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# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Manila Standard

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## DENR welcomes approval of proposed 2019 budget

By Rio N. Araja

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Wednesday welcomed the approval of its P24.17-billion budget for 2019.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the Senate's approval of the DENR's 2019 budget would allow the agency to deliver on the priority programs and projects for the protection of the environment, and the conservation and sustainable use of the country's rich natural resources.

"We can finalize and carry out our 2019 plans, policies and activities to realize our mandate of improving the

lives of Filipinos, while protecting and conserving our rich biodiversity for present and future generations," he said.

Last Monday, senators approved the DENR budget.

The lawmakers commended DENR and Cimatu for showing "sheer political will" in carrying out the closure and rehabilitation of Boracay and the plan to rehabilitate other ecotourism sites.

For 2019, Cimatu said they have allotted P5.072 billion, or almost 21 percent of its total budget, to forest and watershed management through the e-national greening program, while almost P890 million have been earmarked to intensify its activities on forest protec-

tion and to fight illegal logging.

He added that they are also setting aside more than three percent, or P732 million, to carry out its activities in protected area development and wildlife protection and conservation.

Other priority areas include improvement of land administration and management with almost P400 million; scaling up of coastal and marine ecosystems with P267.69 million; and cleanup of Manila Bay with P80 million.

The DENR's proposed budget for 2019 is almost 3 percent lower than the P24.91 billion budget for the agency in the General Appropriations Act for 2018.



## IP 'enviro' protectors cited

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has underscored the vital role that indigenous peoples (IP) play in mitigating climate change impacts and managing solid waste in the Philippines.

DENR Undersecretary for Field Operations Miguel Cuna expressed appreciation to the members of the indigenous groups for taking part with the agency's move to address environmental issues.

"We are greatly aware that our IP brothers and sisters have a bigger part to play in helping us to combat the effects of climate change and global warming, and even our increasing problems in managing our solid waste," he said.

Furthermore, the undersecretary said the IP, particularly the Aetas, have been an important part in the success of DENR programs, including the National Greening Program, the government's flagship reforestation initiative that doubles as a poverty reduction measure.

"Who else would know about the right place to plant trees and the right time to do so? Of course, it is none other than our Aeta brothers and sisters who reside in the place itself," Cuna said during the Salugnayan event.

"Salugnayan" is a term derived from two Filipino words, *salu-salo* (gathering or coming together) and *ugnayan* (connect).

The event aimed to inculcate among Aetas the current updates on NGP, knowledge on climate change and solid waste management along with current issues and problems in environmental management. **Kuhlin Ceslie Gacula**





## DENR flags Manila Bay shoreline as next target for rehabilitation

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) warned of the potential closure of establishments along the shores of Manila Bay that do not comply with environmental regulations, Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said.

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, Mr. Cimatu said: "Those establishments that are right on the water will be closed. I will recommend to the local government that in the first place, they shouldn't be given business permits."

Mr. Cimatu said the extent of Manila Bay pollution was about 115 million most probable number (MPN) fecal coliform bacteria per 100 milliliter (ml) in 2016, which DENR wants to reduce in 2019.

Mr. Cimatu added that the metric will continue to rise if the DENR does not pursue the relocation of informal settlers.

He said the presence of garbage in the water is a separate issue.

"The determinant for Manila Bay water cleanliness is fecal coliform content, because this is the organism that can harm swimmers. This is

the basis, apart from solid waste," he said, adding that once visible garbage is removed the issue is lowering the coliform content.

"I prefer to reduce (coliform) to the condition where people can swim... Either we resort to a chemical treatment or we let nature heal itself," Mr. Cimatu said.

Mr. Cimatu added that he also wants a Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) to take charge of the problem in Metro Manila.

He said that there are around 300,000 informal settler families in the area and the DENR has limited capability in effecting relocations. His priority is those living beside the water.

Mr. Cimatu said that cleaning Manila Bay will be a tougher job than cleaning up Boracay.

