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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

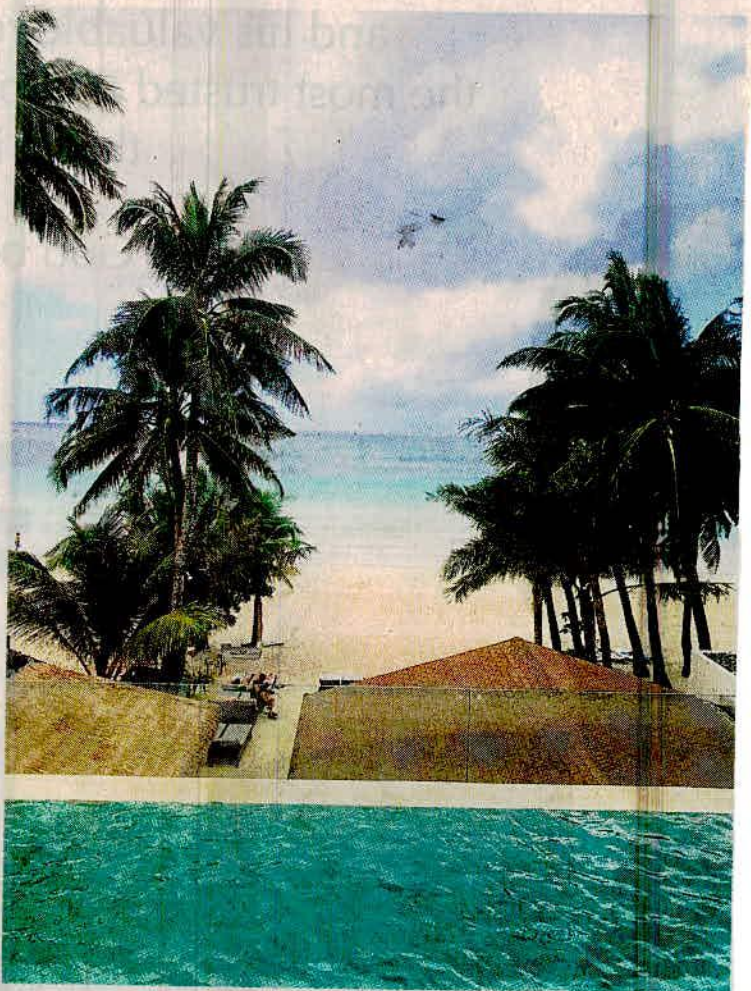
16 DEC 2013

DATE

Hello again, Boracay



FIRST CLASS
MARGAUX SALCEDO



Paradise reopens

I am happy to share, after personally checking it out, that Boracay is ready for Christmas and the New Year.

The waters are once again clear and the white sands, pristine. It reminded me of Boracay in the late 1990s when it was such a pleasure to just walk on that soft sand and swim in those clear waters. The last time I was there, in 2015, I did not even bother to swim because it was so dirty.

Where to stay

If you plan to go to Boracay this Christmas, the first thing you have to make sure of is that you have a confirmed reservation with a hotel. Your hotel must give you a confirmation number. Otherwise, you will not be allowed into the island.

When you book your plane ticket, even online, you will already be asked if you have a hotel reservation even before you proceed. A window will open and you must click yes before you will be allowed to book your ticket.

Upon arrival in Caticlan, before you ride the ferry or boat that will take you to Boracay Island, you will have to present the confirmation number from your hotel to Department of Tourism authorities at a desk at the entrance of the Caticlan ferry station. They will then stamp your hand, as if you are entering an amusement park.

When choosing your hotel, be reminded that the stretch of the Boracay beach is divided into three: Station 1 is the quieter side, on the right if you are facing the beach; Station 2, in the middle, is where D Mall is and a major stop for the e-trikes; and Station 3 is where most of the restaurants and bars are. You can choose your hotel depending on whether the purpose of your visit is to party or to relax. Also note that the walk from Station 1 to Station 3 is a good 30-minute walk on foot. It's a lovely walk on the beach but might be quite tiring so others opt to take a tricycle through the back streets, which at the moment is a big hassle because the roads are still under repair.

Not all hotels are open yet.

Those who have not fully complied with tourism and environmental regulations and local ordinances have not been allowed to reopen, but lots of good hotels already are.

Two Seasons

One of the best hotels you can stay at is Two Seasons Boracay because it allows you to both relax and party. It offers enough privacy as it is located in Station 1, away from the loud festivities in Station 3, but it has its own lanai right at the beachfront where you can just stay, eat and drink all day and all night.

