

DATE : 07 JUN 2019

DAY : Friday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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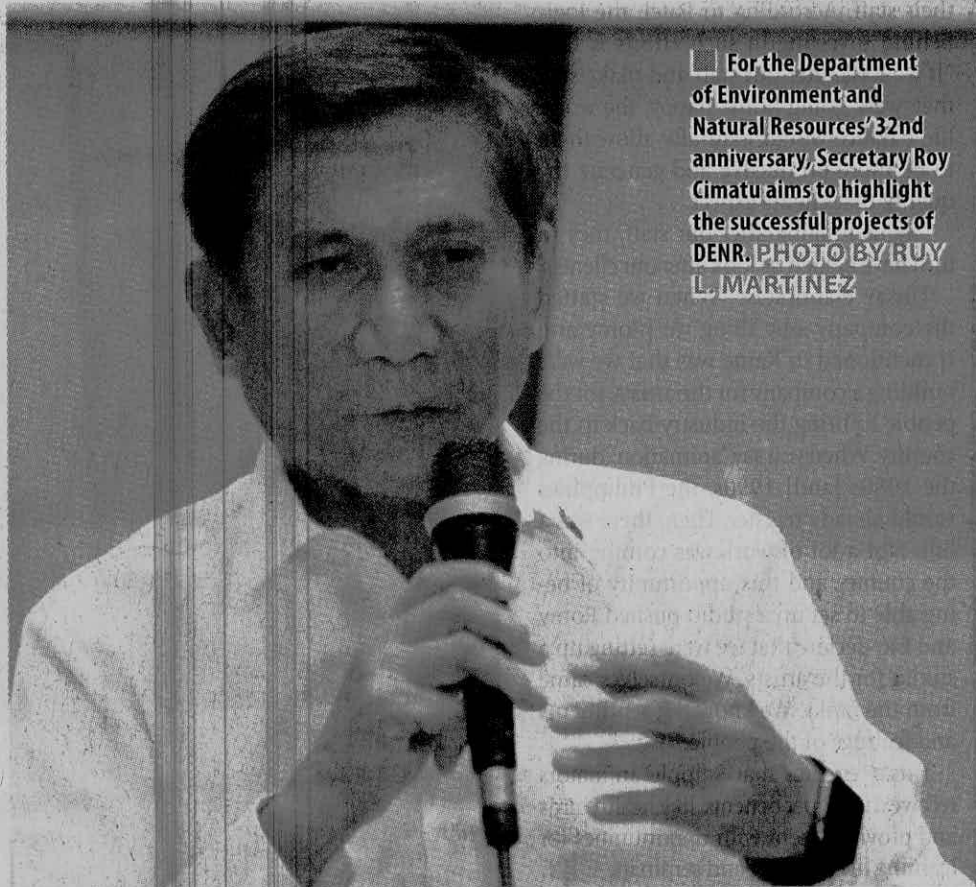
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DENR AT 32

For the Motherland

Saving the Philippines one island, waterway and species at a time



■ For the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' 32nd anniversary, Secretary Roy Cimatu aims to highlight the successful projects of DENR. PHOTO BY RUY L. MARTINEZ

BY MAYLENE STEPHANIE S. VIRAY

A CALL for cleaner islands, protected species and environment-friendly businesses — in light of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation project, lead implementing agency Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to celebrate its 32nd anniversary since its reorganization on June 10, 1987 to become the primary agency responsible for the conservation, management, development and proper use of the country's environment and natural resources.

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"Our department is being looked up by the general public nowadays," Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu says during the department's flag raising ceremony on June 3. "In fact, every time I meet up with people, they are all congratulating me because of the performance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. I am very proud to lead this department, and in fact, I am very proud to wear the logo of the DENR anywhere."

For its 32nd anniversary, Cimatu aims to highlight the successful projects of DENR — such as the Boracay Rehabilitation in October and the ongoing Manila Bay Rehabilitation — on the department's celebration slated on June 14.

"In October, we were able to turn around Boracay and it is still happening now — our success in Boracay will be highlighted during our anniversary," Cimatu says.

He adds that the department will also be inviting secretaries from other departments who were likewise responsible for the clean-up of Boracay and Manila Bay.

"So, on June 14 we will celebrate after we have harvested some honors for the DENR for this year," he shares. "We will also be announcing our Eagle awardees as well as our Rivers (Recognizing Individuals and Institutions towards Vibrant and Enhanced Rivers) for Life awardees."

As the department's highest and most prestigious award, the Eagle Awards is conferred to the most outstanding performers in the regional offices, which can be given to field implementors such as Regional Executive Director, Regional Director of Mines and Geosciences, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer and Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer.

On the other hand, following the success of the Manila Bay clean-up, DENR's Rivers for Life aims to formally recognize the best rehabilitated and most improved water quality from the country's class 3 rivers in a bid to raise awareness to protect and conserve the country's rivers.

Moreover, another reason to celebrate is the country's win over Canada's return shipment of 69 out of 103 container vans filled with tons of garbage the latter exported to Manila in 2013 and 2014.

"We were able to make coordination for the immediate return because while the garbage is still here, our problems would not be resolved," Cimatu shares to his department. "The mandate of the DENR includes the disposal of garbage, which is part of RA 9003 or the Ecological Waste Management Act of our country."

Hence, together with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Subic Bay International Terminal Corp., DENR was able to fast-track the requirements needed for the foreign transshipment. As a result, the 69 container terminals began its travel back to Ottawa, Canada on May 31.

Quoting Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna, Cimatu says the shipment would take at least one month to reach Canada.

"With that, it will end this episode of the Canadian garbage," he says. "But we will not stop there. We will prepare a department order banning all garbage coming from any other countries to make sure that this will not recur. I am very proud that we made another action for our country through DENR."

"So, with that, we look forward to another

anniversary and it will be my third anniversary celebration as your secretary," Cimatu concludes.

Creating ties, boosting efforts

In a bid to enhance the various projects of DENR, the department forges two partnerships, in this year alone, with local and foreign entities with the collective goal of saving the Philippine environment and its species.

To boost the Manila Bay Rehabilitation project, DENR signs a five-year partnership with the Manuel Pangilinan-led Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) to clean up 20 of Manila's filthiest estero (estuaries) that flow into Pasig River — and eventually to Manila Bay — as part of DENR's Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body Program.

These esteros would include Esteros de Vitas, San Lazaro, Kabulusan, Magdalena, Binondo, dela Reina, Sampaloc, San Sebastian, San Miguel, Valencia, Uli-uli, Paco, Pandacan, Tanque, Belete, Provisor, Concordia, Sunog Apog, San Antonio Abad and Quiapo.

"Together, we will continue to clean every estero, assess their quality and identify sources of pollution," Cimatu says during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the DENR central office in Quezon City. "We will take appropriate actions against establishments discharging untreated wastewater to prevent them from further poisoning these waterways."

Under the MoU, MPIC will be funding the rehabilitation and water quality assessment of the adopted esteros as well as mobilize neighboring schools and communities for clean-up activities. For its part, DENR will provide MPIC with relevant data needed for the conduct of water quality assessment study, issue the necessary permits and approvals and take appropriate action against violators within the adopted esteros.

A flagship program established in 2010, DENR's Adopt-an-Estero/Water Body program is in response to the continuing mandamus of the Supreme Court for all concerned agencies to clean up Manila Bay, including waterways that drain into it.

Meanwhile, to stimulate international support to conserve the country's national bird, Cimatu enters an agreement with the leading zoological institution, Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS), to loan and conserve a pair of critically endangered Philippine eagles.

Raptors Geothermica and Sambisig, aged 15 and 17 years old, began their travel to Jurong Bird Park on June 4, where they will be settling at Asia's largest bird park that houses more than 3,500 birds across 400 species.

"The Philippine eagle is a critically-endangered species. As such, it is an ideal ambassador of Philippine biodiversity, perfect for the purpose of generating awareness on the urgent need for conservation," Cimatu says during the signing ceremony of the wildlife loan agreement (WLA) with WRS held at the DENR central office in Quezon City. "Sending Geothermica and Sambisig to Singapore acts as a biosecurity measure to ensure the survival of the species and as a fallback population in the event of catastrophic events like disease outbreaks or extreme natural calamities taking place in their Philippine habitats."

Geothermica and Sambisig are products of the conservation breeding program of the Davao City-based Philippine Eagle Center of the Philippine Eagle Foundation, DENR's primary partner in the conservation of the national bird.

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BusinessMirror Friday, June 7, 2019 **A11**

DENR to plant 3,500 Benguet pine trees on President's summer palace

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jonlmayuga

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announced on Thursday the planting of 3,500 Benguet pine trees within the compound of "The Mansion," the official summer palace of the President situated in Baguio City.

The tree-planting initiative aims to increase the number of tree species that the mountain resort city is famous for.

Known as the "City of Pines," Baguio City is also the summer capital of the Philippines. During summer, Baguio City is flocked by local and foreign tourists to beat the extreme summer heat usually experienced in many parts of Luzon.

DENR-Cordillera Administrative Region Executive Director Ralph C. Pablo said in a statement that the move was in line with the directive of Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, who earlier expressed concern over the declining number of pine trees in the city.

"Cimatu's order was to saturate Baguio with the smell of pine trees again and restore the city's claim to being the City of Pines," Pablo said.

Close to 350 members of the Presidential Security Group took part in the tree-planting activity, which covered some 2 hectares of The Mansion's open grounds.

The mansion is in the eastern part of Baguio City, along Leonard Wood Road and across Wright Park.

Some 11 hectares, or around 74 percent of The Mansion's 14.7-hectare area, is partially forested or classified as "open forest."

The state of Baguio's dwindling number of Benguet pine trees caught Cimatu's attention when he attended the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), alumni homecoming in February.

Cimatu subsequently ordered Pablo to conduct an inventory on the city's number of trees and think of solutions on how to address the dwindling number of the iconic Benguet pine trees, so the DENR could take steps to preserve and protect them.

The inventory showed that the city's trees number 2,498,019 within its 5,750-hectare territory.

Benguet pine trees, some measuring up to 124 centimeters in diameter, number around 351,493 or 14 percent of the total count.

Of the total Benguet pine trees, 79 percent or 277,148 are concentrated in areas classified as "closed forest" or "closed canopy" like Camp John Hay reservation, and forest parks near the Teachers' Camp and the PMA.

The city's open forest, such as the area where the 3,500 saplings were planted, has 70,735 Benguet pine trees with 3,610 others found in residential areas.

Other trees account for half of the inventory of Baguio's tree cover at around 1.2 million which include alnus, eucalyptus and calliandra trees.

Also included in the inventory are 885,268 young trees of all types, naturally growing under matured trees.

Called "regenerants," these young trees measure less than 5 centimeters in diameter and at least 1 meter in height.

The construction boom and expanding urban sprawl have been identified as the reasons for the decline of pine trees in the nation's summer capital.

To address this, Pablo said one of the strategies the DENR regional office has adopted was to discourage lot owners applying for cutting permits to spare the pine trees.

The regional office, he said, has been promoting the benefits of having the trees in their area instead of cutting them down to give way for either construction or expansion of their houses.

"Sadly, the conventional mindset is that trees should go to maximize the floor space of a house. We explain to them the direct and indirect benefits of keeping these trees both to them and to the city, and the added value they give to their houses as an investment," he explained.

Out of Baguio's 5,750-hectare land area, 1,339 hectares or 23 percent are identified and mapped as closed forest or closed canopy; 1,474 hectares or 26 percent are in open forest or "open canopy"; while 2,937 hectares or 51 percent are made up of residential, commercial and built-up areas including roads and highways.



DENR wants Baguio to plant Benguet pines

By Rio N. Araja

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu has ordered the planting of 3,500 Benguet pine trees within the compound of The Mansion in Baguio City to restore the smell of pine trees.

He earlier raised concerns that Baguio was already losing its pine trees, saying visitors and the residents as well could no longer smell the fragrance of the trees that made Baguio famous for as a tourist spot, apart from its cold weather.

Ralph Pablo, Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Cordillera Administrative Region executive director, said about 350 Presidential Security Group members recently took part in the tree-planting activity in the two-hectare open ground of The Mansion, the official summer palace of the Philippine president.

"Secretary Cimatu's order was to saturate Baguio with the smell of pine trees again and restore the city's claim to being the City of Pines," he said.

During last February's Philippine Military Academy alumni homecoming, Cimatu cited the dwindling number of Benguet pine trees in Baguio, the summer capital of the country.

He immediately ordered a conduct of an inventory on the number of pine trees, and to come up with solutions to preserve and protect them.

According to Pablo, an inventory showed the city's trees number 2,498,019 within its 5,750-hectare territory.

Benguet pine trees, measuring up to 124 centimeters in diameter, numbered 351,493 or 14 percent of the total count.

Of the total Benguet pine trees, 79 percent or 277,148 were concentrated in areas classified as "closed forest" or "closed canopy," such as in Camp John Hay reservation and forest parks near the Teachers' Camp and the PMA.



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3,500 Benguet pine trees planted

By **ELLALYN
DE VERA-RUIZ**

Around 3,500 Benguet pine trees have been planted within the compound of Baguio City's "The Mansion," known as the official summer residence of the President of the Philippines.

The planting of pine trees is part of the ongoing government efforts to increase the number of pine trees that Baguio City is famous for.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cordillera Administrative Region Executive Director Ralph Pablo said DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu took notice of the declining number of pine trees in the city after attending the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) alumni homecoming last February.

"Secretary Cimatu's order was to saturate Baguio with the smell of pine trees again and restore the city's claim to being the City of Pines," Pablo said.



PSG plants 3,500 pine seedlings in Baguio

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Around 350 members of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) recently took part in a tree-planting activity within the grounds of The Mansion, the official summer residence of the President and one of the tourist spots in Baguio City.

More than 3,500 Benguet pine seedlings and saplings were planted in the area in support to the advocacy of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for a cleaner ecology and to increase the number of tree species in the city, DENR Cordillera Administrative Region executive director Ralph Pablo said.

Around 74 percent of The Mansion's 14.7-hectare property is partially forested or classified as "open forest." It is located along Leonard Wood Road, across Wright Park.

Pablo said Environment

Secretary Roy Cimatu expressed concern over the declining number of pine trees in the city when he attended the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) alumni homecoming in February.

The DENR provided the pine seedlings and saplings planted by the participants.

An inventory conducted by the DENR showed that of the 2,498,019 trees planted within Baguio City's 5,750-hectare territory, 351,493 or 14 percent are pine trees.

Pablo said most of the pine trees are found in areas classified as "closed forest" or "closed canopy" such as Camp John Hay and parks near Teachers Camp and the PMA headquarters.

Also included in the inventory are other types of trees including alnus, eucalyptus and calliandra.

Pablo cited construction growth as among the reasons for the decline of pine trees in the country's summer capital.



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3,500 PINE TREES ITINANIM SA BAGUIO

UMABOT sa 3,500 Benguet pine trees ang itinanim sa bakuran ng "The Mansion" sa Baguio City bilang bahagi ng programa ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na maparami ang bilang ng puno sa naturang lugar.

Ayon kay DENR-Cordillera Administrative Region Executive Director Ralph Pablo, ang kanilang hakbang ay bilang tugon

sa direktiba ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu na paramihin ang bilang ng Benguet pine trees sa Baguio City dahil patuloy na bumababa ang bilang ng mga punong-kahoy sa lugar, partikular sa Camp John Hay.

"Secretary Cimatu's order was to saturate Baguio with the smell of pine trees again and restore the city's claim to being the City of Pines," sabi ni Pablo.

Nakipagtulungan sa

pagtatanim ng pine trees sa dalawang ektaryang bakuran ng The Mansion ang 350 miyembro ng Presidential Security Group (PSG).