According to Mr. Cimatu, the remedy implemented in Boracay – requiring establishments to have their own drainage systems – must be implemented in the Manila Bay area. — **Reicelene Joy N. Ignacio**



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WARNING ON IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

# UN SCIENCE PANEL CHIEF CALLS FOR MORE ACTION TO CURB WARMING



NEWS

## More action urged to curb warming

KATOWICE, POLAND—The chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on Tuesday urged governments to do more and act swiftly to prevent global warming on a scale that would cause irreversible environmental damage and hit poor societies hard. “Our report shows that political will is key to the implementation of solutions that improve well-being,” Lee Hoesung said. —STORY BY JHESSET O. ENANO

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By Jhesset O. Enano  
@JhessetEnanoINQ

KATOWICE, POLAND—Governments must do more and act swiftly to prevent global warming on a scale that would cause irreversible environmental damage and hit poor societies hard, the head of the United Nation’s top science panel on climate change said on Tuesday.

Lee Hoesung, chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), told diplomats at the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in this southern Polish city, that scientists had conducted an exhaustive review of data for their recent special report on keeping average global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

### Clear message

“Our report shows that political will is key to the implementation of solutions that improve well-being and make it possible to limit global warming to 1.5 C,” Lee said.

“With this report, the scientific message is clear. It is now up to you, the governments, to act,” he added.

Nations assembled in Paris in 2015 invited the IPCC to provide a special report on the impact of global warming of 1.5 C above preindustrial levels, in time for COP24 this year.

The special report, released in October, examined the differences between warming of 1.5 C and 2 C, with its assessment anchored in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

Researchers from 40 countries worked on the report, citing more than 6,000 references and receiving more than 42,000 comments on the study.

The report said that while 1.5 C was a doable target, unprecedented changes were needed to be done urgently to stave off disastrous effects caused by even half a degree of warming, such as stronger typhoons, harsher droughts and extreme heat that could drive millions into poverty.

Speaking to diplomats from



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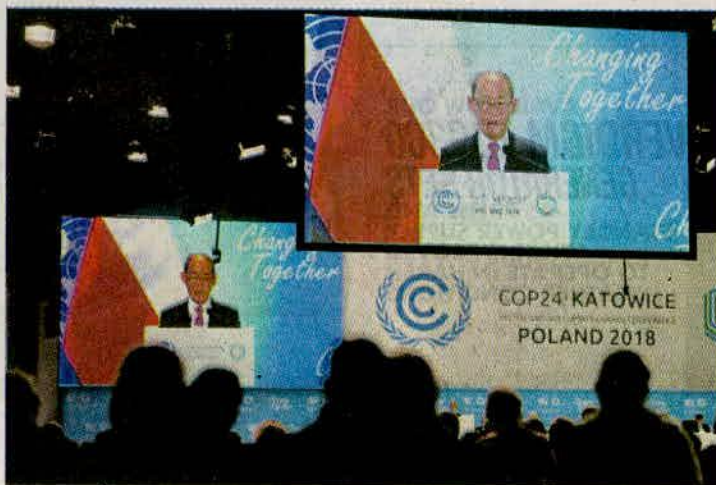
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**POLITICAL WILL** Lee Hoesung, chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, says political will is key to the implementation of solutions that improve well-being and make it possible to limit global warming. —REUTERS

nearly 200 countries, Lee summarized the report: "Every bit of warming matters. Every year matters. Every choice matters."

**Urgent action**

He stressed the urgency of the findings: "The report shows that not just action, but urgent action is needed."

But on the last day of the first week of the climate talks, delegates failed to reach a consensus on whether to "welcome" or "note" the report within the body—the former suggesting a stronger language compared to the latter.

Four major oil-producing countries—the United States,

Russia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait—rejected the proposal to welcome the report.

But several countries, including the ones most vulnerable to climate change, strongly expressed their position to fully recognize the report and its findings.

Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman, vice chair of the Climate Change Commission and the Philippines' lead negotiator, said the country did not merely note the report, but welcomed it.

Ministers are meant to bridge the remaining division between countries by Friday.

**Main aims**

One of the main aims of the meeting is for officials to finalize the rules of the 2015 Paris accord, including details such as how countries will record and report their emissions.

The talks are also meant to push countries to commit more ambitious targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Poor countries want assurances on financial support to tackle climate change. —WITH A REPORT FROM REUTERS INQ



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CONSORTIUM OF 3 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH GROUPS

# CLIMATE POLICIES PUT WORLD ON TRACK FOR 3.3 C WARMING, SAYS REPORT

KATOWICE, POLAND—Average world temperatures are on course to far exceed the main goal set in the 2015 Paris Agreement on limiting global warming, a study showed on Tuesday.

But the overshoot by the end of this century could be less severe than expected thanks to significant efforts by some countries to combat climate change, said the report by Climate Action Tracker (CAT), a consortium of three independent European research groups.