It is also almost on the border of Station 2 so it's not too far from the rest of the world. Also, because it has its own beachfront, you can enjoy that gorgeous Boracay orange sunset without the great (and sometimes cumbersome) crowds that gather in Station 3.

If you can swing a booking for the presidential suite, go for it. The highlight of the suite is an infinity pool that has a view of the beach. Unlike downstairs where you are not allowed to bring food to the beach, in the suite you can catch the sunset while enjoying champagne by the pool.

A regular room would also be worth it because the hotel has several sunbathing beds just outside its lanai. Although Boracay no longer allows eating on the beach, you can have the hotel's famous pizza and oysters just a few steps away before lying down on the beach and getting your tan. They offer a breakfast buffet so you can wake up early, have arroz caldo and danggit, be-

fore catching the morning sun.

Where to eat

There are so many choices now for dining destinations.

Two Seasons Boracay is known for its oysters and pizza. These two items already have their cult following.

But my fave all day breakfast place is Sunnyside Cafe. It never fails. On this trip, the revelation for me was their bacon and mango grilled cheese sandwich which is bacon and mango jam with mozzarella and cheddar cheese sandwiched between two large slices of brioche. It is so good. They also have new items on the menu like an adobo eggs benedict, although I personally prefer the classic eggs benedict. Their chorizo burger is also one helluva gourmet sandwich.

The new hipster dish offered

by several establishments is ube champorado, which I did not try. The massacre of my revered champorado freaked me out. It looks cute on Instagram, though.

The calamansi muffins of Real Coffee is sadly not as good as it used to be. It is now too dense. So maybe you can skip that as pasalubong.

For a sunset dinner, you can try the buffet at Seawind, just beside Two Seasons. Try to be at Station 1 for the sunset because if you are stuck at Station 3, you will have to elbow it out with the crowds.

For a wonderful Spanish dinner, Dos Mestizos is still around. It is now run by Binggoy Remedios' nephew Andre Malarky from Canada, and remains, to this day, one of the best Spanish restaurants not only in Boracay but in the

P-1



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

B6
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

DATE

P-2

Hello again Boracay



Two Seasons welcomes guests

Philippines. You must order the gambas, which is excellent and, of course, their paella. Next door, they also opened a bulalohan and a bakery/deli called Gustos y Gustos that makes the best tartine bread (sourdough) on the island.

New rules

Food is not allowed on the beach. Neither is drinking or smoking.

There will also be no fireworks. It is no longer allowed. (I personally wish this would be implemented in Metro Manila, for the sake of animals and to avoid accidents. Props to Muntinlupa that has implemented a firecracker ban. I hope other cities follow.)

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat, in her year-ender press conference, said she was happy to see that visitors were now, on their own, taking responsibility in maintaining cleanliness in the new Boracay and hoped that all visitors would have the same attitude. Various private establishments have also contributed to help maintain cleanliness, e.g. Cebu Pacific was kind enough to donate trash bins to be placed at various points of the beach, although an ordinance already requires estab-

lishments to do so.

Cleaner, greener

After the success of the Boracay rehabilitation, the DOT and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have moved on to do the rehabilitation of El Nido and Panglao. Unlike Boracay, though, the islands won't be closed. Puyat said they would only close those who refuse to follow environmental laws.

After El Nido and Panglao, Siargao is next.

Hopefully, this leads us to a cleaner, greener, fresher, more beautiful Philippines this 2019.

Two Seasons Boracay. For info, call (036)288-4384 or 0917-5665811 or e-mail bliss@twoseasonsresorts.com.

The Sunny Side Cafe. Station 3 beachfront. (036)288-2874. Open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Dos Mestizos. Station 3 beside the police station. (036)288-5786. Bulalohan is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Dos Mestizos is open from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Gustos y Gustos is open from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. INQ



More from the author at margauxlicious.com.
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More Boracay hotels cleared to operate

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

Eleven more Boracay accommodation establishments have been cleared to operate on the island as the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) continues to give the go signal to compliant hotels.

An updated list released by the Department of Tourism (DOT) yesterday showed there are now 279 hotels with 9,868 rooms that are allowed to accept visitors.

The BIATF reiterated that only those that have complied with the requirements set by the departments of environment and natural resources (DENR), interior and local government (DILG) and DOT are allowed to operate.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat earlier said the BIATF would continue to accredit compliant accommodation establishments.