Ang The Mansion ay ang opisyal na "summer palace" ng Pangulo ng Filipinas at matatagpuan ito sa eastern part ng Baguio City sa kahabaan ng Leonard Wood Road, sa kabila ng Wright Park.

Umaabot sa 74 porsiyento ng kabuuang 14.7 ektaryang lupa ng The Mansion ang tinatawag na "open forest" dahil na rin sa nakatanim na iba't ibang uri ng puno sa paligid nito.

Ang pagbaba ng bilang ng Benguet pine trees sa Baguio City ay napansin ni Cimatu nang dumalo ito sa alumni homecoming ng Philippine Military Academy (PMA) nitong Pebrero.

Sinabi pa ni Pablo na isa sa mga paraan ng DENR regional office upang mapigilan ang pagbaba ng bilang ng mga puno ay ang paghikayat sa lot owners na kumuha ng cutting permit bago putulin ng mga ito ang puno sa kanilang nasasakupang lugar.

Sinabi pa ni Pablo, nagsasagawa ngayon ang re-

gional office ng kampanya upang ipaliwanag sa mga residente ang kahalagahan ng pagkakaroon ng puno sa kanilang nasasakupang lugar upang hindi putulin ng mga ito ang nakatanim kapag nagpapalaki ng mga bahay.

"Sadly, the conventional mindset is that trees should go to maximize the floor space of a house. We explain to them the direct and indirect benefits of keeping these trees both to them and to the city, and the added-value they give

to their houses as an investment," dagdag pa nito.

Nabatid na sa kabuuang 5,750 ektaryang land area ng Baguio City, 1,339 o 23 porsiyento rito ang tinatawag na closed forest o closed canopy habang 1,474 ektarya naman o 26 porsiyento ang open forest o open canopy samantalang 2,937 o 51 porsiyento ang residential at commercial area kabilang na rito ang nakasasakop sa kalsada at highways.

BENEDICT ABAYGAR, JR.



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Philippine Eagle seen over Angat watershed?

BY **FREDDIE C. VELEZ**

NORZAGARAY, Bulacan—As Bulacan celebrates Philippine Eagle Week from June 4 to 10, a big bird with a dark brown feathers was sighted over the Angat watershed area in this province.

The possible sightings of the country's largest bird of prey were relayed to the local media by Emelita Lingap, an officer of the Bulacan Environment and Natural Resources Office (BENRO).

Lingap said the office had submitted a report to their regional office, seeking confirmation if indeed the bird was a Philippine Eagle.

She said the Bulacan environmental office is posting streamers with the message of "Save the Philippine Eagle" in strategic

locations going to the Angat watershed.

Bro. Martin Francisco, chairperson of the Sagip Sierra Madre Environmental Society Inc., also said they have been receiving such reports, but only the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) can confirm.

The DENR regional office in Central Luzon has come out with a statement that for decades, its wildlife experts and biologists have been monitoring the vast and diverse mountain ranges of Sierra Madre in the portion of Nueva Ecija and Aurora to confirm the presence of the Philippine Eagle.

The regional office said that in 2000, local communities observed what looked like a Philippine Eagle flying high in the sky.

The sightings have prodded conservationists to continue their quest to prove that the Philippine Eagle has found a home in the

mountains of Sierra Madre.

In June 2016, an upland farmer found a female Philippine Eagle, approximately three years old, trapped in a snare used to catch monkeys inside the Aurora Memorial National Park (AMNP).

It was the first proof of the bird's presence in the Sierra Madre mountain range in Central Luzon.

The eagle was turned over to the DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO) based in Dingalan. It was later entrusted to the care of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) where it was raised until its release into the wild.

The bird was given the name Agawid, Ilocano for "go home," and was placed in an eagle dome cage to minimize human interaction.



BAGONG LUGAR NG PHILIPPINE EAGLE

NAKITA SA ANGAT WATERSHED-DENR

BULACAN – NAGHAHANDA na ang lalawigan sa Philippine Eagle Week na nagsimula nito lamang Hunyo 4 hanggang 10, kung saan nakitang lumilipad ang mga agila sa Angat watershed.

Ayon kay Provincial officer Emelita Lingap ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), na nakapagbi-

gay na siya ng report sa Regional Office-3 para sa assistance at komfirmasyon ng Philippine Eagle.

Aniya, nakatanggap na sila ng report noong nakaraang buwan ng Mayo kaugnay sa sightings ng endangered species na Agila, kasabay nito ay agad silang naglagay ng streamer posters na may message na “Save the Philippine

Eagle” sa mga strategic na lugar sa Angat watershed.

Matatandaang sa mga nakalipas na dekada una nang naglabas ng statement ang DENR-3 regional office, sa tulong na rin ng mga wildlife expert at biologists na patuloy ang kanilang monitoring sa mountain ranges ng Sierra Madre sakop ng Nueva Ecija at Aurora sa presensya ng Philip-

pine Eagle.

Nabatid na Hunyo 2016, may mga magsasaka ang nakakita sa juvenile female Philippine Eagle, na tinatayang nasa edad tatlong taon, matapos mahuli sa “silo” na ginagamit sa panghuhuli ng ungoy sa bahagi ng Aurora Memorial National Park.

Una nang na turned over sa Community Environment and

Natural Resources (CENRO) sa Dingalan at kalaunan ay inilipat sa kustodiya ng Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) na tinawag na “Agawid” sa wikang Ilocano na ang ibig sabihin ay “umalis na” kung saan noong Mayo 2017 ay ibinalik na ang 5.31 kilograms na agila sa National Park ng Aurora.

THONY ARCENAL



Geothermica, Sambisig 'doing well' at Jurong Bird Park in Singapore

By **ANTONIO L. COLINA IV**

DAVAO CITY — Philippine eagles "Geothermica" and "Sambisig" are now doing well after arriving at the Jurong Bird Park of the Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) on Tuesday for a 10-year loan program agreement signed by the Philippine government with Wildlife Reserves Singapore last May 20.

The agreement aims to protect the critically endangered raptors from extinction due to calamities and diseases, Dominic Tadena, senior bird keeper at the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) said.

Tadena, who is in Singapore to assist the bird keepers of the WRS during the transition period, said the appetite of the raptors, under quarantine for 60 days in separate enclosures at the bird park, is back to normal.

He said the eagles were given white rat and goat meats around 10 a.m. on Wednesday but started eating around 3 p.m. The two raptors were given goat meat on Thursday.

He said the territorial birds were adapting to the new environment.

"Yung old place kung saan naka established na sila as their territory ay medyo na disoriented sila ngayon (They have already established the old place as their territory so they were quite disoriented now)," he said.

Geothermica and Sambisig, captive-bred at the 8.4-hectare Philippine Eagle Center in Malagos, Baguio District, arrived in Singapore at 2:14 p.m. on Tuesday.

Dennis Salvador, Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) executive director, said the eagles left Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) onboard Philippine Airlines (PAL) flight PR 0507 from Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

The eagles, bred in captivity at the 8.4-hectare Philippine Eagle Center in Malagos, Baguio District, were placed in separate sanitized cages before they were sent from Francisco Bangoy International Airport to NAIA at 3:45 a.m.

There are direct flights between Davao and Singapore, serviced Cebu Pacific and SilkAir, but only PAL has met the requirements to transport delicate animals such as the eagles, according to

Dr. Jayson C. Ibañez, PEF's director of research and conservation.

Salvador said various government agencies helped in the transport of the eagles such as the Bureau of Customs, Bureau of Immigration, and Bureau of Animal and Plant and Industry.

He said the raptors were given "special consideration" by PAL. They were the last to board the aircraft and the first to alight.

Salvador said the eagles would be quarantined at the Jurong Bird Park, their home for the next 10 years.

He said senior bird keepers Domingo Tadena and his son, Dominic, accompanied the eagles and the WRS experts.

Philippine passports were also issued to "Geothermica" and "Sambisig."

Shortly before the send-off, Salvador shared photos of the eagles' passports, bearing the names of the raptors and their passport numbers.

Both passports were issued on June 4, 2019 by the Department of Foreign Affairs and will be valid for two years until June 26, 2021.

Unlike other regular passports, Salvador said those are "facsimile" passports issued as proof of nationality of the raptors and not valid as a travel document.

"They have passports because we are also declaring to the public that they are as Filipinos as we are. They will remain to be Filipinos even if they are in Singapore," PEF development project manager Andi Baldonado added.

Geothermica and Sambisig are adopted by Energy Development Corporation and Dow Chemical Philippines Inc., respectively.

Ibañez said Sambisig is a 17-year old female eagle and Geothermica is 15-year old male eagle. Both are at their breeding prime.

"The primary goal is to breed the birds in captivity and if they are successful, the offspring will be brought back to Philippines and released to places where we have lost our eagles. This is part of several strategies to restore Philippine eagle population," he said.

He said the purpose of a loan program is to ensure a disease or a calamity will not eliminate the genetic stock of the Philippine eagle, the national bird of the Philippines.



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PRRC corrects misleading article on waterway work

THE Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission has corrected what it said was a “misleading” article posted June 2 by online news site Rappler on the utilization of the funds for the rehabilitation of waterways in Metro Manila.

In the recent “Tapatan sa Aristocrat” press conference in Manila, PRRC executive director Jose Antonio E. Goitia said that the article was “erroneous, deceptive and offensive” as it may lead the reading public to think that around P107.57 million was spent in 2018 for the rehabilitation and development of six waterways located in the cities of Manila and San Juan and now left uncompleted by the Commission.

“The truth of the matter was that as of December 2018, only P29.63 million was spent for the rehabilitation of the San Juan River and five other *esteros* in Manila as these are still ongoing,” emphasized Goitia.

Goitia added that the Commission has been strict in monitoring the progress of its rehabilitation projects, and that the delay was caused by factors beyond the control of PRRC.

“As early as 2016, PRRC already resettled informal settler families and dismantled illegal structures occupying the legal easements of Estero de Magdalena to pave way for the construction of a linear park development project. As soon as we finished the relocation and easement recovery, the linear park project was put up for bidding and awarded according to procurement laws. However, during the last quarter of 2017, the barangay officials in the area allowed families who were left homeless by a fire incident in Manila to occupy the already recovered easements of Estero de Magdalena,” explained Goitia.

The families have been demanding for relocation houses from PRRC for them to leave Estero de Magdalena, and PRRC is already in coordination with other agencies such as the National Housing Authority to address the problem.

Goitia added that the Commission also encountered problems with erring barangay officials threatening its field engineers as well as the project contractors to stop its project at Estero dela Reina and Estero de Pandacan.

Last year, the PRRC was recognized by the International RiverPrize Foundation as the Inaugural Asia RiverPrize for high level of response to the massive scale of problems faced by the Pasig River despite its limited resources and mandate, making it possible for the return of life- fishes, birds, trees and other aquatic plants-to the once biologically-dead river.



PRRC SAYS RAPPLER POST ON WATERWAYS REHABILITATION INACCURATE

AT the "Tapatan sa Aristocrat" press conference held in Manila, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) reviewed the misleading post by Rappler on June 2, on the utilization of the funds for the rehabilitation of waterways in Metro Manila. PRRC executive director Jose Antonio E. Goitia said that the article was inaccurate as it may lead the reading public to think that around P107.57 million was spent in 2018 for the rehabilitation and development of six waterways in the cities of Manila and San Juan, and now left incomplete by the commission.

"The truth was that, as of December 2018, only P29.63 million was spent for the rehabilitation of the San Juan River and five other esteros in Manila as these are still on-going," Goitia emphasized.

He added that the commission has been strict in monitoring the progress of its rehabilitation projects, and that the delay was caused by factors beyond the control of PRRC.

"As early as 2016, PRRC already resettled informal settlers and dismantled structures occupying the legal easements of Estero de Magdalena to pave way for the construction of a linear park-development project. As soon as we finished the relocation and easement recovery, the linear park project was put up for bidding and awarded according to procurement laws. However, [by] the last quarter of 2017, barangay officials in the area allowed families who were left homeless by a fire incident in

Manila to occupy the already recovered easements of Estero de Magdalena."

Said families have been demanding for relocation houses from PRRC for them to leave Estero de Magdalena, and PRRC is already in coordination with other agencies, such as the National Housing Authority, to address the problem.

Goitia said that the commission has also encountered problems with erring barangay officials threatening its field engineers, as well as project contractors, to stop its project at Estero de la Reina and Estero de Pandacan.

Last year the PRRC was recognized by the International RiverPrize Foundation as the Inaugural Asia RiverPrize for high level of response to the massive scale of problems faced by the Pasig River, despite its limited resources and mandate, making it possible for the return of life fishes, birds, trees and other aquatic plants to the once biologically dead river.

"We have no intention of slowing down as there is so much work to be done, to keep the Pasig River System clean and alive. More important, I will never let government funds to be wasted on incomplete projects," he concluded.

To date PRRC built 41.15 kilometers of linear parks, resettled almost 19,000 informal settlers, dismantled 508 privately owned structures at no cost to the government, dredged 3-million cubic meters of contaminated silts and sediments, and removed 30 million kilograms of solid waste from the Pasig River and its tributaries.



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COA flags trash pileup in Bulacan hospitals

Medical waste from 7 gov't-run facilities in the province remain uncollected, state auditors note

By Patricia Denise M. Chiu
@PDMChiuINQ

The Commission on Audit (COA) has called the attention of the Bulacan government over uncollected and improperly stored biological waste from seven public hospitals in the province.

In its annual audit report released on May 23, the COA described the uncollected waste as a public health hazard.

According to the report, biological waste from Bulacan Medical Center in the City of Malolos, Rogaciano M. Mercado Memorial Hospital in Santa Maria town and Emilio G. Perez Memorial District Hospital in Hagonoy town were not properly bagged and stored.

The COA said Baliuag District Hospital, San Miguel District Hospital and Calumpit District Hospital were able to im-

plement an organized handling and storage system for hospital waste, but the trash had not been collected for at least six months.

It said that while Gregorio del Pilar District Hospital in Bulacan town had an "organized disposal of hospital waste" in color-coded bags, the lack of a suitable space for temporary storage was still a hazard since the bags were merely left stacked on the second-floor balcony of the hospital building.

Assignment

"Hazardous and infectious waste generated by seven district hospitals were not regularly collected from six months to one year, [exposing] hospital patients, health workers and the general public to the danger of human waste, infectious diseases and other toxic waste," the audit body said.

The improper handling and collection of the biowaste are due in part to the provincial government's lack of proper assignments on who should be responsible for the trash. Solid waste management was assigned to the General Services Office (GSO) instead of the Bulacan Environmental and Natural Resources Office, the report said.

However, since the GSO is mainly in charge of quarrying and revenue generation activities, oversight on solid waste management was not effectively discharged, the report said.

"No specific department or office was [tasked] with solid waste and hospital waste management," the report added.

Old issues

But Bulacan Gov. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado on Thursday said the COA findings were old

issues that had already been addressed by the provincial government.

He said the province had contracted a company called Clean Way to collect trash from the hospitals.

But Alvarado said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) Central Luzon office had yet to issue environmental compliance certificates (ECCs) to some of these public hospitals, which were needed to allow Clean Way to transport their trash.

He said the GSO and provincial engineering office would temporarily collect hospital waste pending the issuance of ECCs.

Protacio Bajao, director of Bulacan Medical Center, said the hospital had received its ECC from the DENR, allowing Clean Way to collect its trash regularly. —WITH A REPORT FROM CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE INQ



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Isko to probe 'secret dumpsite' in Manila

WHEN he assumes office, Manila City Mayor-elect Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso will launch an investigation into the alleged "secret dumpsite" and unlicensed piggery that were reportedly discovered at the Baseco Compound.

This was after the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission announced earlier in the week it will file charges against outgoing Mayor Joseph Estrada over the dumpsite that continues to pollute the 25-kilometer long river.

