay. PHOTO BY RENE H. DILAN



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Manila Bay rehab yields vintage bomb

A vintage bomb was recovered by authorities after it was dug up during a dredging operation in Manila Bay yesterday.

The vintage bomb was dug up along Baywalk near the United States embassy in Ermita, Manila yesterday morning, according to the Manila Police District Explosive Ordnance

Disposal.

The vintage bomb was reported to the bomb disposal unit by the Department of Public Works and Highways, which was conducting the dredging operations.

The bomb, an 81mm illuminating round, was turned over to the police for disposal. – **Marc Jayson Cayabyab**



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Bam seeks probe of foiled dredging

SEN. Paolo Benigno "Bam" Aquino 4th on Saturday raised the need to probe the entry of an African-flagged dredging ship with Chinese crew in Lobo River in Batangas, saying the incident was a clear encroachment upon the country's internal seas.

Aquino and Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said they plan to file a resolution to seek an inquiry into a report that a Chinese-manned dredging ship will extract sand from the Lobo River that will be used for the expansion of the Hong Kong airport.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources stopped the dredging last week, saying the vessel lacked documents.

"Inagaw na nga nila ang mga isla natin, pati ba naman buhangin, gusto pa nilang angkinin (They already seized our islands in [the South China Sea], and they still want to get our sand)?" Aquino said.

"Nakakaalarma ang insidenteng ito dahil malinaw na ito'y panghihimasok na sa karagatang sakop ng Pilipinas (This incident is quite alarming and it is a clear encroachment upon the Philippines' territorial seas)," he added.

Aquino believes that the ship is only "a Trojan horse," pretending to undertake a normal business operation for siltation removal, but its main agenda is to take sand from the country's waters to be used for other purposes.

MV Herald, a Sierra Leone-flagged dredging ship, managed to get an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) through a Filipino firm to operate.

But the DENR suspended

the ECC after concerned sectors questioned the awarding of the certificate.

The ship also lacked a permit from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to transport sand and failed to present a permit from the local government of Lobo, Batangas, to dredge in Lobo River.

Recto said the Senate inquiry into the "poaching or export of sand and other landfill materials" should cover not only the reported sand dredging in Batangas "but similar cases in other parts of the country."

"Have we become a land rec-

lamation material supplier? Are we exporting our sand? If our mountains have been flattened and transported ship by ship to reclaim islands, some of which are within our territory, then that is land transfer of the worst kind," he added.

Recto said if reports were true that the ship was dredging sand for use in the building of Hong Kong airport's third runway, "then it is our second contribution to the project, the first being the P700 million that Filipino travellers pay a year for the expansion of the Hong Kong airport."

"It is in the fine print of a

round-trip plane ticket to Hong Kong. [It's in the ticket]. You pay 90 Hong Kong dollars as Hong Kong airport construction fee," he noted.

Sen. Richard Gordon said China's actions in the South China Sea "do not demonstrate the actions of a friend" as he pushed for the strengthening of the country's military equipment.

"A friend does not send hundreds of army, hundreds of navy, does not send hundreds of vessels to harrass our fishermen in our territory," he pointed out on Friday during commemoration of Philippine Veterans Week held at

Fort Bonifacio.

"I'm glad that [Foreign Affairs] Secretary [Teodoro] Locsin already filed a diplomatic protest. If we do not have a strong Navy, if we do not have a strong Army, we will be pushed around by other countries," Gordon said.

He added that he fought to have 13 percent of the proceeds from Tax Reform Acceleration and Inclusion Law allocated for the military, on top of the budget from the Bases Conversion and Development Authority, to ensure that soldiers would not go to war without the proper equipment.

"It is the military's duty to protect the integrity of our territory and to protect our country but they would not be capable of doing that without the right equipment. Let us remind our leaders to learn from history. We should follow Japan's motto, 'Enrich the country, strengthen the military,'" Gordon said.

About 275 Chinese vessels were spotted near and around Pag-asa (Thitu) Island in the South China Sea from January to March this year, according to the Philippine military.

China said the vessels were civilian ships, mostly fishing boats.

BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Worker finds vintage bomb at Manila Bay

By CNN Philippines, STAFF METRO Manila (CNN Philippines) -- Authorities yesterday recovered an unexploded ordnance during a dredging operation at Manila Bay.

According to an initial

report from the Manila Police District, a Department of Public Works and Highways worker saw the vintage bomb along the shoreline of Manila Bay at around 7:30 a.m.

The police's bomb squad identified it as an illumination round from an 81 mm mortar.