"More rooms will be available as

we continue with Phase 2 and 3 of the Boracay rehabilitation. We are making sure the task force's requirements are complied with 100 percent," Puyat said.

The task force urged the public to avoid booking with establishments that have no permits from the DOT, DENR and DILG.

Puyat said they are not setting a limit on the number of accredited accommodation establishments.

Fernando Roxas, executive director of the Asian Institute of Management Andrew Tan Center for Tourism, earlier told **The STAR** that there is no need to limit private companies from investing in tourist destinations as long as these firms comply with the regulations.

The government is limiting the number of tourists in Boracay to ensure the sustainability of the island, which was reopened in October after it was closed for rehabilitation for six months.

BORACAY GETS P150M FOR CONTINUING REHAB

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE national government has earmarked P150 million to support Boracay Island's continuing environmental restoration and to safeguard the world-class tourist destination's coastal and marine ecosystem, a party-list lawmaker said on Saturday.

"The fresh funding is a go, even if the government temporarily runs on a reenacted

budget next year," Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza said.

Atienza, a senior deputy minority leader, said the fresh funding is meant to establish the Boracay Island Critical Habitat; put into operation the Boracay Water Quality Management Area; oversee landfills and materials recovery facilities; monitor water and air quality around the island; and support research on environmental pollution.

"The designated Boracay Island Critical Habitat covers some 750 hectares of forestland and coastal marine areas," said Atienza, a former Environment secretary.

A critical habitat is a specific geographic area that contains features essential to the conservation of endangered or threatened species.

"Boracay's endemic species that require special protection and management include flying foxes

and marine turtles," Atienza said.

He said at least three species of flying foxes inhabit Boracay: the giant golden-crowned flying fox, the giant fruit bat and the small flying fox.

"The demarcated critical habitat is mainly in Barangays Balabag and Yapak, where the flying foxes are concentrated," Atienza said.

Balabag and Yapak are two of Boracay's only three barangays, the third being Manoc-Manoc. The island forms part of the Municipality of Malay in Aklan province.

"In the case of marine turtles, they may not produce offspring if their natural habitat gets disturbed by too many people around," Atienza said.

The lawmaker also stressed the need to renew Boracay's severely eroded coral cover.



Government allocates P150M for Boracay's continuous rehab

THE national government is allocating P150 million for Boracay Island's continuing environmental restoration and to safeguard the world-class tourist destination's coastal and marine ecosystem.

"The fresh funding is a go, even if the government temporarily runs on a reenacted budget next year," said House senior deputy minority leader and Buhay Hayaang Yumabong (Buhay) Party-list Rep. Lito Atienza.

The funds should be used for the establishment

of Boracay Island Critical Habitat; put into operation the Boracay Water Quality Management Area; oversee landfills and materials recovery facilities; monitor water and air quality around the island; and support research on environmental pollution.

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turbed by too many people around," Atienza said.

The lawmaker also stressed the need to renew Boracay's severely eroded coral cover.

Atienza previously backed the six-month shutdown and rehabilitation of Boracay. He even urged President Duterte to extend the environmental recovery plan to include Laguna Lake and Manila Bay.

Boracay was reopened last Oct. 26, but an inter-agency task force has restricted to 19,215 the total number of tourists allowed to stay on the island at any given time.

Jester Manalastas

Boracay gets P150M for Environmental Rehab

By RYAN PONCE PACPACO

THE national government has earmarked P150-million to support Boracay Island's continuing environmental restoration and to safeguard the world-class tourist destination's coastal and marine ecosystem, an opposition House leader said yesterday.

"The fresh funding is a go, even if the government temporarily runs on a re-enacted budget next year," said House senior Deputy

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Minority Leader and Buhay Hayaang Yumabong (Buhay) party-list Rep. Lito Atienza.

Atienza, also one-time Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), said the new money is meant to:

- Establish the Boracay Island Critical Habitat;
- Put into operation the Boracay Water Quality Management Area;
- Oversee landfills and materials recovery fa-

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ilities;

- Monitor water and air quality around the island; and

- Support research on environmental pollution.

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A critical habitat is a specific geographic area that contains features essential to the conservation of endangered or threatened species.

coral cover.

"In the past, unchecked diving and snorkeling spoiled the island's natural underwater habitat," he said.

Atienza, former three-term mayor of Manila, previously backed the six-month shutdown and rehabilitation of Boracay.

He even urged President Duterte to extend the environmental recovery plan to include Laguna Lake and Manila Bay.