The Paris Agreement aims to restrict warming to “well below” 2 degrees Celsius above

preindustrial times.

Countries are meeting in Poland up to Dec. 14 to agree on guidelines for implementing the pact that comes into force in 2020 but there are concerns these will be too weak to limit temperature rise to within safe levels.

### Progress

The CAT report said there had been progress since 2015, but current policies meant the world was heading for warming of 3.3 C.

That compared with the 3.4 C it predicted a year ago, and it said that if governments were

to implement policies they had in the pipeline, warming by 2100 could be limited to 3 C.

Even a rise of 3 C could cause loss of tropical coral reefs, Alpine glaciers, Arctic summer sea ice, and perhaps an irreversible melt of Greenland’s ice that would drive up world sea levels, a United Nations science panel has said.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said in October that keeping the rise to 1.5 C was possible but would require rapid and unprecedented changes in human behavior.

“We have yet to see this translate into action in terms of what governments are prepared to put on the table,” said Bill Hare, chief executive of Climate Analytics, one of the three CAT research groups.

### Right direction

Since the Paris accord was agreed, countries including Argentina, Canada, Chile and India plus the European Union are moving in the right direction toward cutting emissions.

Countries, such as Norway and Costa Rica, are making progress with low-carbon

transport and renewable energy deployment but China’s carbon emissions rose again this year, the report said.

“With prices for renewables dropping roughly a third since Paris, both South Africa and Chile are mapping out strategies to address coal, and renewables are taking off in India,” said Niklas Höhne of research group NewClimate Institute.

But countries including the United States, Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Russia and the United Arab Emirates have made either no progress or taken backward steps. —REUTERS

# UN talks offer help to people uprooted by climate

**KATOWICE** – When indigenous groups from around the world met in Alaska in October, they sounded the alarm on how their homelands, cultures and livelihoods were threatened by rising temperatures, loss of permafrost, higher sea levels and weather disasters.

One of the biggest risks facing them is being displaced from their land by climate change, they said.

"We maintain the unbreakable human and sacred spiritual connection with our land, air, water, forests, sea ice, plants, animals, and our communities handed down to us from our ancestors," they noted in a joint declaration.

The groups from Alaska, Louisiana, Washington, Bangladesh and the Pacific urged UN climate negotiations to recognize the rights and needs of "climate-displaced peoples."

This week, the talks took a decisive step towards doing that, experts said.

Delegates at the conference in Poland approved a report by a taskforce set up to tackle the problem under a five-year-old UN mechanism aimed at addressing worsening losses and damage as a result of climate change.

The decision needs to be formally

adopted when the meeting ends on Dec. 14.

The report encourages countries to formulate laws and policies to prevent people having to leave their homes because of climate change impacts – and to help them move, resettle and minimize negative consequences if they are forced to go.

"If we are prepared, we can take people along. We can reduce suffering, respect people's rights (and) involve them in shaping their own future," said Koko Warner, who supports the work of the taskforce at the UN climate change secretariat (UNFCCC).

Displacement linked to climate change pressures is already happening, she said. But "it's not the apocalyptic story line" it was 10 years ago, she said.

"We're not trying to generate scary numbers. We're trying to generate understanding so that (government ministers) know what





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to do," added Warner, who manages a UNFCCC program on climate impacts, vulnerability and risks.

Humanitarian agencies like the Red Cross, international climate funds and others are already stepping up efforts to protect communities at risk of being uprooted.

The Green Climate Fund, for example, in 2016 approved \$39 million for a project to reduce flooding on three of Tuvalu's nine islands by putting in sea walls, shoring up beaches and conserving local ecosystems.

Maina Talia of the Tuvalu Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO) said villagers in the low-lying Pacific island nation now experience floods on an almost monthly basis, and are increasingly threatened by fierce storms.

That could damage their way of life, which is closely tied to the land and a sense of community and togetherness, he added.

Placentas and umbilical cords are buried in the earth, for example. When Cyclone Pam hit in 2015, it uncovered some graves.

It was interpreted by local people as a simple message from their fore-

fathers, Talia told an event on the sidelines of the talks in Katowice: "If you are thinking of migrating or running away, please take us with you, do not leave us behind."

### **Policies, funding fall short**

The recommendations in the task-force report urge governments and UN agencies to include communities in their efforts to gather data and better understand the displacement risks they face, so that more effective solutions can be crafted.