Authorities said the ordnance was removed at 9:08 a.m. and was taken to Tarlac province for controlled explosion.

The Manila Bay is being dredged as part of the government's rehabilitation and restoration efforts as ordered by President Rodrigo Duterte.



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Countries have legal obligation to ensure clean air – UN

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

Countries have a legal obligation to ensure clean air for its citizens, a United Nations human rights representative said.

David Boyd, UN's special rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, said in a report that the "complete absence or weakness of national air quality standards" in many states indicated "a widespread failure to fulfill this fundamental human rights obligation, with devastating impacts" on child health globally.

Boyd cited the findings of a 2017 review indicating that 80 countries did not have any air quality standards or guidelines at all, and that few had incorporated World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines into their air quality standards and not one had adopted all of these guidelines.

Clean air as a human right is not a new issue or concept within international discussions – the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights told last year's WHO's First Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health, "there can be no doubt that all human beings are entitled to breathe clean air."

"The failure to respect, protect and fulfill the right to breathe clean air is inflicting a terrible toll on people all across the world. The statistics presented in the present report depict a public health catastrophe, yet the numbers fail to capture the magnitude of human suffering involved," Boyd said, noting that each premature death, every illness and every disability afflicts an individual with hopes, dreams and loved ones.

"Air pollution is a preventable problem. The solutions – laws, standards, policies, investments and technologies – are known. Implementing these solutions will of course entail large investments, but the benefits of fulfilling the right to breathe clean air for all of humanity are incalculable," he said.



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Sa kabila ng utos ng DILG PAGLILINIS NG ESTERO SA QC, MABABALAM

MATAPOS magbabala ang Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) sa mga opisyal ng barangay na hindi makikisap sa paglilinis ng mga ilog, estero at kanal sa bawat nasasakupan, nanganiban naman na mabalam ang proyektong ito sa isang distrito sa Quezon City.

Kabilang sa utos ng DILG sa mga barangay official ang paghuli sa mga nagtatapon ng basura sa kanal, estero, ilog upang maipatupad ang clean-up at rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay. Subalit nanganganib na mabalam ang Clean and Green program na ito para sa kalikasan o paglilinis ng este-

ro, ilog at kanal sa District 1 sa Quezon City.

Nabatid na baka hindi maisakatuparan ang paglilinis sa ilog at estero, partikular sa Culiat creek dahil umano sa kawalan ng pondo para rito sapagkat hindi pa nilalagdaan ni QC District 1 Rep. Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo ang Development plan ng nakasasakop na barangay sa lugar.

Nabatid sa isang barangay official na kailangan pang dalhin sa bahay ni Rep. Crisologo ang kanilang development plan project para mapirmahan ng mambabatas at mapondohan ang kanilang proyekto sa barangay.

Bunsod nito, nababalam

tuloy maging ang ilang proyekto na nais nilang ipatupad sa kanilang barangay.

Ang ilan sa mga development project ng mga barangay sa distrito ngayong 2019 ay ang clean and green program para sa "Sagip Batis" o paglilinis ng mga estero at kanal, Disaster program para sa mga kalamidad at peace and order na pawang nangangailangan ng pondo para maipatupad.

Kaugnay nito, nagbabala naman ang DENR sa mga nagnanais maligo sa Manila Bay partikular sa Baseco Cmpd. ngayong tag-init dahil hindi pa ligtas pagliguan ang naturang lugar.

SANTI CELARIO



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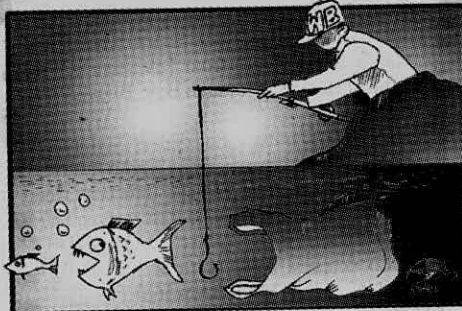
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Ang aming pananaw...



BASURANG PLASTIK, ALISIN NATIN SA MGA LAWAS-TUBIG

SOBRANG laki na ang problema ng buong mundo sa basurang plastik lalo't maraming balyena at lumba-lumba sa iba't ibang panig ng karagatan sa buong mundo ang natatagpuan na namatay sa nakaing iba't ibang klase ng plastic.

Malaking problema nga rin ito ni Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) Executive Director Jose Antonio "Ka Pepeton" Goitia dahil hindi mawala-wala ang mga basurang plastik sa mga estero ng buong Metro Manila na nagdidiretso sa pilit isinasalbang Manila Bay.