The existence of this dumpsite, Domagoso stressed in a statement, "clearly obstructs the national government's efforts to rehabilitate the polluted waterway."

"Once Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna and I formally assume office in July, we will immediately conduct a probe into this

garbage-filled land and hold erring officials accountable," Domagoso said.

"When the investigation concludes, we will file necessary charges. This will serve as a stern warning to erring barangay and city officials," the mayor-elect said.

Domagoso also assured Manileños that his administration will actively cooperate with the PRRC and other concerned government agencies in rehabilitating the polluted Pasig River.

"We are ready to assist the national government in cleaning up the river

not only to restore its water quality but also to improve urban life," he stressed.

Meanwhile, the Manila mayor-elect called on Manileños to participate in the new administration's primary policy to clean-up the city's alleys, streets and waterways.

"We as Manileños should participate in the local government's efforts in our own little way. Our plans and dreams to create a cleaner and healthier Manila can be made possible if we unite and work hand in hand," Domagoso said.

During the recent local elections, Domagoso ran a platform-based campaign that recognized the city's worsening garbage situation.

Cleaning up Manila, he said, will be his number one priority in leading the nation's capital.



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Trash talk 2

There's a lesson to learn somewhere following the trash controversy that even led to the recall of the country's diplomats from Canada.

Yes, the garbage that the North American country shipped to us surreptitiously has been sent back, while those coming from Hong Kong, declared as electronic accessories that turned out to be trash, were similarly shipped back recently.

There can only be one explanation why developed countries have resorted to dumping their garbage on developing nations – the global trash situation is getting worse.

One of the most daunting issues facing the world today is the mounting waste problem, which impairs public health, pollutes the environment and threatens to drown some poor countries

“ When waste is not collected, the frequency of illness such as diarrhea doubles and acute respiratory infection – linked to the burning of waste – is six times higher, according to a study.

in toxicity.

More than half the world's population do not have access to regular trash collection, a grim statistic given the amount of garbage produced globally.

Some experts say the globe's trash troubles are at a crisis level. A study showed that the United States, China, Brazil, Japan and Germany are the leading trash generators. The US produced about 228 million tons of waste in 2006, a figure that climbed to 254 tons by 2013. China (with a population around four times larger than that of the US) is close behind, with 190 million tons of waste per year.

It appears therefore that the more urbanized and industrialized a country becomes, the more trash it produces. Population growth, urbanization and rising consumption are seen as key factors that lead to the mounting trash problem in most countries.

In fact it is the trash issue that led to the recall of Philippine diplomats from Canada. It is also a trash issue that led to the downfall of Erap Estrada as Mayor of Manila.

No matter. What is glaring is this: Public

waste systems in cities cannot keep pace with urban expansion. And there seems to be no relief in sight so much so that developed nations spend more on collection than disposal, but collection is still not that efficient.

When waste is not collected, the frequency of illness such as diarrhea doubles and acute respiratory infection – linked to the burning of waste – is six times higher, according to a study.

In less developed nations, uncollected waste is typically heaviest near less affluent neighborhoods and slums. For scavengers, discarded food in the heaps of trash provide sustenance and livelihood. At the same time, those who forage through the dumps expose themselves to hazards such as lead and mercury and infectious agents.

So what could be the solution? It's not as simple as getting an incinerator and the problem is gone. The key, we believe, is ensuring the waste actually gets collected for disposal. Trash could then be reused or recycled. An information program aimed at changing the habits of people related to waste could also be implemented.

In some countries, informal waste workers have been given formal employment

opportunities in waste management.

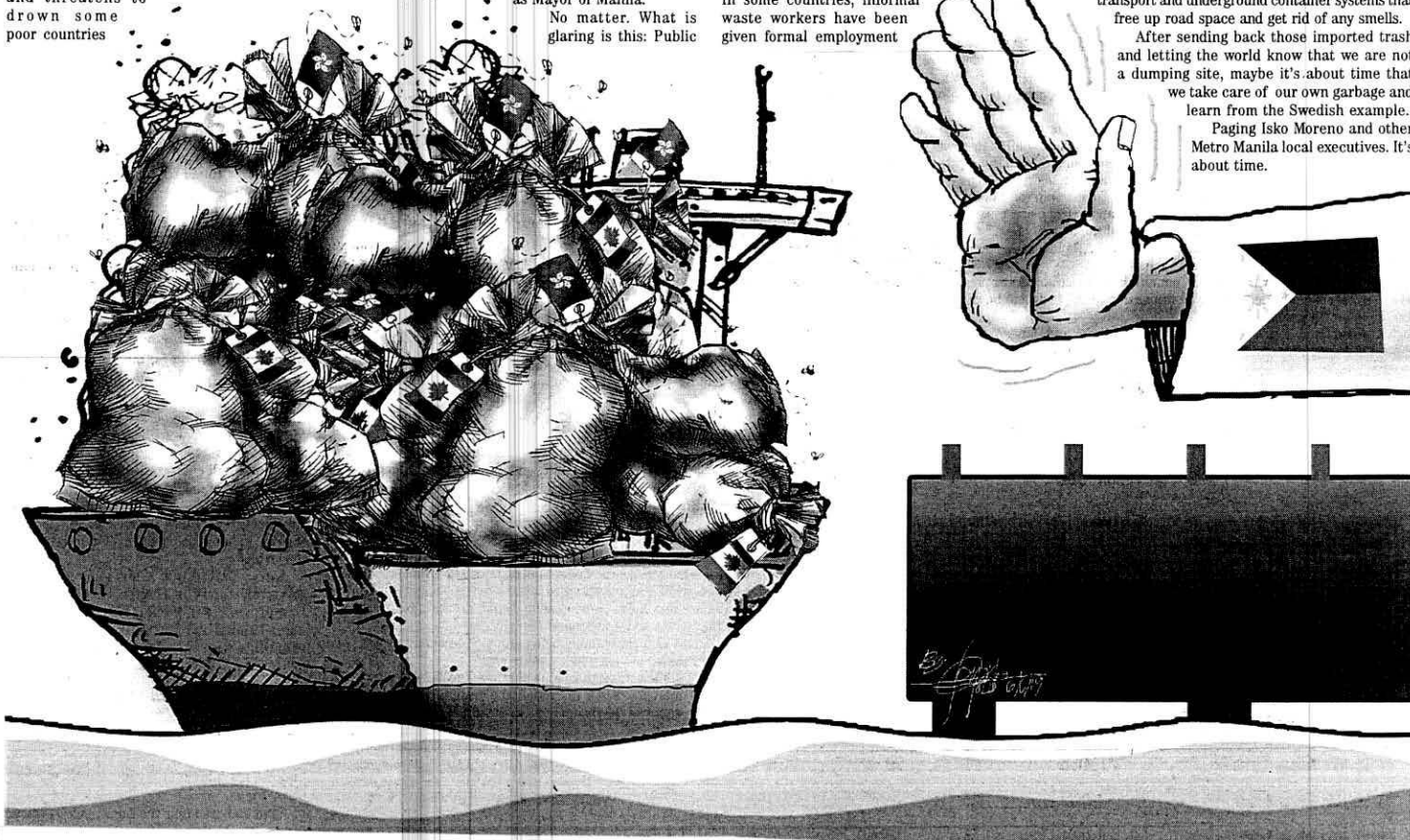
Or perhaps we could take a cue from Sweden whose recycling of trash is so revolutionary it even has to import rubbish from other countries to keep its recycling plants going. Less than one percent of Swedish household waste was sent to a landfill last year or any year since 2011. We can only dream of such an effective system here.

“ Population growth, urbanization and rising consumption are seen as key factors that lead to the mounting trash problem in most countries.

Swedish municipalities are individually investing in futuristic waste collection techniques, like automated vacuum systems in residential blocks, removing the need for collection, transport and underground container systems that free up road space and get rid of any smells.

After sending back those imported trash and letting the world know that we are not a dumping site, maybe it's about time that we take care of our own garbage and learn from the Swedish example.

Paging Isko Moreno and other Metro Manila local executives. It's about time.





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PUKPUKAN ang kampanya ng pamahalaan laban sa mga iliga na basurahan o dumpsite ng mga lokal na pamahalaan.

Pero maging ang mga ligal na dumpsite ay binabantayan din dahil maaring umaapaw na ito at hinahalian ng pang-aabuso.

Dalawang dumpsite ang isinara mismo ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa Luzon at sa Visayas.

Nitong nakaraang buwan, pinasara natin ang open dumpsite sa Limay, Bataan.

At nitong nagdaang mga araw lamang, pinasara rin natin ang open dumpsite ng General Luna open dumpsite sa Siargao Islands sa Suri-gao del Norte.

AKSYON SA SUMBONG

Pinupuntahan natin, kasama ang mga kaukulang ahensya ng pamahalaan at iba't ibang media, ang mga isinusumbong ng mga mamamayan na iligal na dumpsite o tambakan ng basura sa mga munisipyo, lungsod at iba pang lokal na pamahalaan.

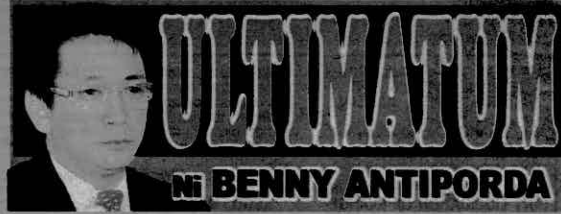
Kasama ng iba pang mga ahensya ang DENR sa pag-inspeksyon upang magkaroon ng buo na pag-iimbestiga at tamang aksyon sa mga isinusumbong na basura ng mga mamamayan.

Bukas din sa media-men ang ginagawang aksyon ng pamahalaan sa mga lugar na iniinspeksyon, pinapayagan na magpatuloy o ganap na isinasara para sa kaukulang impormasyon sa publiko.

Dahil sa pagsamasama ng mga kaukulang ahensya ng pamahalaan at pagsama ng media sa mga programang kontra-basura ng pamahalaan, mabilis na napalalawak ang ating mga gawain at nagiging epektibo.

Kabilang sa mga epekto ang pagkukusa mismo ng mga lokal na pamahalaan at mamamayan na tumugon sa mga panawagan para sa tamang pagtatapon ng basura at pagpigil sa mga maabusong pagtrato sa basura.

Kahit na wala pa sa radar ng pamahalaan ang mga problema, kumikilos na ang mga ito gaya ng ginawa sa Cebu na



GIYERA VS INAABUSO, ILLEGAL DUMPSITES

kusang naglinis ng mga basura sa mga ilog, kanal at dalampasigan ng mga taga-Cebu.

MAPANIRA

Mahigpit nating binabantayan, mga Bro, ang mga open dumpsite, lalo na kung iligal.

Masasabing iligal ang isang dumpsite kung wala itong environmental clearance certificate mula sa kaukulang organo ng DENR.

Kasama rin sa maituturing na iligal ang paggamit bilang basurahan ang mga lupang hindi dumaan sa mga pagdinig ng konseho ng mga lokal na pamahalaan at basta na lang ginawang tambakan ng basura.

Dahil open at iligal, wala talagang plano sa paggawa sa mga ito bilang tambakan ng basura.

Kaya naman, pagdating, halimbawa, ng tag-ulan, anak ng tokwa, umaagos o tumatapon ang mga basura sa mga ilog, kanal at karagatan.

Sa Limay, Bataan, sa Manila Bay dumidiretso ang mga basura galing sa open dumpsite.

Sa General Luna, Siargao, sa mga ilog, sapa at dalampasigan din ang bagsak ng mga basura.

Kapag ligal ang dumpsite, ginagawan ng paraan ito na hindi matatapon ang basura kung saan-saan.

LIGAL NA NAAABUSO

Pero may mga ligal na dumpsite na naabusong, umaapaw na gaya ng nangyari noon sa Payatas dumpsite sa Quezon City.

Alam ba ninyong napa-kaistrikto ng Marikina City sa basura pero nakapagtataka noong una na dinadaluhong noon ng basura ang Marikina River.

'Yun pala, natitibag at naanod ang mga basura sa Payatas at sa Marikina River pumupunta ang mga ito.

Kapag napakawalan ang mga ito sa Marikina River, tuloy-tuloy ang mga ito sa Laguna de Bay o sa Pasig River na magdadala naman ng basura sa Manila Bay.

Maituturing ding naabu-

so ang ligal na dumpsite kung ginagawa nang pera-pera ang operasyon nito.

'Yun bang === pinagkakaperahan na ng mga mayor o gobernador ang basurahan at wala na silang pakialam kung umaapaw na ang mga ito at kahit na nabasag na ang mga kalsada na dinaraan ng mga dump truck at namamaho na ang lahat ng mga munisipyo at barangay na dinaraan ng mga ito patungo sa dumpsite.

MAMAMAYAN AT MEDIA

Marami talagang problema sa basura, kasama ang polusyon, ang hindi nalalaman ng mga kaukulang ahensya ng pamahalaan sa maraming kadahilanan.

Isa na rito ang pagtatakip mismo ng mga opisyal ng mga lokal na pamahalaan, lalo na kung pinagkakaperahan nila ang pagtatapon ng basura sa iba't ibang paraan, kabilang na ang pangongolekta ng malaking halaga sa bawat papasok at magtatapon na dump truck, konti man o puno ang karga nitong basura.

Meron ding mga dumpsite na ginawang temporaryo lamang pero ginawa nang pansamantalagal at ang pondo para sa ligal na dump site ay ibinubulsa na ng mga tiwaling opisyal ng pamahalaan.

Sa puntong ito, kinakailangan ang partisipasyon ng mga mamamayan para maamoy ng mga kinauukulan ang baho ng mga ligal na naabusong dumpsite.

Siyempre pa, 'pag sinasabi nating mamamayan, kabilang na ryan ang mediya o nasa social media na nag-iingay laban sa basura.

O siya, paano, mga Bro at Sis?

oOo

Anomang reaksiyon o reklamo ay maaring iparating sa 0922840-3333 o i-email sa banti-porda@yahoo.com.



Nickel Asia leads in 'plogging' for Environment Day

NICKEL Asia Corp., together with its subsidiaries—Cagdianao Mining, Dinapigue Mining, Hinatuan Mining, Hinatuan-Manicani Project, Rio Tuba Nickel, and Taganito Mining—once again lead in “Plogging” for World Environment Day 2019.

It is the second year that NAC conducted this sports activity simultaneously with its subsidiaries all over the country, with the theme “Healthy Ka Na, Nakalinis Ka Pa.”

Plogging is jogging while picking up trash.

The United Nations declares June 5 of every year as WED, declaring today as “a special day to draw awareness and encourage actions to pressing environment concerns” such as pollution.

This is the second year that NAC as a corporate citizen is participating in this world event that is celebrated by some 100 countries across the globe.

The NAC-wide Plogging was simultaneously conducted today by NAC employees and their partners in their respective communities from the company’s mining operations in Surigao Del Norte, in Bataraza in Palawan; in Cagdianao in Dinagat Island; in Dinapigue in Isabela; and in Guianan in

Eastern Samar.

In Surigao City alone, some 2,000 kilos of trash, as estimated by DENR-PENRO, were collected by some 150 joggers who joined this year’s NAC-wide Plogging. NAC hopes that this amount of trash plucked from the streets by the joggers will gradually decrease as the company intensifies its campaign on responsible waste management.

Ploggers from Surigao City were joined by members of the Surigao Runners Club; REACT Miners; Tri-Sur; Bugsay Marajaw Surigao; Emergency Service Corp. Alumni Association, BJMP, BFP, DENR-PENRO, DepEd, Joy FM, and other running enthusiasts.

Engineer Robert Francisco, NAC-Taganito Mining’s Environment Manager, said: “We are doing this activity every year to get the attention and the support of the communities to get involve in the discourse on environment protection and sustainability.”