This is the kind of approach experts such as Robin Bronen, who heads the Alaska Institute for Justice, are already developing.

She has worked with three communities facing relocation in the far-northern US state to craft guidelines on how they want to adapt to a warming environment now and later.

That process could be used by other people facing similar threats, she added.

The communities also have devised a new word in their local language, meaning "land collapse" as a result of climate change, which could draw attention to the phenomenon, the lawyer said.

And they have learned how to monitor local coastal erosion and permafrost melt themselves using simple tools, she said.

The UN's Warner said the task-force had worked to bring together many different organizations to share their expertise on migration linked to climate change.

The Philippines, meanwhile, has called for rapid action against climate change even as it urged developed countries to increase their support for nations most vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Climate Change Commission secretary Emmanuel de Guzman urged countries to incorporate climate change in their long-term policy during the ongoing 24th session of the Conference of the Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change or COP24 in Katowice, Poland.

"The alarming report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for instance, pointed out that world leaders need to step up climate action if the world is to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius," De Guzman said.

"Already, the Philippines and many other countries are facing challenges such as droughts, higher sea levels and catastrophic typhoons exacerbated by climate change," he said. - Thomson Reuters Foundation, Helen Flores

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## PH banners climate justice in COP 24

**THE Philippines joins 196 countries for a two-week climate change conference in Katowice, Poland, to adopt the implementation guidelines of the 2015 Paris Agreement.**  
At the climate talks, known as the 24th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 24) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Katowice, the Philippines

reaffirms its leadership on climate action and highlights its initiative on climate justice to help vulnerable communities adapt to climate change.  
The 2015 Global Climate Risk index put the Philippines on top of the list of 186 countries most affected by climate change.  
"In the climate talks, ours is a leadership voice on behalf of the climate vulnerable. The Philippines has succeeded in

championing climate justice and other fundamental principles in the talks," Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman, vice chairperson of the Climate Change Commission, said.  
The climate talks, he said, is an opportunity for the Philippines to show leadership and momentum on global climate action and to ensure the completion of the implementation guidelines of the landmark 2015 Paris

Agreement on climate change.  
The Philippines is highly regarded in the negotiation process at the climate talks as a leader of developing countries. As chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum in 2015, the Philippines, on behalf of 48 developing countries, led the advocacy for the ambitious global warming threshold of 1.5C, now enshrined in the Paris Agreement.  
As among the most influential voices in the climate negotiations, De Guzman said the Philippines will be constant and persistent in its call for the provision of scaled-up, continuous, predictable, and adequate financial support of developed countries to developing countries.  
He said President Rodrigo Duterte, chairperson of the Climate Change Commission, had made clear that climate change is among the top priorities of his administration.  
In his message at the summit, President Duterte aired a sense of urgency in the fight against climate change, telling world leaders that "climate action and ambition must be shared and demonstrated by all nations."  
"I call on industrialized nations to significantly reduce their carbon emissions and provide assistance to developing nations in terms of finance, capacity building and technology transfers, as urged by the Paris Agreement," the President said. "It is only by helping one another that we can win the fight against climate change," President Duterte said.  
The Philippine delegation to the climate talks in Katowice, Poland will be crucial in safeguarding the continued success of the Paris Agreement.



## Climate scientist debunks 'sea level rise alarm,' UN climate agenda crumbling

### First word

**M**ANY Filipinos have bought the climate change (global warming) dogma for two key reasons:

First, they swallowed the claim of sea level rise, and they got scared by the thought that the Philippines as a Pacific island nation will drown in this century. Sea level rise is a key component of climate change alarmism. Second, they bought the promise of rebates by advanced nations (especially the West) for their responsibility in global pollution, and the promise that developing states will get generous financial assistance in coping with climate change. The big persuader was the creation of a Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Current developments in the climate change debate — in both politics and the science — are rapidly destroying these articles of faith.

### Sea level alarm borderline impossible

Dr. Judith Curry, a much-published and widely respected climatologist at the Georgia Institute of Science and Technology, recently released and published the results of her research and study on sea level rise.

Titled, "Sea Level Rise and Climate Change," the special report virtually destroys the contention of climate alarmists that sea levels are rising and will drown entire countries in this century.

The report is posted and widely quoted and reported online.

Curry says alarming sea level rise projections are "very weakly justified."

Curry's new research found current sea level rise as within natural variability, despite some acceleration.