Kaya napapanahon ang alok ng World Bank (WB) na suporta sa Filipinas para solusyunan ang malawakang problema ng bansa sa polusyon sa plastik kabilang ang pagkakaroon ng trust fund na susuporta sa isang healthy at productive ocean.

Sinabi ni Agata Pawlowska, WB portfolio manager sa isang forum sa Manila na ang PROBLUE, multi-donor trust fund na inilunsad nakaraang taon ay tututok sa marine litter, patutunayang epektibo sa Filipinas na natukoy bilang major contributor ng plastic pollution sa karagatan.

"Some of the early commitments will be for East Asia," ani Pawlowska na nagsabing ang World Bank ay nagtatag ng marine plastic bilang prayoridad na pagkakalooban ng pinansiyal na suporta sa rehiyon.

Ikinatuwa naman ito ni Goitia na nagsabing napakahalaga ng pagtutulongan ng lahat upang masagip natin ang karagatan na pangunahin nating pinagkukunan ng pagkain.



PRRC PARTNERS WITH CHINA FIRST HIGHWAY ENGINEERING CO., LTD. ON PASIG RIVER DEVELOPMENT



Consistent with the pronouncement of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and the mandate of the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) to control the pollution of the Pasig River system and enhance its development in order to maximize its utilization for socioeconomic purposes, the PRRC entered into a partnership with the China First Highway Engineering Co., Ltd. (CFHEC), through a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation on March 22, 2019, at the Novotel Manila, Cubao, Quezon City.

The MOU, which outlines the potential benefits of the partnership for the Pasig River, was signed by PRRC Executive Director Jose Antonio E. Goitia and CFHEC General Manager Hou Ji-anchao, together with PRRC Operations Director Anshari C. Lomodag Jr., and CFHEC's Business Managers Zhang Hanzhou and Liu Mengchen.

"We can rightfully claim that the President is ever supportive to the PRRC as manifested by his issuance of Administrative Order No. 16 last February 19, 2019 – giving particular roles for this Commission (PRRC) to perform in expediting the rehabilitation and restoration of the coastal and marine ecosystem of the Manila Bay," says Goitia.

CFHEC, a state-owned corporation from the People's Republic of China, has the capacity and track record for implementing engineering and construction requirements of public infrastructure projects, including water treatment, roads, transportation, and commercial development, among other works.

A feasibility study for the full rehabilitation of the Pasig River System, including the requirements for the treatment of industrial wastewater and sewerage before draining to the waterways, will be undertaken by the CFHEC – at no cost to the PRRC.

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 6957, as amended by R.A. No. 7728, the unsolicited proposal of the CFHEC shall be subject to the appropriate review and approval of the Philippine Government through the conduct of a competitive challenge, and in accordance to applicable laws and regulations.

"Today marks another momentous event in the histories of the PRRC and CFHEC, as both signify to participate in joint undertaking for the cause of attaining the requirements of the Pasig River Integrated and Strategic Master plan (PRISM)," adds Goitia.



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Parañaque, Coca-Cola celebrate 18th year of Solid Waste Management Act

COCA-COLA Philippines, the Parañaque City government and the National Solid Waste Management Commission recently celebrated the 18th year of the enactment of Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000" — a law that enforces the proper management of waste at the barangay level.

Led by officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources; Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivares; and environmental and solid waste management officers from Malabon, Muntinlupa, Taguig, Pasay, Valenzuela, Las Piñas, and San Juan; the celebration, aptly themed, National Zero Waste Month: We and Alternative Technologies, Partnering for Proper Waste Management, gathered stakeholders, including civic

and private sectors, who are at the frontlines of tackling the country's waste problems. "This is an important milestone for all of us who are working towards the realization of a World Without Waste. The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 introduced waste management long before anyone thought it was needed. Today, as there is more consciousness about the impact of waste, Coca-Cola is at the forefront of finding solutions, both at the community and company levels, to effectively reduce waste and complete the sequence of recycling the resources and turning them into entirely new materials that we can use," said Winn Everhart, president and general manager of Coca-Cola Philippines.



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

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THE EAGLE HAS LANDED — A Philippine Eagle rests on a branch of the Tanguile tree. Protecting our planet also protects the habitat of this critically-endangered bird species whose number stands at only 400. (J. Kahlil Panopio)



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is trending

SIMPLE ACTS SAVE THE EARTH

By **JOHANNES L. CHUA**

The lights were turned off for an hour last March 31. Cities around the world, including landmarks and offices in Metro Manila, went dark for 60 minutes. Now what?