Boracay was reopened



Rep. Atienza

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13 DEC 2018

DATE

279 hotel, resort bukas na sa Boracay - DOT

NASA 279 resort at hotel na ang binigyan ng akreditasyon ng Department of Tourism (DOT) sa Boracay na may kabuuang kapasidad na 10,000 room.

Ayon sa DOT, pangangak na sa itinakdang requirement ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), DOT at Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) ang magsabing establisimiyento kaya pinayagan nang makapag-operate.

Sinabi ni Tourism Secretary Berna Puyat na tuloy tuloy ang kanilang pag-e-evaluate sa mga hotel at resort, ang hindi maka-comply ay hindi umano papayagan na makapagbukas habang ang mga may paglabag sa environmental laws ay kanilang ipasasara.

Pinaalalahanan ni Puyat ang mga resort at hotel owner na maaari pa rin na mabawi ang inisyu sa kanilang sertipikasyon kung magpapabaya at hindi makakasunud sa kanilang itinakdang rules.

Ayon kay Puyat ay regular pa rin umano ang kanilang gagawing inspeksyon. **(Tina Mendoza)**

16 DEC 2013

DATE 2013

UPPER HALF

2

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DOT: 279 Boracay hotels, resorts now open for visitors

THE Department of Tourism (DOT) announced that there are 279 hotels and resorts in the Boracay Island that are now accredited and open to accept tourists

and other visitors.

As of Dec. 14, Almost 10,000 rooms had already been accredited by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), DOT

and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Among those allowed to operate, Fairways and Bluewater Resort and Savoy Hotel had the high-

est number of available rooms with 700 and 559, respectively.

After a six-month closure for rehabilitation, Boracay reopened last Oct. 26. — *Inquirer.net*



Eagle center urges conservation volunteerism

By Maya M. Padillo

To encourage cooperation and support of wildlife from the public, the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) is intensifying conservation volunteerism by showcasing flight prowess of Sinag, the youngest eagle in the center.

Sinag which recently celebrated its third hatch day, is also the foundation's ambassador and rallying symbol for conservation volunteerism.

It is all about the willingness to actively participate and contribute to

protecting the Philippine eagle, the biodiversity it represents and the forests.

"By showing Sinag's powerful characteristics and natural behaviors through flight demonstrations, the public would come to value this majestic bird and realize the need to save them from extinction," Nelizza Marzo, PEF communications officer, said.

"This is part of inspiring action from our audience is encouraging appreciation of the species," she added.

The foundation hopes that through Sinag, more will be encouraged to

participate in the mission to save the eagles and protect the forests through volunteerism.

"The PEF has a growing pool of volunteers, born out of constant engagement with institutions like schools and universities nationwide, and active social media presence," Marzo added.

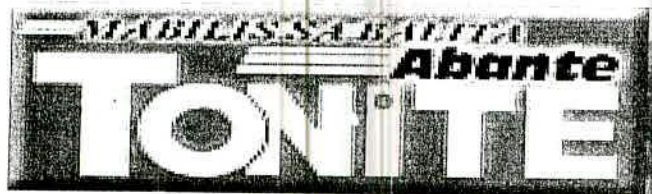
"As more people become aware about the cause, support is also growing. She added that the PEF's work is expanding beyond the center and operate in areas throughout the country where eagles occur," she emphasized.

"Thus, there are many opportunities for partnerships and to engage organizations and individuals to join this noble effort. Thankfully, all the eagles at the center are now adopted and there are still many who are willing to contribute to help further the conservation work," Marzo continued.

"We are grateful for the generosity of our partners and donors like the Davao City Government who help us sustain our operations especially in providing food and shelter to the different raptors and animals in our care," she stressed.



Sinag This Philippine eagle is the foundation's ambassador and rallying symbol for conservation volunteerism. FILE PHOTO



16 DEC 2013

DATE

UPPER HALF

9

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Family Tree Planting bill umabante sa Kongreso

Family Tree Planting bill umabante sa Kamara

Lusot na sa ikalawang pagbasa sa Kamara ang isang panukala na mag-obliga sa bawat magulang na magtanim ng dalawang puno para sa kada sanggol na isisilang.

Nakapaloob ito sa House Bill 8727 o 'Family Tree Planting Act' na iniakda ni Baguio City Rep. Mark Go.

Ang mga puno ay itatanim sa bisinidad ng tirahan o sa lugar na itatalaga ng barangay council na aprubado rin ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Nakasaad din sa panukala na para matiyak na susunod ang lahat, ibibigay lamang ng City o Municipal Local Civil Registry ang Certificate of Live Birth ng bata kapag nakapagtanim na ng puno ang mga magulang nito.