“We at NAC take these matters very seriously and our everyday work involves discussions on issues pertaining to serious environment concerns such as plastic and air pollution and we want everyone on the communities to get in on the game.”



Ploggers from Surigao City were joined by members of the Surigao Runners Club; REACT Miners; Tri-Sur; Bugsay Marajaw Surigao; Emergency Service Corp. Alumni Association, BJMP, BFP, DENR-PENRO, DepEd, Joy FM, and other running enthusiasts.



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2 miners dead from gas poisoning

By Aldwin Quitasol

ITOGON, Benguet – Two small scale miners were found dead two days after falling victims to alleged gas poisoning over the weekend inside a small scale mine area at Goldriver, Loacan, Itogon here.

According to the Itogon Municipal Police, the victims were identified as Flores Esnada Lampacan, 59 years old, married, and Lharson Ambros Lampacan, 32 yrs old, single, both farmers and residents of Baguio Gold, Tuding, Itogon, Benguet.

Initial investigation disclosed that the incident may have

transpired between 2-3 June when the victims allegedly went to inspect an old abandoned mine tailings at said area. The bodies were discovered by fellow pocket miners Nicanor Adais and Soriano Bastian who are both residents of Gold River, Loacan, Itogon, Benguet who went to the same place to conduct inspection.

The bodies of the victims were found inside the water impounding box or pond. According to the police, the victims might be inside the water impounding box to clean the same when the gas poisoning happened resulting in their death.



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Villar's campaign tarps upcycled into bags

By **VANNE ELAINE P. TERRAZOLA**

Reelected Senator Cynthia Villar has tapped women in Dasmariñas, Cavite to give new life to her campaign materials in the recent elections.

The election tarpaulins have been upcycled into bags by a group of women from a small tailoring business in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Villar, the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, said: "We are very glad that we have now a way for the proper disposal of those used tarpaulins. Through this initiative, we were not only able to recycle used tarpaulins into something useful, we were also able to help women earn additional income for their families."

At least 550 bags were produced by the MXD Tailoring from the 2x3 feet tarpaulins. The bag measures 12x18x4 inches.

The shop is expected to make more bags as tarpaulins collected from other provinces arrive.

Villar said tarpaulin bags are "the more durable and environment-friendly substitute for plastic bags."

She said she will distribute the bags for free to "further



FROM TARPS TO BAGS - The campaign tarpaulins of reelected Senator Cynthia Villar have been upcycled into bags by a group of women in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

promote her advocacy for plastic recycling."

On the last day of their session for the 17th Congress on Tuesday, Villar was seen giving some of the bags to her fellow senators in the Senate plenary.

Aside from the tarpaulin recycling, the Nacionalista Party senator earlier initiated a plastic recycling project to turn plastic wastes into school chairs.

These chairs were donated to different public schools all over the country.

VILLAR TAPS WOMEN OF CAVITE FOR TARPAULIN RECYCLING PROJECT

RE-ELECTED Senator Cynthia Villar has tapped the help of a group of women in Dasmariñas, Cavite to make bags out of the tarpaulins used during her campaign for the recent elections.

Villar, chair of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, said this recycling project benefits a small tailoring business,

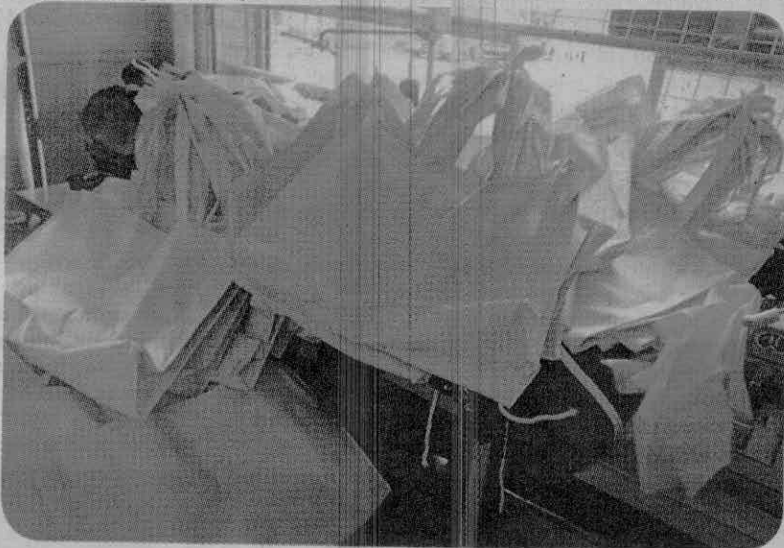
of the apartment she is renting. For five years, she worked for her older sister's tailoring shop until it closed down. She then borrowed the sewing machines and started her own business.

"Tuwang-tuwa po ako kasi nagsisimula pa lang ako tapos nagtiwala na po sa akin si Senator Villar na gumawa ng bags niya. Malaking tulung po ito sa akin at sa

Ferrer loaned one of her machines so she could work from home.

Ferrer said she appreciates Villar for providing a source of additional income for mothers like her. She said she was able to look after her kids aged 10 and 7, while operating her small business.

The finished product has a dimension of 12 x 18 x 4 inches, it is white with the printed side of



which employs mothers as sewers.

"We are very glad that we have now a way for the proper disposal of these used tarpaulins. Through this initiative, we were not only able to recycle used tarpaulins into something useful, we were also able to help women earn additional income for their families," Villar said.

Christine Joy Ferrer, 27 years old, just started MXD Tailoring two months ago in the garage

mga sewer ko," Ferrer said.

The 2 x 3 feet tarpaulins collected by the staff of Villar were delivered to Ferrer's shop to be made into bags for P16 per piece. On the first week, they were able to finish 550 bags. They will be making more as tarpaulins collected from the provinces start to arrive.

Ferrer said her 4 sewers are mothers who live nearby. One of her sewers has to look after a baby.

the tarpaulin made as the inside of the bag. Tarpaulin bags are the more durable and environment-friendly substitute for plastic bags. Villar said she will distribute the bags for free to further promote her advocacy for plastic recycling.

The Nacionalista Party senator also initiated a plastic recycling project which turns plastic wastes into school chairs. Through a plastic factory she built in Las Piñas, 20 kilos of soft plastics such



as food wrappers were recycled into a plastic chair with changeable parts and has a life span of 20 years.

These chairs were donated to different public schools all over the country.

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Gov't urged to ratify law vs waste dumping to Phl

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

A green group is calling on the government to immediately ratify the Basel Ban Amendment to ensure that the Philippines will no longer become a dumping ground for wastes.

Environmental justice group BAN Toxics is urging the government to ratify the Basel Ban Amendment, which seeks to ensure that developing countries, like the Philippines, do not become convenient dumping grounds for waste intended for disposal or recycling.

It emphasized that it is a loophole that continues to be exploited under the international treaty Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

"As long as the Basel Ban Amendment has not been ratified by our government, waste traders will feel emboldened and continue to view the Philippines' open-door policy to wastes as a welcome mat for dumping," BAN Toxics' deputy executive director Reynaldo San Juan said.

"The ratification is a work toward minimizing the risk of rich countries trashing our country. It is the necessary step to further defend our national dignity and

protect the nation's health and environment from waste global trade," he added.

While the repatriation of the Canadian waste is a historic moment for the Philippines, the group clamors for a more sustainable and stronger action from the government in protecting the environment.

Last week, *MV Bavaria*, carrying 69 cargo vans containing mixed wastes, sailed back to Canada, where the shipments all originated.

In 2013, 50 container vans containing household waste were shipped to the Philippines from Canada.

The waste remained in the country over half a decade later, leading President Duterte to issue a deadline for Canada to take back the waste.

The Basel Ban prohibits the export of hazardous wastes from rich to poorer countries, such as the Philippines.

The Philippines ratified the Basel Convention in 1994 and has yet to ratify the Basel Ban Amendment, which was designed to protect developing countries from becoming a dumping ground for unwanted toxic waste and garbage.

BAN Toxics said the Philippines has been a victim to illegal dumping of hazardous wastes and garbage and that the

Canadian trash is just one of several incidents.

Aside from the Canadian trash, cargos containing garbage from South Korea were discovered in October 2018, and just last month, new trash shipments from Hong Kong and Australia were discovered in the port of Tagoloan in Misamis Oriental.

"The movement of trash is expected to rise as China, once the global recycler, has shut its doors from accepting these wastes in an effort to focus on their domestic wastes," San Juan said.



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**Palace lifts ban on gov't
execs' travel to Canada**

Malacañang on Thursday lifted its restrictions on official travels to Canada, after the 69 containers of garbage that Canada had dumped in the country in 2013 were finally shipped back on Friday. "In view of the Canadian government's retrieval and reshipment to Canada of the containers of garbage mentioned in the aforesaid directive, please be informed that such directive is hereby lifted, effective immediately," Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said in a memorandum, referring to a May 20 directive limiting the Philippine government's interactions with Canada over the trash row. Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. has also advised Philippine diplomats recalled from Ottawa to return to their posts after the resolution of the garbage row.

—JULIE M. AURELIO



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

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PH lifts travel ban on gov't workers to Canada

By **GENALYN D. KABILING**

The Philippine government has resumed its official interaction with Canada after it retrieved the heaps of garbage illegally shipped to the country years ago.

Malacañang has issued a formal order "lifting the restrictions on travels to Canada and official interaction with representatives of the Canadian government."

The memorandum, signed by Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea last June 4, was addressed to all department secretaries and heads of agencies, government-owned and/or controlled corporations (GOCCs), and government financial institutions (GFIs).

"This refers to this Office's Memorandum, dated 20 May 2019, directing all department secretaries and heads of agencies, GOCCs and GFIs to refrain from issuing travel authorities for foreign trips to Canada, and to reduce official interaction with representatives of the Canadian Government," the memo read.

"In view of the Canadian Government's retrieval and reshipment to Canada of the containers of garbage mentioned in the aforesaid directive, please be informed that such directive is hereby LIFTED, effective immediately," it added.

Medialdea's memorandum was released to the public by the Palace Thursday.

President Duterte earlier threatened to declare war if Canada fails to ship back to their country the tons of garbage that arrived in the country between 2013 and 2014.

Duterte gave Canada until May 15 to retrieve the trash but Ottawa missed the deadline. It was then the Philippines sought "diminished diplomatic relations" with Canada that included recalling the country's ambassador and consul general, and banning official trips to Canada by government officials.

Sixty-nine containers of garbage from Canada were eventually shipped back to its place of origin late last month, ending the dispute between the two countries.



Ban on official travel to Canada lifted

MALACANANG has formally lifted a ban on travel of government workers to Canada after tons of garbage illegally dumped in the country five years ago were shipped back to Canada.

"In view of the Canadian government's retrieval and reshipment to Canada of the containers of garbage... please be informed that such directive (ban) is hereby lifted, effective immediately," Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said in a memorandum dated June 4.

The garbage was sent back to Canada last Friday, with the Canadian government shouldering the P10-million shipping cost.

On May 20, Medialdea issued a memorandum directing all department secretaries and heads of

agencies, government-owned and -controlled corporations, and government financial institutions to refrain from issuing travel authorities for official trips to Canada.

The memorandum also ordered heads of government agencies to reduce official interaction with representatives of the Canadian government.

The directive came after the recall of Philippine diplomats to Canada led by the ambassador after Canada failed to meet the May 15 deadline to retrieve the 69 containers of garbage shipped to the Philippines in 2013 and 2014.

Prior to that, President Duterte threatened to dump the garbage on a Canadian beach or ship it back and leave it within the Canada's borders. — *Jocelyn Montemayor*



Dept. secretaries pwede na ulit bumiyahе sa Canada

MAAARI na ulit makabyahе patungong Canada ang lahat ng department secretaries at head of agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations at Government Financial Institutions.

Ito ang nilalaman ng Memorandum na ipinalabas kahapon ng Malakanyang na pirmado ni Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea na may petsang Hunyo 4, 2019.

Nakasaad sa Memorandum na inaalis na ang ipinatupad na restriksyon sa pagbyahе sa Canada at official interaction sa mga kinatawan ng Canadian government dahil binitbit na ng pamahalaan ng Canada ang kanilang tone-toneladang basura na nakatambak sa Pilipinas.

"This refers to this Office's Memorandum, dated 20 May 2019, directing all department secretaries and heads of agencies, GOCCs and GFIs to refrain from issuing travel au-

thorities for official foreign trips to Canada, and to reduce official interaction with representatives of the Canadian Government. In view of the Canadian Government's retrieval and reshipment to Canada of the containers of garbage mentioned in the aforesaid directive, please be informed that such directive is hereby lifted, effective immediately," ayon sa memorandum.

Matatandaang inatasan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte ang lahat ng department secretaries at heads of government agencies na limitahan ang pagbibigay ng travel authorities para sa official trips sa Canada.

Ito'y may kaugnayan sa kabiguan ng Canada na kunin ang tone-toneladang basura na itinapon sa bansa noong 2013 at 2014.

Ayon kay Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo, base sa memorandum na nilagdaan ni Executive Sec-

retary Salvador Medialdea noong May 20, 2019, pinagbabawalan din ng Pangulo ang mga nasa government owned, controlled corporations at government institutions na magbigay ng travel authorities sa Canada.

Pinalilimitahan na rin ng Pangulo sa government agencies ang pagkakaroon ng official interaction sa mga kinatawan ng Canadian government.

Ayon kay Sec. Panelo, ang memorandum ay alinsunod na rin sa marilin na panindigan ni Pangulong Duterte na hindi nababahala ang Pilipinas na putulin ang diplomatic ties ng Pilipinas sa Canada kung hindi kukunin ang basura.

Nagsimula na aniya sa pamamagitan ng pag-recall ng Pilipinas sa ambassador at consul general nang mabigo ang Canada na makamit ang itinakdang May 15 deadline.

Una rito, ipinag-utos ng Pangulo ang paghahanap ng private shipping company na magdadala ng basura sa Canada.

KRIS JOSE



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Balita

ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAMAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BAYSA

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Ugnayang PH-Canada, balik sa dati

Ibinalik na ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas ang official interaction nito sa Canada matapos hakutin ng huli ang basurang ilegal na ipinadala sa bansa ilang taon na ang n...alilipas.

Naglabas ang Malacañang ng formal order "lifting the restrictions on travels to Canada and official interaction with representatives of the Canadian government."

Ang memorandum, nilagdaan ni Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea nitong Hunyo 4, ay naka-address sa lahat ng department secretaries and heads of agencies, government-owned and/or controlled corporations (GOCCs), at government financial institutions (GFIs).

"This refers to this Office's Memorandum, dated 20 May 2019, directing all department secretaries and heads of agencies, GOCCs and GFIs to refrain from issuing travel authorities for foreign trips to Canada, and to reduce official interaction with representatives of the Canadian Government," saad sa memo.

"In view of the Canadian Government's retrieval and reshipment to Canada of the containers of garbage mentioned in the aforesaid directive, please be informed that such directive is hereby LIFTED, effective immediately," dagdag dito.

Inilabas ng Palasyo sa publiko ang memorandum ni Medialdea kahapon.

Genalyn D. Kabiling



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Travel ban sa Canada binawi ng palasyo

Inutos kahapon ng palasyo ng Malacañang na alisin na ang ipinairal na travel ban sa mga government trip patungong Canada.

"This refers to this Office's Memorandum, dated 20 May 2019, directing all department secretaries and heads of agencies, GOCCs and GFIs to refrain from issuing travel authorities for official trips to Canada, and to reduce official interaction with representatives of the Canadian Government," ayon kay Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea.

Sa nilagdaan memorandum noong Hunyo 4, iniha-yag ni Medialdea ang pag-aalis ng travel ban sa Canada matapos na pormal na maibalik sa Canada ang tone-toneladang basura nito na nanatili sa bansa sa loob ng ilang taon.