Of course, the Earth Hour is a commendable event as it raised (once again) the much needed awareness of saving the planet from man's destruc-

tion. But what must we do next? What can we – as an individual, a member of a community, or a decision-maker – do to save the environment?

A lot of people will be surprised but it does not take much. You don't have to be rich, well-connected, or influential to help save the environment. A simple lifestyle change – such as refusing single-use straw in your softdrink – can go a long way.

There are a lot of things that one

can do. In the social media world where listicles are prevalent, lists of this-and-that to save the earth are plenty. In reality, there is no dearth in knowledge, only a shortage of action. Though being an "online warrior" is in vogue these days, it is a totally different experience to actually join a cleanup drive, to plant seeds of native trees, or to listen to true eco warriors explain how land reclamation can endanger biodiversity.

For inspiration, one does not have

to look to foreigners or refer to international organizations. Filipinos have demonstrated time and again that they can rise up for the planet, and say, enough is enough.

A decade ago, eminent eco crusader Odette Alcantara passed away. But she has deeply planted the seeds of environmentalism that her advocacies and words continue to reverberate to this day. At the same time 10 years ago, an environment lawyer by the

name of Antonio A. Oposa Jr. received the 2009 Ramon Magsaysay Award for his passionate advocacy to enforce environmental laws.

A lot of people, especially the millennials, are not aware that the drive to clean Manila Bay did not just start with the current administration. In the late 90s, Oposa discovered that the raw sewage of Metro Manila – about 16 million liters a day – was being dumped in Manila Bay.

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Simple Acts Save the Earth

In Oposa's book *Shooting Stars and Dancing Fish*, he wrote: "Nine out of the 10 things found by fishermen in the harbor were just garbage like plastic, rubber slippers, Styrofoam, etc. Manila Bay was being used as a garbage can and toilet bowl."

After 10 years of litigation, from January 1999 to December 2008, the Supreme Court ordered all the defendant government agencies (around 11) to clean up Manila Bay.

In the book, Oposa detailed the arduous process and logistical nightmare when the case went through the judicial mill and concluded with the Supreme Court decision. Amidst weariness, Oposa remembered asking Alcantara these questions: "Tita Odette, what am I doing? Am I doing right?" To that, Alcantara answered: "Don't worry Tony, a lawyer who defends the Earth has God for a client."

Now, in 2019, one does not have to drag one's feet to court to fight for the environment. To help ease the burden on the planet, it is easy if one can change his or her lifestyle and mindset.

In a foreword written by Oposa for a book, he wrote: "Studies have shown that if we all - eight billion of the world's population - lived the highly-consuming lifestyle of an average American, we will need the resources of nine Earths. Last time I checked, we only had one. Thus, we need to stop copying the lifestyle of the Western world. In fact, we should not only aim to reduce our wastes, rather our goal must be to completely remove it from our mental vocabulary. There are not enough sources of life that we can afford to waste."

With all the reminders and information available, there is no excuse to waste our finite resources. To start, one must have the discipline.

"The most basic element of nation-building is discipline. And the most basic form of discipline is cleanliness of self and of surroundings. For after all, how can we dream of a clean country if we continue to throw away paper that came from trees, plastic sachets from fossil fuels, and other materials that came from the bowels of the Earth?"

And as a final reminder, Oposa has these words on how to start a green journey - "Waste in all its forms must be stopped, full stop."

Indeed, in a world where environmental challenges seem so overwhelming, the easiest way for all of us to have a large impact is to reduce our individual waste, once and for all.



#LoveTheEarth is trending

Saving the planet in the time of social media

When it comes to marketing campaigns or sending out any message, social media is an effective tool. Social media platforms are a great equalizer, too – no matter your social status, age, gender or educational background, you can have a voice.

The accessibility of social media is both boon and bane as there's really no sure way of controlling what information is available for people to consume. In the case of environment messages, however, social media is a powerful tool and we've seen many positive impacts brought about by an effective "green" online campaign.

We checked various online platforms to search for successful environmental campaigns to show that when it comes to championing the cause of Mother Nature, we need all the help we can get to put the message across.

WWF's Endangered Species Emoji

Everyone has probably used an emoji more than once in their lives. It's such a powerful "symbol" that people often use it to convey different types of emotions, activities, occasions and more.

Sensing the effectivity of using emojis, the environmental group World Wide Fund for Nature launched the #endangeredemoji campaign which encourages people to use endangered animal emojis on Twitter.

The emojis include the Galapagos Penguin, the Asian Elephant, the Maui Dolphin, the Giant Panda, the Green Turtle, the Blue Whale, among others, to raise awareness that saving our planet is also saving their habitat and their lives.