"Climate variability and change is a lot more complex than 'CO2 as control knob'," Curry said.

When it comes to alarming projections of global warming-induced sea level rise, veteran climate scientist Curry says people need to cool it.

"Projections of extreme, alarming impacts are very weakly justified to borderline impossible," Curry told The Daily Caller News Foundation.



### OBSERVER

**YEN  
MAKABENTA**

Curry's latest research looks in detail at projections of sea level rise. Her ultimate conclusion: "Some of the worst-case scenarios strain credulity."

"With regard to 21st century climate projections, we are dealing with deep uncertainty, and we should not be basing our policies based on the assumption that the climate will actually evolve as predicted," Curry said.

No alarmist, scientist or no, has come out to contest Dr. Curry's special report.

### UN climate agenda crumbling

On the other front, the promise of a financial bonanza for developing nations fighting climate change has nearly evaporated at the ongoing COP24 summit in Katowice, Poland.

The United Nations climate agenda, which has predicted a global climate catastrophe in this century, is crumbling.

The news from Europe and around the world are not encouraging for the UN-led initiative to fight climate change.

At the climate change summit in Poland, with 15,000 delegates from 190 nations in attendance, the global climate consensus appears to be in tatters.

It's important to recall the history of the COP (Conference of the Parties). The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change has held annual conferences since COP1 in Berlin, Germany, in 1995, which tried to establish obligations on nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Delegates and observers have traveled each year to exotic global locations, such as Bali, Geneva and Nairobi, to haggle over the timing and amount of emissions reductions.

COP3 in Kyoto, Japan, in De-

ember 1997 was the first notable Conference of the Parties. COP3 adopted the Kyoto Protocol treaty, which obligated developed nations to reduce emissions 6 to 8 percent below 1990 levels. More than 190 nations adopted the Protocol, with the United States being the major exception.

COP16 in Cancún, Mexico, in December 2010 established the Green Climate Fund, calling for \$100 billion per year to be contributed by developed nations to fund climate projects and programs in the developing nations. COP16 also adopted the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius warming over pre-industrial temperatures.

COP21 in Paris adopted the Paris Climate Agreement on Dec. 12, 2015. It was a non-binding agreement signed by 196 nations, pledging to reduce emissions from 2020 according to each nation's own "nationally determined contributions." The Paris agreement reaffirmed commitments to the GCF and to limiting global temperature rise to "well below 2 degrees Celsius."

With COP24, however, the effort to fight climate change has waned. Almost all major nations are behind on their 2015 commitments to reduce emissions.

On June 1, 2017, US President Donald Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris climate accords. Subsequently, the US government slashed funding for UN climate efforts from \$1.7 billion in fiscal year 2017 proposed by the Obama administration to only \$160 million.

In 2014, contributors pledged \$10.3 billion to the GCF, with \$3 billion pledged by the Obama administration. But only \$1 billion of the US pledge was delivered prior to the Trump administration cuts.

GCF projects today total less than \$5 billion in value. GCF Executive Director Howard Bamsey of Australia resigned after a meeting in July when no new projects were approved.

Finally, in addition to the collapse of the GCF, rebellious citizens are forcing governments

to scale back efforts to "fight" climate change in key nations, such as France and Australia.

France is reeling today from the protests and riots ignited by a planned carbon tax.

In Australia, Scott Morrison replaced Malcolm Turnbull as prime minister because of power outages and rising electricity prices from green energy policies.

In Canada, the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan oppose Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's carbon tax.

In Brazil, a new government has taken over, and it plans to pull the nation out of the Paris accords.

### PH must review its climate policy

The Philippines as a leading Asia-Pacific nation cannot be a mere spectator of these major developments that are happening today in the climate change debate. The government must competently monitor what is happening, and thereby understand how developments impact our national life.

Ignoring the news will leave us behind other nations.

With the sea level alarm debunked, and no prospect of a financial bonanza, it's time for the Philippines to review its climate policy and commitments, to see how they can be made better.

We should remember that we signed and made a pledge under the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, with President Benigno Aquino 3rd signing. I remember the shameful antics of one Filipino delegate who tried a hunger strike for publicity in one climate conference.

The Philippines shouldn't just watch while all the current global tumult is going on.

The UN climate agenda is crumbling. Citizens are forcing their governments to stop foolish efforts to control global temperatures.

We should make our own decision, too.