"In view of the Canadian Government's retrieval and reshipment to Canada of the containers of garbage mentioned in the aforesaid directive, please be informed that such directive is hereby lifted, effective immediately," sabi ni Medialdea.

Noong Abril nagbanta ng giyera si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa Canada kaugnay ng isyu ng basura. **(Prince Golez)**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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TRAVEL BAN SA CANADA OPISYAL NANG BINAWI NI PANGULONG DUTERTE

INILABAS kahapon ng Malacañang ang memorandum na nagtatanggal sa unang kautusan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte hinggil sa pagbabawal sa mga miyembro ng gabinete na bumiyaha sa Canada.

Batay sa memorandum na may lagda ni Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea noong nagdaang 4 Hunyo 2019, saklaw ng pagtatanggal ng ban para makabiyaha

muli sa Canada ang heads of agencies at mga nasa government-owned and controlled corporation (GOCC).

Maaari na rin makapunta sa Canada ang mga opisyal ng Government Financial Institution at kasabay nito ang pagpapahintulot para muling bumalik sa official interaction sa mga opisyal ng Canada. Puwede nang mag-isyu ng travel authority para sa mga

official foreign trip sa nabanggit na bansa.

Una nang nagbigay ng direktiba si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa mga opisyal ng pamahalaan na huwag bumiyaha sa nasabing North American country matapos mabigong tuparin ang May 15 deadline na itinakda ni Pangulong Duterte para hakutin ang kanilang mga itinapong basura sa Filipinas.

(ROSE NOVENARIO)



TAO PO!

NI BOBOT FRADEJÁS
(Email: bootsfra@yahoo.com)

GINUNITA kahapon àng ika-73 taong anibersaryo ng D-Day, ang makasaysayang pag-landing ng puwersang Allied sa Normandy, isang rehiyon ng Pransiya na kaharap ang English Channel. Sa araw na ito, pumasok ang magkakasanib na puwersa ng Estados Unidos, Britanya, Canada, Australia, at iba pang bansang kasama sa puwersang Allied sa Europa upang gapiin ang puwersang Axis na pina-ngungunahan ng Nazi Germany.

Kasama sa selebrasyon ang makasaysayang muling pagtalon ng isang 97 anyos na Amerikanong GI suot ang isang parachute at kasama ng isang batang sundalo. Ginawa ni Tom Rice ang pagtalon sa mismong lugar na binagsakan niya noong una siyang tumalon at mag-parachute noong 1944. Sinasabing ang D-Day ang naghudyat sa pagkatalo ng Nazi Germany at pagtatapos ng Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig.

HANGGANG ngayon, walang malinaw na patakaran (polisiya) ang gobyerno tungkol sa walang habas na paggamit at pagkakatatapan ng plastik. Nakakabahala ang polusyon na sanhi ng plastik. Napakaraming plastic ang napunta sa karagatan at sumakal sa maraming yamang-dagat.

Hindi namin alam kung may panukalang batas sa paggamit, pagtatapon, o kahit recycling ng naglipanang plastik. Wala rin malinaw na pananaliksik sa plastik. Ang Manila Bay at Ilog Pasig ang dalawang lugar na may pinakamaraming basurang plastik. Tone-toneladang plastik ang nakokolekta sa bawat paglilinis sa dalawang lugar.

PINAG-UUSAPAN rin lang ang basura. Hindi pa rin tuluyang natatalakay ang mga basurang galing sa mga Kanluraning bansa at itinatapon sa mga bansa sa Asya, kasama ang Filipinas. Bagaman nagagalit si Rodrigo Duterte sa mga basurang naipuslit sa Filipinas ng kung sino sa Canada, hindi rin malinaw ang polisiya tungkol diyari.

Pagpupuslit o smuggling ang sala ng mga nagpuslit ng basura dito ngunit walang malinaw na polisiya kontra naiangkat na basura. Hin-

D-DAY, PLASTIK, ATBP.

di ito natalakay sa Kongreso. Walang malinaw na pag-uisap sa usaping ito ang mga mambabatas. Panahon na magkaroon ng batas tungkol sa usaping ito.

GINULANTANG kami ng isang ulat pagsisiyasat (investigative report) na isang pahayagan na nagsisiwalat ng katiwalian ng PhilHealth sa mga pasyenteng may karamdman sa kidney. Ayon sa ulat, sumisingil ang mga kidney dialysis centers sa PhilHealth sa mga dialysis session kahit hindi naman nangyari ang mga ito.

Hindi naman tinitingnang mabuti ng PhilHealth kung mayroon totoong dialysis sessions at kagyat na binabayaran ang mga nani-ningil na dialysis centers. "Ghost dialysis" ang taguri ng pahayagan sa ganitong katiwalian.

Kahit namatay na ang mga pasyente, tuloy tuloy pa rin ang pagbayad ng PhilHealth sa mga dialysis centers. "Ghost patients" naman ang taguri ng ulat sa ganitong kalakaran. Kailangan talagang maisaayos ang PhilHealth upang magampanan ng maayos ang mandando nito sa ilalim ng batas. Maraming kalokohan at katiwalian ng nangyayari sa PhilHealth.

MGA PILING SALITA: "Lampas dalawang taon na si Senadora Leila M. de Lima sa ilegal at di-makatarungang pagkakakulong, ngunit wala pa rin maiprisinta ni-isang konkretong ebidensya o mapagkakatiwalaang testigo ang rehimeng Duterte." - Free Leila Movement

"[Rodrigo] Duterte is the ultimate mistake." - Jayson Laluna, netizen

MULA naman kay Ethel Booba, isang komedyante: "Sasot tweeted, 'Kapag tinanong ka ng tita mong taklesa ngayong Noche Buena kung bakit wala ka pang asawa, gayahin mo si PNoy: Sisihin mo si Gloria.'

"The comedian replied, 'That's so 2015. Ang uso ngayon, 'Tita, give me at least 3 to 6 months at makakahanap din ako ng jowa.' Then, kapag 'di mo natupad, extend mo pa ng 5 more years. Charot!'"

PANALANGIN sa pandaigdigang kapayapaan" ang hinihingi ng Santo Papa (Pope Francis) bukas. Hinihiling niya sa sa pandaigdigang pamayanan na huminto ang bawat nilalang bukas sa ganap na ala-una ng hapon sa kani-kanilang time zone at magdasal at hingin sa Diyos ang kapayapaan.

Kalampagin ang pinto ng langit ng dasal, aniya.



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PUSONG PANALO

ni **Atty. Jose Ferdinand M. Rojas III**

(Pagpapatuloy)
KAKAIBA ang init na nararamdaman ngayon. Hunyo na ngunit maalinsangan pa rin kahit na kung minsan ay bumubuhos ang ulan. Marami ang nagtatanong: Ito ba ay dulot ng global warming? May magagawa pa ba tayo upang mabago ang klima at mailigtas ang ating mundo? Huli na ba ang lahat?

Panahon na upang makiisa ang lahat sa sama-samang pagkilos para maisalba pa ang at-

ing planeta at mga buhay na narito. Isang paraan lamang ang pagyakap sa Zero Waste, Plastic-free Lifestyle. Bukod pa sa aking naibahaging tips sa mga nagdaang kolum, mayroon akong ilang idaragdag pa ngayon. Sa mga susunod na pagkakataon ay nais ko pa ring maglaan ng espasyo para sa mga impormasyong kaugnay ng kalikasan, climate change, zero waste lifestyle, global warming, at mga usaping kaugnay nito.

Inaasahan kong ma-

SUBUKAN NATIN ANG ZERO WASTE LIFESTYLE

giging masigasig tayong lahat sa pagkilos upang makatulong sa pandaigdigang kampanya tungo sa pangangalaga ng ating kalikasan.

Sa opisina, iwasan ang madalas na pagprint sa papel. Kung maaaring ipadala ang dokumento sa email o sa pamamagitan ng file sharing, mas mainam ito. Gamitin din natin ang likuran ng mga papel na may sulat o print na. Maaari ka ring magsimula ng recycling drive sa lugar, na iyong pinagatrabahuan. Kung mas marami ang makiisa sa pagkilos, mas malapit

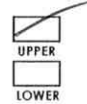
tayo sa tagumpay.

Sa inyong tahanan naman, imbes na gumamit ng mga produktong panlinis na gawa sa kemikal na nakasasama sa ating kalikasan, ugaling gumamit ng suka at baking soda. May mga kompanya ring gumagawa ng mga environment-friendly na sabon, panghugas ng plato, panlinis ng tiles, at iba pa.

Ganoon din sa inyong banyo--tangkilikin natin ang mga produktong gawa sa natural na sangkap o 'di kaya ay gumamit ng mga bagay na matatagpuan sa kalikasan o sa tahanan.

Halimbawa ay batong panghilod, loofah, honey, itlog, lemon, oatmeal, gatas, at iba pang sangkap na matatagpuan sa ating tahanan o 'di kaya ay gawa sa mga natural at organic na ingredients.

Mayroon ding impormasyon sa internet tungkol sa paggawa ng sariling makeup, shampoo, pabango, lotion, sabon, at iba pang produktong ginagamit sa ating katawan. Magsaliksik upang matagpuan ang mga impormasyong makatutulong nang malaki sa atin at sa ating Inang Kalikasan.



Customs foils dumping of HK trash

By Vito Barcelo

SEVENTY shipments of trash from Hong Kong were intercepted by the Bureau of Customs before those were illegally dumped into the country, an official said Thursday.

That was after customs authorities in Mindanao discovered the shipments of electronic waste before the shipments could enter the Mindanao Container Terminal sub-port in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental.

MCT sub-port collector John Simon said

the shipments were not allowed to be unloaded from a container ship after learning those contained waste.

The shipments were the same type imported by a Pasay City-based company, Crowd Win Industrial Limited Corp.

“Crowd Win Industrial Limited Corp. was the same company that imported a shipment of assorted electronic accessories, but the actual content of the container van turned out to be smashed components of electronic devices, Simon said.

The 2.561 tons of electronic waste from Hong Kong were eventually sent back to their point of origin by Customs on June 5, 2019, he said.

The cargo, consisting mainly of shredded gadget parts and plastic scraps packed in 22 huge sling bags, arrived at the Mindanao Container Terminal sub-port in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental on Feb. 2 and was put on hold by Customs for “misdeclaration.”

The imported garbage was shipped back to its point of origin on board the cargo ship *SITC Nagoya*, Simon said.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency was also invited to inspect the container to determine the possible presence of illegal drugs but it found nothing.

The return of the mixed waste was coordinated with the Environmental Protection Department of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and is expected to arrive in Hong Kong on June 10, 2019.

The expense in the reexportation of the shipment was shouldered by the Hong Kong government.



Air pollution, violation of human rights

An independent United Nations (UN) expert said the failure of governments across the world to ensure clear air constitutes a “violation of the rights to life, health and well-being, as well as the right to live in a healthy environment.”

In line with the 2019 World Environment Day – which has air pollution as its theme – David Boyd, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, called on states to take urgent action to improve air quality in order to fulfill their human rights obligations?

World Environment Day, celebrated since 1974, is the United Nations day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action to protect the environment.

Air pollution is a deadly, man-made problem, responsible for the early deaths of some seven million people every year, around 600,000 of whom are children. It is estimated that 90 percent of the world’s population breathe polluted air.

Every five seconds, somebody around the world dies prematurely as a result.

In a statement, Boyd said uncontaminated air is a core component of the right to a healthy environment, together with clean water and adequate sanitation, healthy and sustainably produced food, a non-toxic environment, healthy biodiversity and a safe climate.

“The right to a healthy environment is fundamental to human well-being and is legally

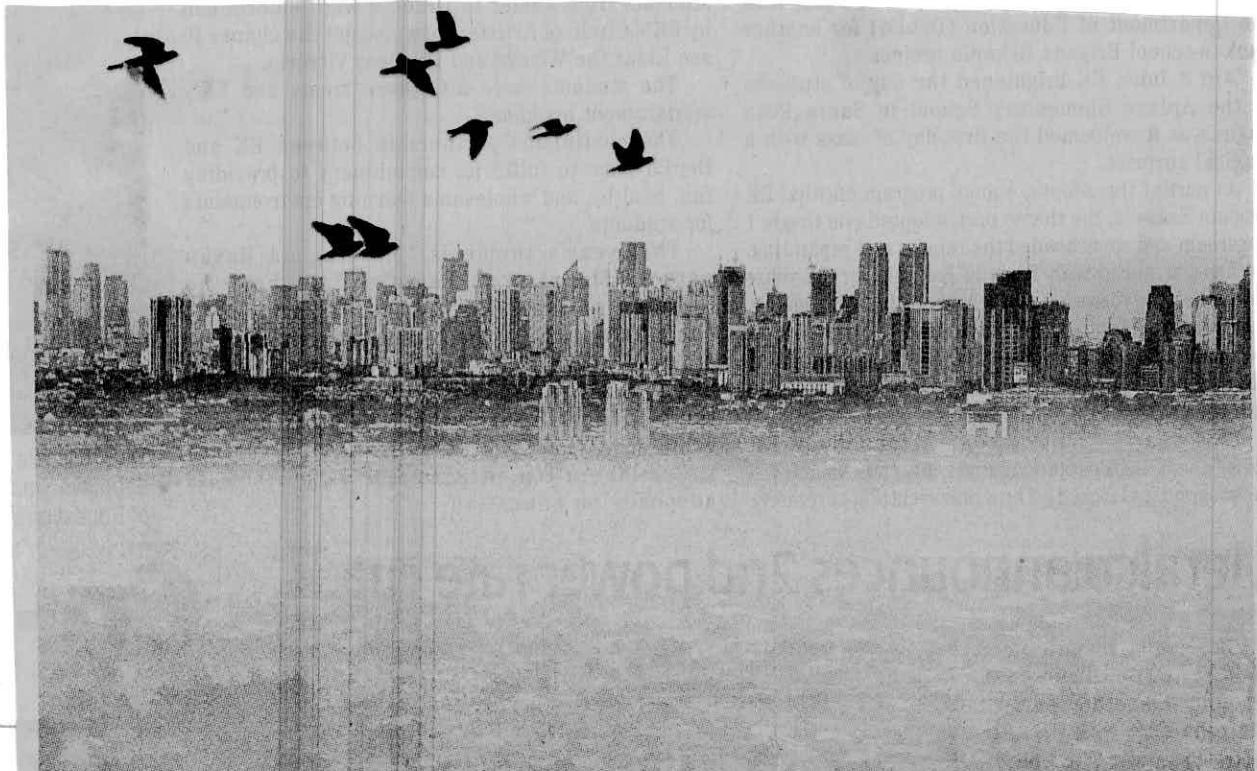
recognized by over 150 states at the national and regional levels. It should be globally reaffirmed to ensure the enjoyment of this right by everyone, everywhere while upholding the human rights principles of universality and non-discrimination.”

Boyd described the efforts of China, host of this year’s World Environment Day, to tackle air pollution, as a “success story.” Although the Chinese capital, Beijing, has become synonymous with dirty air over the past few decades, a concerted effort by local and regional authorities has seen an improved situation in recent years, with the concentration of fine particulates – the tiny, invisible airborne particles that are largely responsible for deaths and illnesses from air pollution – falling by a third.

The UN expert reiterated his recommended measures for reducing air pollution, contained in a report presented to the UN Human Rights Council in March. These include monitoring air quality and impacts on human health; assessing sources of air pollution; establishing air quality legislation; and developing air quality action plans.

“In celebration of World Environment Day, I urge states to take bold action to beat air pollution, improve health, address climate change, and fulfill their human rights obligations,” the expert said.

World Environment Day, celebrated since 1974, is the United Nations day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action to protect the environment. It is organized around a theme that addresses a particularly pressing environmental concern.