The 10-year challenge

Early this year, people posted photos of themselves from 10 years back, showing friends online how much they have aged physically in a decade. A few weeks since the viral post, civic groups started posting the environment version of the 10-year



Online 10-year challenge for the environment shows a forest turning into a dry patch of land. (@ClimateSeed)

challenge, and the pictures are quite disturbing.

Most of the photos showed how nature deteriorated in the last 10 years – polar bears looking gaunt because the rising sea levels and the melting ice caps destroyed their feeding grounds, majestic ice caps have turned to ice patches, and once lush forests now reduced to dry patches of land.

#trashtag challenge

The #trashtag challenge is one of the most significant activities in social media today. Instead of encouraging people to do something dangerous, it encourages netizens to do their part for the environment.

People would go to different areas and start cleaning the place by segregating trash and making sure that a place becomes clean after. People first have to take a photo before the activity and then post a picture right after and use the hashtag #trashtag.

It's a great campaign which produced over 50,000 posts on Instagram which means that people actually completed 50,000 successful cleanup activities. The trashtag challenge first began in the US and eventually reached our shores.

The #trashtag challenge has raised awareness on the problem of litter affecting our oceans and beaches. This only proves that with the right message, social media can be put into good use. Lessen the selfies and the OOTDs, the environment needs all the help it can get.



'Green-minded' gatherings

Join these groups to start your eco journey

Text by **KIM FERRER**

In 2015, an international group started reporting that the Philippines is a huge contributor of plastic waste that ends up floating in the ocean. This prompted various organizations to call for the banning of single-use plastic products such as plastic straws, cups, or grocery bags.

With this increased awareness on environmental issues, it is just not enough to track progress or call on government to take action behind a computer screen or a smartphone. One must now become part and contribute a single voice to a larger movement calling to protect the environment at all costs.

How do you start to become a full-fledged eco-warrior? Start joining some of these groups. You can become a volunteer and meet like-minded individuals. You will definitely learn a lot of things, have fun and most of all, help save the environment.

The Plastic Solution

This group helps find solutions to the enormous plastic crisis with a goal to eliminate the presence of non-biodegradable waste from the environment through 'eco-bricking,' where an average-sized PET bottle is stuffed with non-biodegradable waste (plastic wrappers, soft plastic bags, chip packets, shampoo sachets, etc.).

Then, they use these eco-bricks to build projects such as perimeter fencing and bathroom stalls in The Circle Hostel branches, a seedling nursery in an Aeta community, as well as planter boxes and benches in public schools. (www.facebook.com/theplasticsolution)

Haribon Foundation

Haribon Foundation, formed in 1972, has worked to benefit our planet's "ridge to reef." In Mt. Banahaw alone, the group has planted 17,000 native tree seedlings in over 13 hectares of land.

It has also helped in the management plans of 16 marine protected areas where fishermen and coastal communities depend on fish supply and coral reef habitats to thrive.

Armed with over 2,000 volunteers who attend their tree-planting, school tours, and various activities, they also partner with groups and government agencies to conserve our biodiversity. (www.haribon.org.ph)

Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines

The Philippines sits in one of the most strategic locations for marine biodiversity. We are surrounded by bodies of water which are ideal breeding ground for marine life. If we don't act properly, these biodiversity may suffer irreparable damage. This group protects sea creatures from harm and encourages everyone to be part of it. (www.mwwphilippines.org)

Let's Do It! Philippines

A movement among creative and passionate individuals, and collaboration among different organizations coming as one with the goal to save the planet by cleaning up the Philippines starting with one's own community. Its "People for a Clean Planet" campaigns for clean, healthy, climate resilient and zero waste communities. The group aims to make five percent of the entire population live a zero-waste lifestyle. (www.letsdoitphilippines.com)



A mangrove tour by Save Philippine Seas.

Save Philippine Seas

With a mantra "Don't do unto others what you don't want done unto you", the group calls on people to treat the ocean with respect so that in turn, it can also nurture us. With the vastness of the ocean that surrounds our country, imagine the harm it can inflict on us if we would not take care of it.

The group's 'advocaseas' is to promote community empowerment, environmental education, and shark conservation. It also conducts citizen-led programs to encourage behavioral change for the benefit of the planet. (www.savephilippineseas.org)

Mother Earth Foundation

Imagine the tons of garbage thrown every day, made worse by the lack of proper or effective waste management. Mother Earth Foundation pushes its zero-waste advocacy to local government authorities. It also conducts programs in schools and barangays to promote environmental education and proper waste management. (www.motherearthphil.org)