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## Scanners intercept illegal transport of wildlife, corals

The Bureau of Customs at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-NAIA) warned illegal wildlife traders to stop their activities because the agency is in close coordination with other regulating agencies to secure Philippine borders and protect the environment from such traders.

The BOC-NAIA team continues to protect the Philippine borders against illegal wildlife in cooperation with the Customs X-Ray Inspection Project, which apprehended a total of 34 wildlife species that a passenger tried to sneak into the

country without necessary importation permit from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The intercepted wildlife species consisted of 20 lizards (dragon and geckos), four snakes and 10 Moss frogs, which were concealed in shoeboxes in the luggage of a female passenger who arrived from Bangkok on Dec. 6 at Terminal 2.

Meanwhile, 254 pieces of live corals were about to be carted out of country when discovered by Customs inspectors in two pieces of luggage

bound for Taiwan. These were immediately turned over to the DENR-NCR and brought to the Biodiversity Management Bureau in Quezon City for proper identification, care and protection.

BOC-NAIA district collector Mimel Talusan said the importation of wildlife species without permit or clearance from DENR is a violation of the Customs Modernization Tariff Act in relation to provisions of Republic Act 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection law of 2001.

- Rudy Santos



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# RELOCATIONS SA 300K KATAO SA MANILA BAY

**MANILA – UPANG** makaiwas sa disgrasya at mapangalagaan ang karagatan, ire-relocate ng pamahalaan ang 300,000 informal settlers na nasa Manila Bay.

Ayon kay Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, ang hakbang ay bahagi ng rehabilitasyon ng dagat.

Itinuturong dahilan ng mataas na lebel ng polusyon sa Manila

Bay ay ang mga basura na itinatapon ng mga informal settlers sa paligid ng katubigan.

Nananatiling lubhang mapanganib sa kalusugan ang paglangoy sa Manila Bay dahil sa

mataas na coliform level.

Binigyan lamang ni Cimatu ng dalawang linggong palugit ang Manila Bay Coordinating Committee upang bumuo ng work plan at simulan ang rehabilitasyon ng

Manila Bay.

Aminado naman ang kalihim na hindi sapat ang kakayahan ng gobyerno para ilipat ang mga ilegal na naninirahan kaya unti-unti lamang anyong gagawin. **PMRT**



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REGIONS

## Rescued sea turtle ends up in eatery

CEBU CITY—At least 60 kilograms of meat from endangered sea turtles were seized by a government team during a raid on an eatery at Barangay Pasil here on Tuesday. A tag recovered from one of the butchered turtles showed that it had been rescued and rehabilitated in Sandakan, Malaysia. Five people, including the eatery's cook and cashier, were arrested during the operation. —STORY BY ROSALIE ABATAYO

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# Turtle rescued in Malaysia ends up at Cebu City eatery

60 kilos of sea turtle meat seized, 5 suspects nabbed during gov't raid on fish market

By Rosalie Abatayo  
@inquirervisayas

CEBU CITY—An adult green sea turtle that had been rescued and tagged for conservation in Malaysia was no match to traders at Pasil fish market here, who butchered the marine creature along with other "pawikan" for their meat.

Agents of the Central Visayas regional offices of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Cebu City government confiscated on Tuesday about 60 kilograms of pawikan meat from an eatery on Rallos Street here.

"One of the pawikan was already rescued and rehabilitated in Malaysia. The tag came from Sandakan, Malaysia. This species is migratory so when it came to Cebu, it was captured and killed," said Rogelio Demelletes Jr., DENR senior ecosystem management officer.

### Illegal trade

The government team arrested five people during the operation—eatery cashier Donesa Bustamante, cook Cresley Obatay and helpers Ariestey Pableo, Julio Abunta and Clifford Obatay.

They refused to issue any statement to reporters or divulge to authorities their source of pawikan meat.

Demelletes said Cebu City,



**TURTLE SLAUGHTER** Chunks of meat from six endangered green sea turtles, five of them juveniles, are found by a government raiding team stored in a cooler at an eatery in Cebu City. —LITO TECSON/CEBU DAILY NEWS

particularly Barangay Pasil, had been a known site for illegal trade of wildlife meat.

"It is common knowledge here that pawikan meat is sold in Pasil. It's called 'power.' Even

if you look at Google Earth, they have a map that points to Pasil with the [word] 'power' on it," he said.

Pawikan meat prepared as the local dish "larang" can be

bought at roadside eateries in Pasil by using the code "power," a reference to the local belief that eating this exotic dish will improve sexual prowess.