A THICK blanket of smog covers an eastern section of Manila during a busy morning. The United Nations has said that air pollution is a deadly, man-made problem, responsible for the early deaths of some seven million people every year. AFP



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NEWS

People unknowingly eat, inhale plastics

PARIS—People eat and breathe in tens of thousands of microplastic particles every year, according to a new study published on Wednesday that raised fresh questions over how plastic waste could directly impact our health. Microplastics, which float in the air and enter the food chain, are tiny plastic shards broken down from man-made products, such as synthetic clothing, car tires and contact lenses. —STORY BY AFP

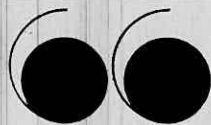
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People eat, inhale plastics but don't know it

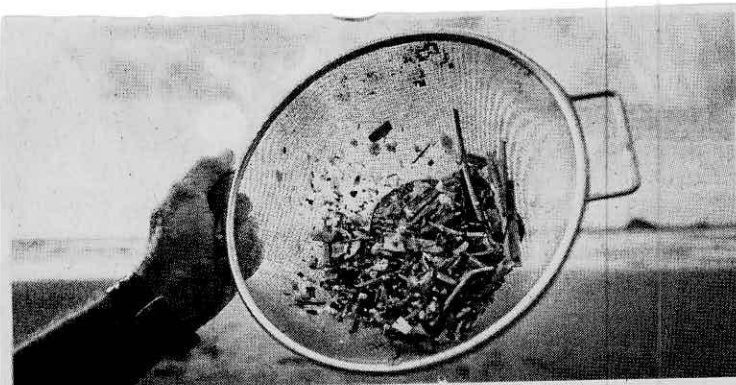
PARIS—Humans eat and breathe in tens of thousands of microplastic particles every year, according to a new analysis published on Wednesday that raised fresh questions over how plastic waste could directly impact our health.

Microplastics—tiny plastic shards broken down from man-made products, such as synthetic clothing, car tires and contact lenses—are among the most ubiquitous materials on the planet.

They have been found on some of the world's highest



Canadian scientists found that an adult male could expect to ingest up to 52,000 microplastic particles each year



PLASTIC DEBRIS A volunteer for the nongovernmental group Canarias Libre de Plásticos (Canary Islands Free of Plastics) shows plastic waste and debris collected from the Almaciga Beach on Canary Island of Tenerife, Spain, in this July 14, 2018 photo. —AFP

glaciers and at the bottom of the deepest ocean trenches.

Several previous studies have shown how microplastics may enter the human food chain, including one last year that found them in nearly all major bottled water brands sampled.

In the research, Canadian scientists analyzed hundreds of data sets on microplastic contamination and compared them to the typical diet and consumption habits of Americans.

They found that an **A5**

adult male could expect to ingest up to 52,000 microplastic particles each year.

World Environment Day

Taking into account the pollution we breathe in, that figure rose to 121,000 particles—equivalent to over 320 particles every day.

The release of the study coincided with the United Nations' World Environment Day, the theme of which this year is air pollution.

An additional 90,000 particles could be ingested each year if an individual only drank bottled water, according to the study, published in the journal *Environmental Science and Technology*.

The authors stressed that their figures were estimates. The amount of plastics consumed by a given individual would depend largely on where they live and what they eat, they said.

They added that the impact on human health of microplastic consumption was still not well understood.

Microplastic particles smaller than 130 micrometers in diameter "have the potential to translocate into human tissues (and) trigger a localized immune response," they said.

More research needed

Alastair Grant, professor of ecology at the University of East Anglia, said there was no evidence that the plastic particles identified in the study posed any "significant danger to human health." Grant, who was not involved in the research, added that it was likely that only a small percentage of particles inhaled actually reached the lungs.

"One of the two sources for particle concentrations in air says that the observed fibers are too large to be inhaled, so the numbers of particles that actually reach our lungs will be much smaller than the numbers quoted," he said.

The authors said more research was needed to better understand how many microparticles reach the lungs and stomach, and what, if any, danger this poses.

"The most effective way to reduce human consumption of microplastics will likely be to reduce the production and use of plastics," they said. —AFP



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Through the lens of business progress



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Southeast Asia should keep taking the world's junk



Adam Minter

BLOOMBERG

SOUTHEAST Asian nations no longer want your trash. Last week, Malaysia announced it was sending 3,300 tons of scrap plastics, including CDs, insulated electric cables and milk jugs back to countries ranging from Australia to Bangladesh, Canada, China, Japan and Saudi Arabia. Days later, the Philippines shipped back 69 containers of dirty Canadian diapers and other refuse brought into the country between 2013 and 2014.

It's easy to see why: Smaller countries don't want to become dumping grounds for trash that looks like it belongs in a hazardous-waste bin rather than a recycling facility. What's ironic is that some of the countries forced to take back their scrap plastics don't necessarily mind. In China, Japan and especially Europe, there's growing momentum behind the idea that economies should strive to be more "circular"—in other words, that any waste they generate should be processed, recycled and reused at or close to home. Europe has set ambitious targets to achieve a continent-wide circular economy over the next three decades.

It's an attractive idea. Unfortunately, it won't work. A true circular economy can't be national or even regional. It has to be global.

For the most part, that's what the

world had until quite recently. In the 19th century, an up-and-coming US imported scrap clothing from Europe to feed its paper mills and scrap steel from the UK to help build its railways. After World War II, Japan and Taiwan rebuilt their economies by importing vast quantities of low-cost scrap metal and paper from around the world.

Beginning in the early 1980s, China surpassed all predecessors by becoming the world's largest importer of recyclables. Everybody won. Countries that might otherwise have sent recyclables to a dump for lack of proper processing facilities found a huge customer willing to pay a premium for it. Meanwhile, China was able to integrate recyclables into its manufacturing supply chain on a mass scale. To take just one example, in 2016, China made as much as half

of its copper from recycled resources, half of which were imported.

Of course, there were costs. Just as Chinese manufacturers often failed to meet the health and safety standards of developed countries, so did Chinese recyclers. Meanwhile, it proved cheaper to import recyclables—even the worst—from the developed world than to collect and manage China's own waste. In January 2018 China severely restricted the import of scrap recyclables.

That decision has since warped the global recycling trade. Unscrupulous Chinese scrap importers quickly shifted operations to countries such as Malaysia, where they cut corners in recycling materials for export to factories back in China. Recent accounts of so-called waste dumping in Malaysia largely document these Chinese operations, not those of traditional Malaysian recyclers, who had previously generated few complaints.

The distinction is important. Restricting the global trade in recyclable plastics because of the actions of some bad actors won't suddenly encourage rich nations to reuse more of their own trash. The manufacturers who need that recycled material will remain in the developing world, especially since consumption, too, is growing in those regions. Meanwhile, recycled raw materials generated in developed regions like Europe will be more expensive—and less competitive—than what developing countries can make at home (a

problem familiar to manufacturers of finished goods).

Rather than trying to create closed recycling loops in each country or each region, environmental activists would do better to make the global recycling trade cleaner and more efficient. The first step is for the World Customs Organization to establish harmonized custom codes that accurately classify waste and recyclable raw materials. Currently, no such system exists, which allows importers to bring in low-quality recyclables that can only be processed using unsafe and environmentally unsound means.

Countries could also make the flow of recyclables smoother by lowering or eliminating tariffs on recyclable materials. These only raise the costs of recycling and incentivize smuggling.

Meanwhile, if activists in rich countries are concerned with the ability of poorer nations to recycle trash properly, they could do more to help them establish modern waste management systems. The US government is taking small steps in this direction already and China, in particular, could be a leader in this effort. If it diverted a mere 3 percent of all Belt and Road financing to establishing modern landfills and recycling facilities in recipient countries, it would expand the supply of sustainable raw materials while blunting the negative environmental consequences of letting poorer countries process imported trash.

Century Pacific commits to be 'plastic-neutral' by 2020

By IRIS GONZALES

The Century Pacific Group (CPG), the group behind Century canned tuna and the iconic Shakey's Pizza chain, has committed to be "plastic-neutral" by 2020.

The companies under the group, Century Pacific Food (CNPF) and Shakey's Pizza Asia Ventures, signed an agreement with Republic Cement to co-process post-consumer plastic waste.

CPG president Christopher Po said the new partnership paves the way for the group to conduct its businesses in a more sustainable way.

Under the agreement, the waste would be converted to energy as an alternative fuel in producing cement.

"Over the years, our companies have implemented various programs to help promote a greener Philippines. These include various recycling initiatives and attempts to reduce packaging waste.

As we grow in number of

products sold and restaurant outlets opened, we've also sought partners to help balance out our environmental effects. This now includes Republic Cement, and we look forward to working with them in this worthwhile endeavor," Po said.

CNPF, one of the country's biggest food firms, is the company behind household names Century Tuna, Argentina, 555 and Birch Tree.

Shakey's Pizza Asia Ventures, meanwhile, is the owner of the Shakey's brand, a leader in both the pizza and full-service restaurant categories.

Both are among the Philippines' top consumer companies and are working to minimize their environmental footprint.

CNPF is the first among Philippine tuna companies to join a global coalition to ensure the conservation of seafood resources.

For his part, Republic Cement Services Inc. president Nabil Francis said the com-

pany is happy to share the advocacy with CPG to promote and support responsible disposal of plastic packaging materials to reduce its harmful effects on the environment.

The method of co-processing uses very high heat from cement manufacturing to completely destroy waste materials, recovering from them thermal and mineral properties which provide the energy needed to produce cement.

Republic Cement will co-process non-specific, recovered post-consumer plastic materials utilizing the energy from the plastics as an alternative fuel in order to produce cement.

This, in turn, would allow both Century and Shakey's to be "plastic-neutral."

This means that the companies would be able to offset the amount of plastic produced with an equivalent amount of post-consumer plastics to be used for co-processing by Republic Cement.



Signing the deal are (from left) Vicente Gregorio, president of Pizza; Christopher Po, president of CPG; Nabil Francis, president of Republic Cement Services Inc; Renato Sunico, president of Republic Cement & Building Materials Inc; and Martin Wills, Republic Cement Services Inc. vice-president for manufacturing.

Republic Cement is licensed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to use and dispose of qualified waste streams through cement kiln co-processing.

Efforts to go "plastic-neutral" are part of CPG's participation in global efforts to reduce plastic pollution,

Around 300 million tons of plastic are produced every

year, according to the World-wide Fund for Nature, with much of it ending up in landfills or polluting the seas, in what has become a growing international crisis.



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As more developing countries reject plastic waste exports, wealthy nations seek solutions at home

BY KATE O'NEILL,
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

LESS than two years after China banned most imports of scrap material from abroad, many of its neighbors are following suit. On May 28, 2019, Malaysia's environment minister announced that the country was sending 3,000 metric tons of contaminated plastic wastes back to their countries of origin, including the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. Along with the Philippines, which is sending 2,400 tons of illegally exported trash back to Canada, Malaysia's stance highlights how controversial the global trade in plastic scrap has become.

Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam are all halting flows of plastics that once went to China but were diverted elsewhere after China started refusing it. They are finding support from many nations that are concerned about waste dumping and marine plastic pollution. At a meeting in Geneva in May 2019, 186 countries agreed to dramatically restrict international trade in scrap plastics to prevent plastics dumping.

As I show in my forthcoming book, *Waste*, scrap material of all kinds is both a resource and a threat. The new plastics restriction allows less-wealthy countries to exercise their sovereign right not to accept materials they are ill-equipped to

handle. This narrows options for wealthy countries that used to send much of their plastic and paper scrap abroad, and is a small but symbolic step toward curbing plastic waste.

A trade with few rules

The Basel Convention, which governs the international waste trade, was adopted in 1989 in response to egregious cases of hazardous waste dumping on communities in Africa, the Caribbean and Asia. Many of its goals remain unfulfilled, including a ban on shipments of hazardous waste from wealthy to less-wealthy nations for final disposal, and a liability protocol that would assign financial responsibility in the event of an incident. And the agreement has largely failed to encompass newer wastes, particularly discarded electronics.

The new provision, proposed by Norway with broad international support, takes a more aggressive approach. It moves plastic scrap from one category — wastes that can be traded unless directly contaminated — to another group of materials that are not deemed hazardous per se, but are subject to the same trade controls as those classified as hazardous. Now these plastics can be shipped overseas for disposal or recycling only with the express consent of the importing country.

The United States signed the

treaty in 1989, but never ratified it and is not bound by the treaty's terms. However, Basel Convention member countries cannot accept any restricted waste imports from the United States unless they have reached a bilateral or regional agreement that meets Basel's environmental provisions. The US already has such an agreement with fellow OECD member countries.

Operation National Sword, China's policy restricting imports of post-consumer scrap, was a major driver for updating the treaty. Before the ban China imported nearly half of the world's scrap plastic and paper. Now scrap exporters in wealthy nations are struggling to find alternate markets overseas and boost domestic recycling.

Crisis and opportunity for US recyclers

Trends in the United States illustrate these wrenching shifts. Plastic scrap exports to China plummeted from around 250,000 tons in the spring of 2017 to near zero in the spring of 2019. Overall, U.S. exports of plastic waste to all countries fell from 750,000 tons to 375,000 tons over the same period.

Most U.S. waste and recycling policies are made at the local level, and the past year has been a transformative period. Without ready markets abroad for scrap, recyclers are raising prices, which in turn is leading

some municipalities to reduce or eliminate curbside recycling programs. Many plastic products in groups 3-7, the least recyclable types, are being sent to landfills.

More positively, recycling authorities have launched public education campaigns, and investment in recycling infrastructure is on the rise. There is palpable energy at trade meetings around improving options for plastics recycling. Chinese companies are investing in US pulp and paper recycling plants, and may extend into plastics.

Green-leaning states and cities across the nation have passed strict controls on single-use consumer plastics. However, businesses are pushing back, and have persuaded some US states to adopt preemptive measures barring plastic bag bans.

The greatest immediate pressure is on international scrap dealers, who are most immediately affected by the Norway Amendment and vocally opposed it. They are also under stress from the US-China tariff wars, which could make it difficult for them to send even clean, commercially valuable scrap to China.

Waste or scrap?

Under the Norway Amendment, nations can still export plastic scrap if it is clean, uncontaminated and of high quality. The

► PlasticA6



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A broader look at today's business

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As more developing countries

measure effectively distinguishes between waste — which has no value and is potentially harmful — and scrap, or discarded materials that still have value.

This bifurcation matters for the US and other countries that formerly outsourced their recycling to China and are having trouble creating domestic demand for recovered plastics, because it makes a legitimate trade in plastic and other marginal scrap possible. However, there is still no guarantee that this scrap can be reprocessed without harm to workers or the environment once it has reached the importing country.

Nor will the Norway Amendment do much to reduce marine plastic pollution directly. Only a tiny fraction of ocean plastics originate from shipped plastic scrap from rich countries. Most come from items that are used and discarded on land and never enter a recycling system.

Curbing plastic pollution will require broader action, with a focus on coordinating scattered global initiatives and building up relevant international law. Implementing extended producer responsibility for plastics, which could require manufacturers to take plastic products back at their end of life and dispose of them in approved ways, would be a useful step. However, it should not supplant ongoing efforts to reduce production and use of plastics, which contribute to climate change as well as waste.

Solutions may come from the top down in European nations or the bottom up in the United States. But as one Asian country after another shuts the door on scrap exports, it is becoming increasingly clear that business as usual will not solve the plastic pollution challenge.

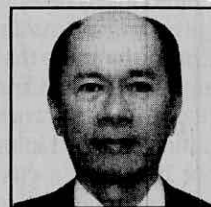
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FEATURE

Environmental responsibility in venue management and operations



By **ATTY. ARMANDO L. SURATOS**

EVENTS in huge venues such as convention centers, arenas, and exhibitions halls tend to produce large quantities of waste products and require a huge amount of energy. The responsibility of mitigating the environmental impact of events does not solely lie on the organizer, but on the venue as well.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Benjamin E. Diokno, who chairs the board of directors of the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), said, "We encourage green event and convention planning, which has become an established trend in the global tourism and convention industry."

To reduce its carbon footprint, PICC has been adapting sustainable practices in its operations. The 43-year-old center implements various environmental programs on energy efficiency, water conservation and sewage treatment, waste management and other environmental practices in air quality, upkeep of buildings and lawns, and food and beverage services. PICC continuously evaluates existing practices and looks for new and better alternatives that support sustainability, lessen negative environmental impact, and make business sense.

According to Atty. Renato B. Padilla, general manager of the PICC, "the convention center adopts the best global practices in its management and operations to ensure the successful staging of all events, big or small."

Energy efficiency

The PICC recently inaugurated its solar photovoltaic (PV) system in collaboration with the PNOG-Renewables Corporation. A total of 1,050 kwp of solar PV panels was installed in four buildings in the PICC complex – the Reception and Plenary Hall (600 kwh), Secretariat Hall (210 kwp), and Delegation Hall (240 kwp). It is the largest solar PV system installed by the PNOG RC to date, with a capacity to produce 1,050,000 kwp of electricity and provide clean solar energy. Apart from clean energy, this facility could also offset at least 1,000 metric tons of carbon emissions from fossil fuel energy sources.

The PICC started its energy conservation program through the improvement of its equipment operation process years before it launched its

solar PV system. Forty percent of the centralized air conditioning system has been replaced with packaged units and variable refrigerant volume (VRV) air conditioning systems at the Delegation and Secretariat building starting in 2013. This resulted in a 24% reduction in kwh power consumption, equivalent to P19.7 million in savings annually.

The Delegation Lobby's signature 3,068 droplights as well as the grand chandeliers at the Reception Hall were converted to LED in 2012 and 2015, respectively, generating savings of 67,494 watts. Because of the conversion from incandescent bulbs to LED, PICC has saved 407,880 watts in its power consumption since 2005, which is equivalent to P12.9 million.

Water conservation and sewage treatment

The PICC is one of the few establishments around the Manila Bay area with a sewage treatment plant (STP). It was installed in 2009 to control waste water parameters/conditions like biochemical oxygen demand, total suspended solids, oil and grease, color and total coliform. The most recent laboratory test undertaken by a third party accredited by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in January, 2019, showed that the PICC is within the standard limit for oil and grease effluent and compliant with environmental rules and regulations. The recycled water from the STP is used to water plants, trees, and lawns.

Signages within and outside the center urge employees, tenants, and guests to conserve water and power.

Green environment

Plants are provided in the PICC's interiors and surrounding the exterior areas. It has its own greenhouse where the plants are grown and used in pocket gardens during events. The 12-hectare property has forest-variety and fruit-bearing trees, and the harvested fruits (mango, jackfruit, santol, and buko) are shared with the employees. Organic-based fertilizers and pesticides are used to make the plants vigorous and healthy, and the use of chemical fertilizers have been reduced to the minimum and only applied whenever and wherever necessary.

The PICC strictly implements a no smoking policy within its premises following Executive Order No. 26 which pro-

hibits the use of tobacco products in all public places in the Philippines. Air quality tests are regularly conducted within the complex and its meeting rooms to ensure the quality of indoor air.

Parked vehicles are monitored to ensure that engines are turned off to lessen carbon emission.

Locally available non-toxic and environment friendly products are used for cleaning. Biodegradable waste materials are segregated, while paper materials are sent to recycling facilities.

Waste segregation is practiced through labeled trash bins, while event and conference organizers are asked to bring with them all printed literature left behind by their attendees and delegates.

Employee engagement

Aside from constantly encouraging employees to imbibe the reduce, reuse, and recycle behavior in the workplace, management and staff of PICC have an annual seed-sowing activity to celebrate Earth Day every April. Employees plant hundreds of narra seeds which are then propagated in the PICC greenhouse and donated to various government agencies and NGOs for their own tree-planting activities.

Future plans

Sustainability has become the norm nowadays, but PICC has long been upholding green operational standards. To further minimize its impact on the environment and help its bottomline in the long run, PICC shall continue its air conditioning replacement program, upgrade its escalators to units with sensors, and promote green practices with its partners and clients.

An example of this is the PICC's upcoming partnership with Green Architecture Advocacy Philippines (GreenAP) by being the venue of the 16th Green Forum on August 30-31, 2019. One of the highlights of the forum, which carries the theme "Sus10ability through the Decade," is a walking tour of the PICC that will showcase its sustainable strategies.

Governor Diokno said: "On a macro scale, we push for green banking and sustainable finance. Closer to home, we advocate the use of applicable and appropriate technologies in place for a safe, healthy, and efficient work environment. We will continue to work on ways to minimize the burden to the environment. Going green is the way to go."



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Little fish, big ocean

By TIN SARTORIO

Like many people, I've always liked being around water. Beaches, waterfalls, lakes, rivers — you name it. I've also always been curious about life beneath the calm surface; it also doesn't hurt to know that scuba diving is the closest experience to being weightless in outer space. So for my 24th birthday, I saved up like crazy and signed up for a dive license certification with RAID (Rebreather Association of International Divers) along with my friend MV. We got to work with dive master John who also trained MV's family of advanced divers. We knew we were in good hands.

Unlike most recreational activities, scuba diving is not a skill you can just learn on the fly. Before I even set foot

How does one act after seeing the effects of climate change firsthand and the value of what we have to lose?

on a dive site, I had to complete a nine-course module along with the online quizzes and tests that came with the RAID course. I found myself relearning about marine biology, physics and physiology and at the same time learning the parts and function of scuba (BTW, that's an acronym for "self-contained underwater breathing apparatus", you're welcome). Before signing up, I knew diving was a technical activity, but I honestly didn't really expect it to be *that* complex. TL;DR: my life depends on what I know about basic science, the environment and my scuba, and how I use all of that to adapt underwater during every dive. No pressure. (Read: *So much pressure.*)

But the promise of the experience outweighed the anxiety — or at least I convinced myself that it was anyway. After all, the Philippines is part of the Coral Triangle, aka one of the world's richest areas for marine life. So when someone says we have some of the best dive spots in the world, they're really not exaggerating.

After learning about the equipment and the skills needed to operate them — in a swimming pool test, no less — master John took us to a sanctuary in Anilao, Batangas for our first dive out. The water is very unassuming, judging from the surface, and it helped calm me down that my dive group was very supportive and more experienced than me. We got

dropped off at a spot called Classroom, a shallow area of clear soft sand that's perfect for beginners, and worked our way downward, one meter at a time. We started bumping into different species of fish, one school after the other, and seeing vibrant coral reefs stretching to the dark abyss that, sadly, I was still not allowed to swim to. But still, the experience was life-changing. By the time we got back to the boat, we had painlessly clocked 80 minutes underwater at a depth of 20 meters. That's when I knew I was onto something here.

I'd be lying if I said all dive experiences are pleasant. When I took up diving, I admit it was a very self-serving decision. I wanted to learn how to survive underwater. I wanted to see the diversity of our marine life. But the more that I dove, the more places I saw, the more I could no longer ignore the "elephant in the water." Studies show that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than there are fish. Coral bleaching is happening now, not in some distant future, and it will become worse a lot sooner than most of us are aware of. Animal migration patterns have changed because of changes in water temperature and loss of coral reefs that function as home to many marine species. There's a real, big shift happening in the marine ecosystem, people.

I'm definitely not an expert on this. The above information are easily accessible and, just like you, I end up having more questions than answers every time I do my research. But the ocean crisis isn't isolated from the other parts of the planet. The sooner we accept this, the sooner our network of problems gets put into perspective.

My most recent dive was for a cleanup movement in Anilao. It was held a week after a storm had passed and that trip was more enlightening than any article or any documentary. I saw the damage myself. It happened to a place I was familiar with and it was so disheartening to see how vulnerable we are right now. What more when the Big One hits?

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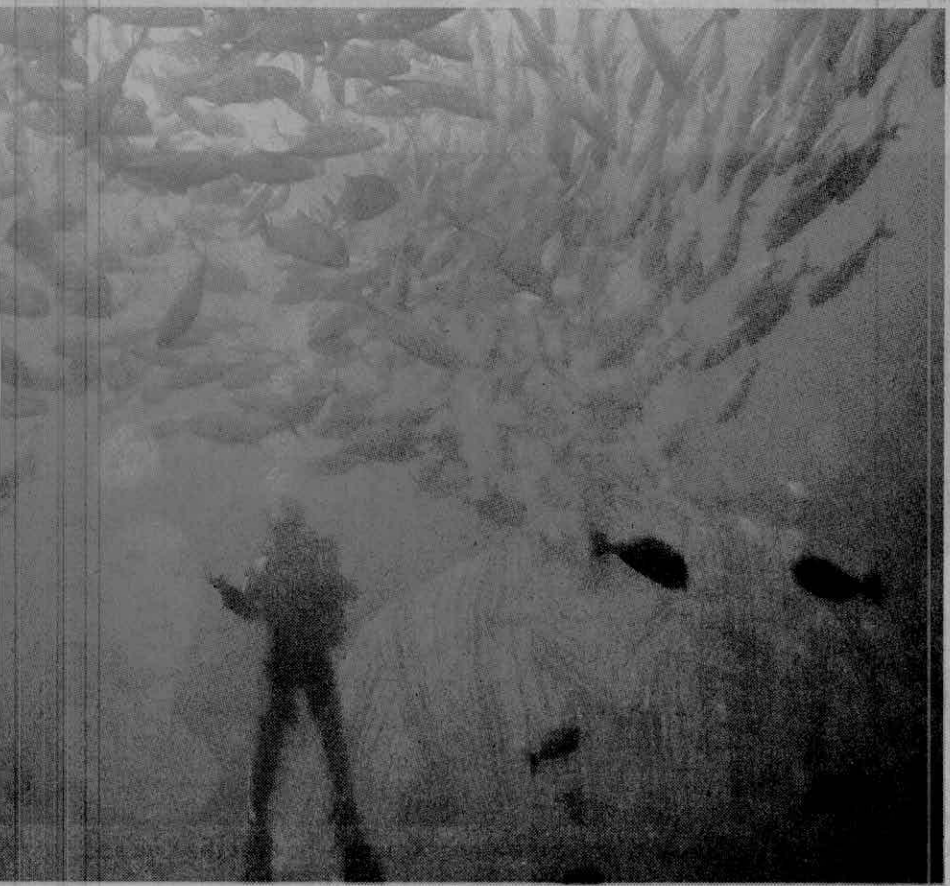
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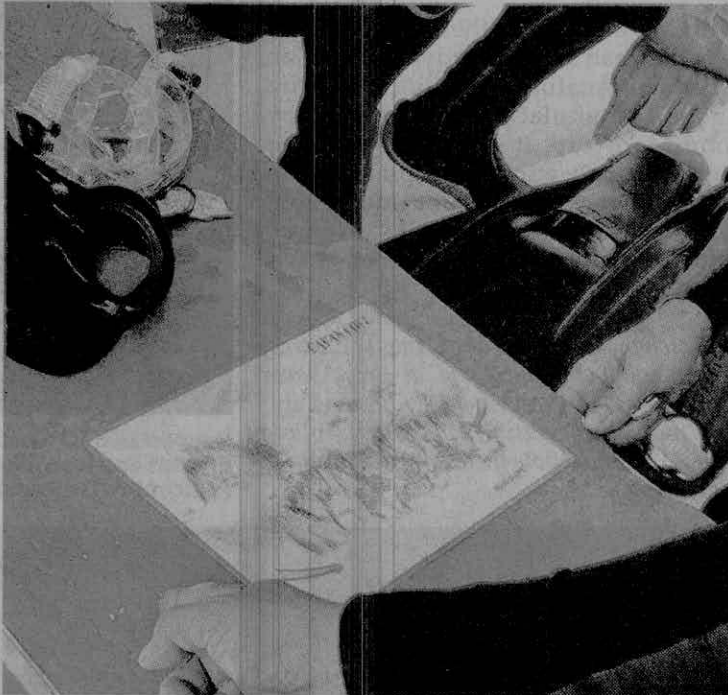
I'm not saying a cleanup dive will solve everything, nor am I saying that you have to dive to understand these problems. But if there's one thing I learned from scuba diving that's worth imparting, it's that a school of little fishies in a big ocean can do a whole lot more than a lone fish can. And if there are as many people who like being around water as much as I do, then something must be done.

These days, I don't dive as often as I like. While I've grown to appreciate the ocean on a much deeper level, I also know diving tourism contributes its own fair share of pollution — from plane, car and boat carbon emissions to microfibers escaping from the synthetic attire we wear into the ocean. For me, it's not about stopping completely as it is trying to be more efficient. I try to do more and see more during each drive trip because if I'm part of the problem, that also means I'm part of the solution. This is my commitment to the environment for now, and I'm okay with that.



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Rolling in the deep: Studies show that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean.



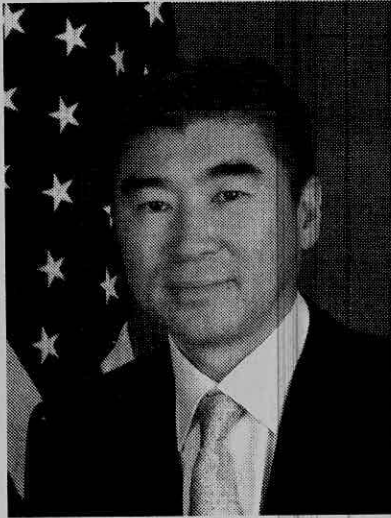
Joining cleanup dives won't solve everything, but it's a good place to start.

Fun fact: Did you know the Philippines is part of the Coral Triangle, making it one of the world's richest areas for marine life?



Your fish is your future

By US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim



LYING within the global center of marine biodiversity, the Philippines is one of the world's top-fish producing countries, and millions of Filipinos derive their livelihood from fishing. However, these rich and precious resources are declining rapidly, with research showing that 10 of the country's 13 major fishing grounds are already under threat due to overfishing, destructive fishing practices, habitat degradation, pollution, improper waste disposal, and extreme weather.

It is estimated that the Philippines loses nearly P68.5 billion a year to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, a trend that affects the country's economic development through lost revenue and unrealized opportunities for local fishermen and associated seafood industries. With fish making up the major protein source in the Filipino diet, this decline in fish stocks also has implications for the country's food security, particularly for the nearly 52 percent of fisherfolk who already live beneath the poverty line. Illegal fishing practices also put law-abiding fishers and seafood producers at a disadvantage in both the domestic and global marketplace.

As we observe the International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing on June 5, I'd like to thank our Philippine partners for working with us to address the threats posed by illegal fishing and to protect our

marine resources for future generations. For over three decades, the US government has worked closely with the Philippine government and local partners to achieve our shared goal of sustainable fisheries and healthy marine ecosystems. For example, the US Agency for International Development's five-year EcoFish Project worked with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and local governments to increase the number and weight of fish by 24 percent in focus sites. USAID's new P1.3 billion, five-year Fish Right project, launched in 2018, works with BFAR, DENR, and a consortium of local partners to address biodiversity threats and increase fish biomass in select marine biodiversity areas in the Philippines. Building on the gains of previous USAID-supported coastal, marine, and biodiversity conservation projects that introduced an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, the Fish Right partnership promotes the sustainable use of critical coastal and marine resources, enhances the resilience of these resources, and improves the ability of Philippine authorities to sustainably manage fisheries—for the benefit of all Filipinos.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has partnered with other US agencies, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to develop and implement capacity-building programs for managers of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This effort will continue to train new MPA managers to more effectively address threats to Philippine marine resources.