"Power" is sold at the eatery for P90 per serving, expensive than the regular larang prepared from fish, which costs P75 per serving.

Those who buy or eat pawikan meat, he said, may also be held liable because "nobody will sell if there is no [buyer]," he said.

### Rampant

According to lawyer Habeas Corpuz of the NBI environmental crime division, his group received an intelligence report about the rampant illegal wildlife trade in Pasil.

DENR and NBI agents conducted a "test buy" of raw pawikan meat over a month ago to verify reports that sea turtles were being used in dishes offered in the area.

"Normally, they do not sell raw meat. Luckily, our men were able to buy raw meat. We used that to subject the sample to a DNA sequencing test," Corpuz said.

The test, conducted by researchers at the University of the Philippines Diliman, reported that the DNA of the sample meat bought in Pasil matched by "99.83 to 100 percent" with the DNA sequence of green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*).

He said the pawikan meat

that the team seized from the eatery was stored in a cooler. The body parts showed that the meat came from five to six juveniles and an adult green sea turtle.

### Finding supplier

"We want to identify where the supply is coming from because we want to cut this business from [the source]," Corpuz said.

Charges of multiple counts of possessing, trading and killing endangered species were filed against the suspects on Tuesday. These offenses are bailable.

Under Republic Act No. 9147 (Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act), trading of endangered animals or their byproducts is punishable with imprisonment of at least six months to one year with accessory penalty of P10,000 to P100,000.

For the slaughter of pawikan, a violator may be imprisoned for six to 12 years and fined between P100,000 and P1 million.

The green sea turtle, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), is one of the largest species of sea turtles, growing to 150-400 pounds, or up to 180 kg.

"Classified as endangered, green turtles are threatened by over harvesting of their eggs, hunting of adults, being caught in fishing gear and loss of nesting beach sites," the WWF said on its website.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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### *Editorial*

## Squatters ang dahilan kaya daming basura sa Manila Bay

**N**OON pa man, mga informal settlers o squatters na nasa baybay-dagat, pampang ng mga estero at ilog ang nagpaparumi sa kapaligiran. Dahil sila ang nakatira sa mga pampang, tapon na lang sila nang tapon sa dagat o estero. Hindi na sila lalayo pa para magtapon ng kanilang basura. Kaya hindi na nakapagtataka kung bakit hindi maubus-ubos ang mga nakalutang na basura sa dagat at sa mga estero.

Ang mga squatter sa Maynila ang nagpaparumi sa Manila Bay. Lahat nang mga basura na itinatap-on nila sa mga estero, Pasig River at iba pang water ways, tatangayin lahat sa Manila Bay. Namumutiktik ang basura at aanurin ito patungo sa baybayin ng Roxas Boulevard. Makikita ang mga basurang ito ng mga namamasyal sa Luneta at maski ng mga nakatira sa condo. Makikitang sobra nang polluted ang Manila Bay at naaamoy pa ang karumihan nito.

Sinabi mismo ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu na ang mga informal settlers sa Maynila at iba pang lungsod at bayan na nasa paligid ng Manila Bay ang dapat sisihin kung sobra na itong polluted. Lahat umano ng basura ng mga nakatira sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay at mga pampang ng estero ay humahantong sa dagat. Pinag-iisipan na umano ng kanyang tanggapan kung paano ire-relocate ang mga squatters. Makikipag-meeting umano siya sa local governments at iba pang ahensiya sa posibleng paglilikas ng mga squatters. Hindi raw simple ang gagawing pag-relocate pero siskaping magawa ito. Makikipag-usap umano sila sa mga pamilyang nakatira sa mga baybayin ng Manila Bay at mga estero.

Matagal nang problema ito. Marami nang pina-ngako ang bawat administration na ililipat ang mga squatters. Pero lahat ay pawang sa salita lamang. Dahil sa ningas-kugon na ugaling ito ng mga namumuno, lalo pang dumami ang mga squatters at ang resulta, dumami pang lalo ang basura at sobrang naging polluted ang Manila Bay. Kawawang Manila Bay!



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In this file photo taken December 2010 by Romeo Gaccad, Komodo dragons search the shore area of Rinca island, part of the protected area of Komodo National Park. The governor of Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara province – home to the world's biggest lizard – has proposed charging visitors \$500 each to see the endangered species, about 50 times the current \$10 entrance fee for foreign tourists at the national park.

AFP