Recognizing the important role law enforcement plays in combating illegal fishing and protecting marine resources, Philippine law enforcement officers have collaborated with US experts to better utilize sophisticated satellite data to detect boats fishing illegally in Philippine waters and to prevent and deter illegal fishing. We have helped to train nearly 100 officers and inspectors from BFAR and the Philippine Coast Guard on practical law enforcement techniques,

such as how to board foreign fishing vessels, conduct comprehensive fisheries inspections, and draft briefings and affidavits for prosecutors.

This year, the US Coast Guard led a first-of-its-kind multinational fisheries law enforcement workshop in Manila that built capacity for at-sea enforcement operations in Southeast Asia. The workshop, which included participants from the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia, strengthened domestic fishery enforcement in each country and helped to improve regional cooperation, coordination, and interoperability.

American scientists also seek opportunities to collaborate with Philippine counterparts on marine science research projects. These scientific endeavors do not just increase our joint understanding of oceanographic phenomena or marine species distribution, they help inform global and local evidence-based fisheries management policies and ensure that there will still be fish for Filipino generations to come.

Ensuring the health of Philippine fisheries—and the country's economy—will not just require robust law enforcement and improved science, it will also require innovative new ideas championed by young Filipinos. To that end, we have supported marine-focused education and empowerment camps for some of the country's most inventive and motivated emerging leaders. We are proud to see the dynamic youth pioneer new social entrepreneurship models in their communities, establish green businesses that address marine challenges, and strive to educate those around them about the importance of healthy ocean ecosystems.

The US government is honored to work alongside Philippine government agencies, civil society, and inspiring young Filipinos to address these challenges. And we will continue to work together to advance human and ecological well-being in the Philippines and to support initiatives that ensure the continued health of Philippine fisheries. We truly believe that your fish is your future.



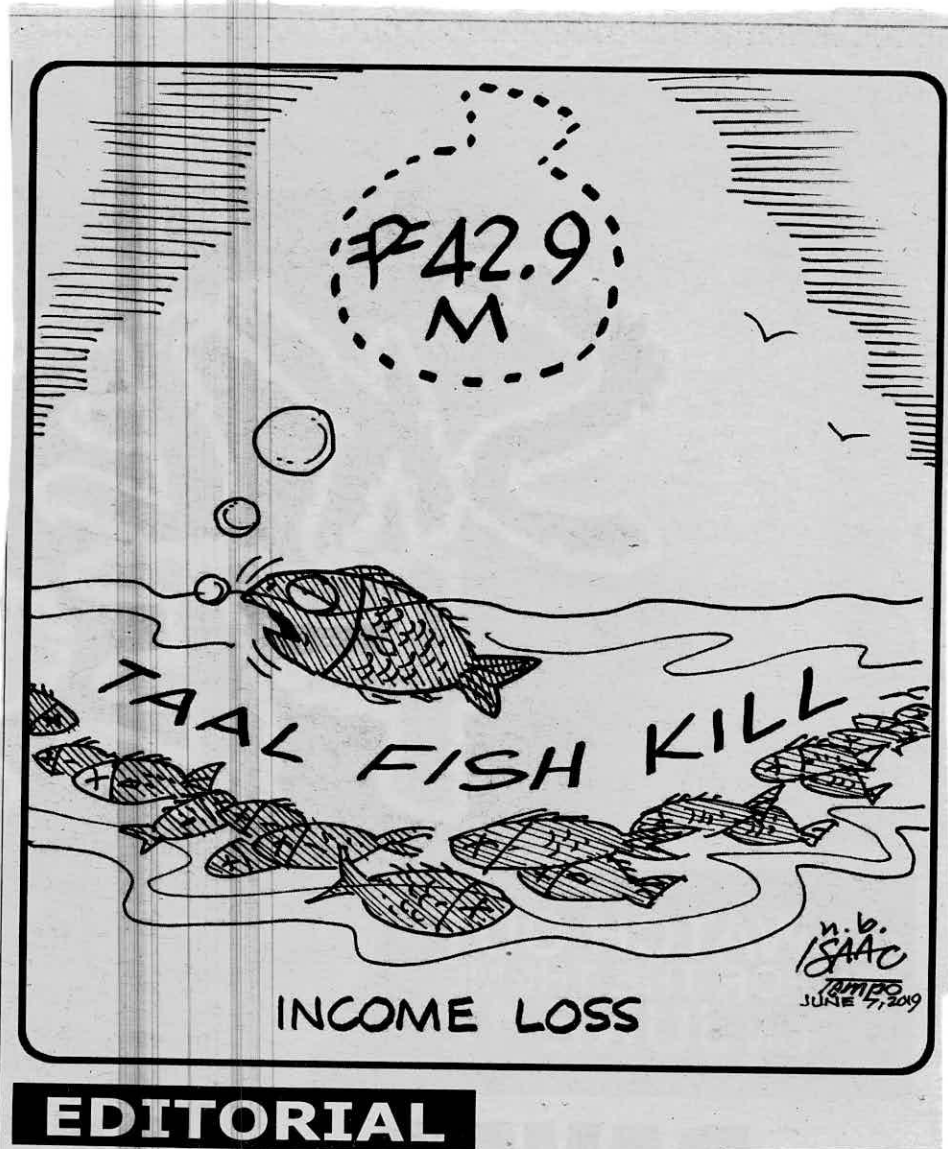
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Public warned vs toxic school supplies

By **MAYEN JAYMALIN**

The Department of Health (DOH) yesterday warned the public against possible health risks linked to toxic school supplies.

Citing an advisory of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said lead-contaminated school materials have long-lasting effects on children's health.

"Lead exposure in children may have permanent consequences, such as neurological damage, delayed mental and physical development, attention and learning deficiencies, impairment of cognitive functions of the brain and hearing problems," Duque said.

He said long-term exposure from inhalation of cadmium may also result in chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, emphysema and chronic kidney diseases.

Exposure to mercury even in small

amounts, he said, may cause serious health problems and is a threat to the development of the fetus in pregnant women.

Duque said that children tend to put objects in their mouth, thereby exposing themselves to hazardous substances.

"So be careful when you buy school supplies for your children," he said.

Last year, Duque said, the FDA found unacceptable levels of heavy metals, including lead, cadmium and mercury, in a number of school materials.

Among these contaminated school supplies are the 12-in-1 pencil, Fairyland (brand) 16 Crayons and Leehoe (brand) Glitter Fabric Paint Pens.

"Read carefully the labels to know if it is appropriate for your children and registered with our FDA for safety, and immediately consult a doctor in cases of accidental ingestion or any adverse health effects while using school supplies," Duque said.

GREEN GROUPS HIT DFA POLICY

PH EXECS WON'T ATTEND CLIMATE MEETS ABROAD

By **Dona Z. Pazzibugan**
and **Patricia Denise M. Chiu**
@Team_Inquirer

Manila will no longer send officials to attend climate change conferences that will require delegates to travel by plane and will re-

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strict its participation to the conferences via the internet.

"Following (President) Duterte's answer to UN's plea for yet another stronger stand against climate change—which he branded as more hot air—I am rejecting all official participation in climate change conferences requiring air travel," Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. announced on Twitter on Wednesday.

"We'll just vote yes to radical proposals. No more talk," he added.

Locsin's statement was strongly criticized by some environmental groups, including one coalition that called his new

policy "arrogant, self-righteous, myopic and misplaced."

Not the solution

"To hear the Duterte government completely abandon its responsibility to fight for the interests and well-being of the people of the Philippines in the international arena in the face of a global crisis requiring urgent global solutions, is deeply disturbing," said the coalition, which includes the Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development, the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, Alyansa Tigil Mina, Sanlakas and Oriang Women's Movement.

The Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED) expressed disappointment over Locsin's decision.

CEED said it "shares the frustrations of the government" regarding the failures of the negotiations to exact accountability and take action on climate change but the solution was not to reduce Manila's involvement.

Denial in crafting solutions

"Refusing attendance to climate negotiations denies the Filipino people participation in crafting solutions," CEED said in a statement.

It said the country was in a unique position to present the voice of vulnerable nations, and if the Philippines did not speak out at climate talks, these would be dominated by "rich, industrialized economies," which could interpret Manila's absence as a license

to escape accountability.

Reacting to the criticisms, Locsin on Thursday clarified his statement, again on Twitter, saying the country would not send officials to "chitchat."

"We just vote without talking. A Nauru UN conference in New York said that using air travel to talk about climate change makes the climate worse. (We'll just do it via the internet.) Clean communication," he said.

Citing "UN experts," he said the government's climate arguments and proposals, not the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), were "the strongest."

"So who will make and propose them now? We will—on the internet as UN Conference urged. (No more) traveling

faces. But NGOs are free to come and go at their own expense," Locsin said.

Participating in the conferences via the internet "saves the planet from more jet travels that wreck the environment."

"That was the conclusion of a Nauru sponsored conference I attended as UN rep. An entire world summit was done online. Awesome," he added.

Du30 remarks in Japan

In his latest remarks on climate change, which he made at the 25th Nikkei International Conference on the Future of Asia last week, President Duterte called for greater accountability among developed nations who contribute to global pollution.

Mr. Duterte also said the destruction caused by natural disasters "is more painful for developing nations and for the poorest of the poor."

Paris Agreement

In 2017, Mr. Duterte signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which urged nations to slash their emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming, and keep the global average temperature increases to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius.

Under the pact, the Philippines promised to cut carbon emissions by 70 percent by 2030, even if the country is not a major greenhouse gas emitter.

Mr. Duterte had said the accord favored industrialized countries. INQ



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Salceda wants PH back at climate change conferences

By **NINO N. LUCES**

LEGAZPI CITY - Albay 2nd District Representative Joey Salceda said Thursday he will appeal the position of the Duterte administration on the Philippines' participation in climate change conferences.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. has said the Philippines will no longer send representatives to climate change conferences that require air travel. Salceda, who made

Albay a model for disaster risk reduction (DRR) in climate change programs during his term as governor, said the Philippines' participation is badly needed since the nation enjoys the moral and intellectual leadership in negotiations to resolve the global problem.

"Yes, I would appeal the position of the administration about sustaining the Philippine participation in climate conferences. We owe it to the next generation of Filipinos who would confront bigger risks in their lifetime," Salceda said.

During the speech of President Duterte at the Nikkei International Conference on the Future of Asia in Tokyo last Friday, he slammed UN climate conferences as "a waste of time and money," having accomplished nothing to improve the situation.

According to Chris Barrie, a retired admiral and former head of the Australian Defense Force, "after nuclear war, human-induced global warming is the greatest threat to human life on the planet."

He said that a doomsday future is not inevitable, but without immediate drastic action, the poor will suffer.



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'Phl participation in climate confabs limited to internet'

By **PIA LEE-BRAGO**

Manila will continue to take part in global discourse on climate change but only through the internet, as Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. wants "no traveling faces" to represent the country in such conferences abroad.

On Wednesday, Locsin said on Twitter that the Philippines would no longer send official representatives to climate change conferences requiring air travel, supposedly in deference to President Duterte's position that these conferences have not been very helpful.

In his tweet yesterday, Locsin said the Philippines would definitely not be left out even if it sends no representatives to regular global conferences on the issue. "UN experts say the Philippine DFA's – not NGOs'

– climate arguments and proposals are the strongest. So who will make and propose them now? We will – on the internet as UN Conference urged. *Wala ng* traveling faces. But NGOs are free to come and go at their own expense," Locsin tweeted.

He said the DFA will depend mostly on Philippine foreign posts to provide pertinent information and articulate the country's position on issues.

"In my watch we will depend mostly on our foreign posts. They are in site and must know more than home office. If they don't know more they will be recalled," Locsin said.

Duterte said in his speech at the Nikkei International Conference on the Future of Asia in Tokyo last Friday that UN climate conferences are a "waste of time and money."

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Poor people need food, not more climate talks

Earth activists may scorn Foreign Sec. Teddy Locsin barring more air travels to international climate change talks. But he makes a case for just signing any radical proposals at home. For one, flights burn added fossil fuels aboard the jumbo and at the airport. Besides, anything that can be said has been said about climactic catastrophe. Proof perhaps is a recent UN consultant's report that a million animal and 200,000 plant species are facing extinction. It is a consolidation of 15,000 studies worldwide on global warming and habitat ruin. Foreseen is the end of a third of sea mammals, a third of sharks, a third of corals, and 40 percent of amphibians.

The UN has had 25 annual gatherings on climate change since 1995. They are called Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Framework Convention on the global threat. Held in various world capitals, COPs 1 to 25 brought together heads of state, legislators, scientists, industrialists, and social workers. Regular attendees must have earned hundreds of thousands of frequent-flier miles. Starting 2005 the COPs also coincided with the "Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol" (CMP). So there have been CMPs 1 to 15. And added starting 2016 were conferences for meetings on actions (CMAs), numbering four so far. They sound like meetings to set more meetings, weary environmentalists have rued.

Yet no marked consensus has been achieved. Island and seaside countries have cried about rising ocean temperatures and waters wiping them out. Fishermen have reported of thinning catches, and farmers of successive crop failures. Scientists have suggested ways to reverse the fall. All to no avail. Wars are erupting due to droughts.

The UN talks seem futile, noted President Rody Duterte at the Nikkei Conference on the Future of Asia in Tokyo last week. Facing the Pacific, the Philippines is first to be hit by super typhoons spurred by global warming, he said. Lives and property are lost forever. Yet others don't care; it's every country to itself. No mechanism legally binds state-parties to cooperate. World powers are the first to break accords. Duterte recounted that the UN secretary general had asked for support for a second stronger pact to combat climate change. He saw no point in it. America has not signed the first treaty, China got out of it, and Russia is unhappy with its membership. Plus, there's the imminent peril of sudden death by nuclear war overtaking slow death from climate disaster. Duterte is not the first leader of a developing state to complain.

Since 1990 rich countries have blamed on poor ones half of the world's green-

house gases. That year the US-based World Research Institute calculated the carbon dioxides produced by each country as bases for negotiated international curbs. Supposedly Asians were among the worst contributors because they eat rice and keep animals. Rice paddies exude methane that makes rice grow. Cattle fart methane that punches holes in the ozone layer. Those supposedly are as much the cause of polar icecap melting, heat waves and bitter colds as factory fumes in the rich world.

The WRI figures have been rebutted several times over. CO2 recalculations take into account poor countries' "sinks" - such as forests and grasslands - that if preserved can absorb pollutants. The oceans, owned by humankind, also are sinks. Prominent among the critiques was 1991's "Global Warming in an Unequal World: A Case of Environmental Colonialism." The authors, Indian conservationists Sunita Narain and Anil Agarwal, differentiated emissions of the poor, like subsistence paddy rice and livestock, from emissions of the rich, say, cars. They showed that industrial America's net annual contribution to world emissions was 27.4 percent, not the mere 17 percent that WRI claimed. Rice eating and cattle raising China and India, despite huge populations, pitch in much less. China's net emission was only 0.57 percent and India's only 0.013 percent, from WRI's accusing 6.4 and 3.9 percent respectively.

The poor have a right to their staple food and changing diets. Asians, Africans and South Americans are eating more meat because of increased family incomes. Livestock technologies, new roads, and freer trade also have brought down prices of beef, pork, mutton, and poultry. Half the world's pork is consumed in China. India's appetite for milk, cheese and butter has more than quadrupled in recent years. There are presently 28 billion chicken, raised mostly in poor countries, compared to 500 million house sparrows (maya) worldwide. Four-fifths of developing countries' agricultural lands are devoted to cattle pastures and feeds. Those are making poor Asians, Africans and South Americans taller and healthier.

The rich countries may complain that those are bad for the planet. But so are their unbridled mining of fossil fuels and factory pollution. If they want cooperation to save the earth, they must also respect the entitlements of the poor to food and a better life. There's little or no chance of that happening soon, though.

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