Ang nasabing panukala ay ini-sponsor ni Tarlac Rep. Noel Villanueva, chairman ng House Committee on Reforestation.
(Aries Cano)



13 DEC 2013

DATE

ECOWASTE CALLS FOR PLASTIC-FREE HOLIDAYS

WITH just a few days left before Christmas and New Year, the environmental advocacy group EcoWaste Coalition exhorted the public to do their best to lessen the generation of garbage this festive season.

The group drew attention to the nation's ballooning waste production estimated at over 40,000 tons daily and the need to seriously cut wasting.

"The rash of holiday shopping, gift-giving, partying and other festive activities is expected to generate truckloads of garbage like in past celebrations," said Daniel Alejandre, Zero Waste campaigner of EcoWaste Coalition.

"Individual waste generation in Metro Manila estimated at 0.2650 to 1.0032 kg/person/day, for instance, will surely swell with increased consumption and disposal during the extended holidays, especially if discards are not properly sorted at source. We can show Mother Earth some kindness this jolly season by preventing and reducing waste such as single-use plastics," he added.

Considering the plastic pollution crisis that is threatening the world's oceans, EcoWaste Coalition urged the public to consume and dispose of less plastic during the holidays and beyond.

For a plastic-less Christmas and New Year, the group suggested these tips: 1) Bring reusable bags and containers on your trip to the wet market, *tiangge*, department store or shopping mall; 2) Refrain from buying over packaged products; 3) Avoid disposable cutlery (spoons, forks, knives) and crockery (dishes, plates, cups); 4) Give plastic-free gifts; and 5) Opt for home-made reusable holiday decorations.

"Gift-giving need not put a strain on the environment. Please make it a habit to cut your gift wrap waste. Bags, boxes, cards, ribbons, bows and wrappers should be reused or repurposed instead of being burned or dumped," Alejandre said.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

A-1
 PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
 STORY

BANNER
 STORY

EDITORIAL

CARIC

15 DEC 2013

DATE

Nations still worlds apart at crunch UN climate summit

KATOWICE, POLAND— Marathon talks aimed at charting mankind's path away from climate catastrophe entered overtime on Saturday as nations locked over a plan presented by Poland that exposed sever-

sources of disagreement. Negotiators told Agence France-Presse (AFP) that the early 200 states involved were still far apart on several crucial issues from how nations report reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, to the levels of help given to countries already hurt-

ing from climate change. Ministers at the COP24 talks must agree on a common rule book to make good on promises they made in the landmark 2015 Paris accord, which vowed to limit global temperature rises to well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

But with the starkest warnings yet from scientists highlighting the need to slash fossil fuel emissions within the coming decades in order to meet the safer

cap of 1.5C warming, delegates were urged to act now or condemn at risk nations to disaster.

The summit was meant to wrap up at midnight on Saturday but overran into the wee hours as areas of dispute emerged, often with different alignments of developed and developing nations straddling each divide. The talks have been under way since Dec. 2.

'Not a failure'

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said on Friday that work needed to be finished "with the highest possible level of ambition."

"It's essential for me that Katowice is not a failure," Guterres said.

The Katowice draft text is still subject to change but requires developed countries to deliver and increase on a promise of \$100 billion a year of climate finance to help poorer countries adapt to climate change by 2020 and rules on how to report and monitor each na-



'DINOSAUR' IN THE ROOM
 One of the environmental activists at the climate change conference in Katowice, Poland.

tion's greenhouse gas emissions.

The draft text included no resolution on how the climate fight would be financed, and developed nations responsible for the lion's share of historic greenhouse gas emissions were accused of seeking to shirk funding promises made in Paris.

One veteran observer told

AFP that the United States, despite President Donald Trump's intention to withdraw from Paris, was seeking to water down "differentiation," a bedrock principle of the underlying UN climate convention.

Tentative consensus

Washington wants countries to contribute to the climate fight based on their current emission levels, rather than their historic pollution, meaning the United States would be less bound to help developing nations green their economies.

One potential breakthrough came in the form of tentative consensus over how to treat the latest UN scientific report.

Most nations wanted the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which highlighted the need for greenhouse gas emissions to be slashed to nearly half by 2030 in order to hit the 1.5C target to form a key part of future planning.

But the United States, Saudi

Arabia, Russia and Kuwait objected, leading to watered down language in the draft decision.

IPs find voice

Indigenous peoples (IPs) across the world have secured their voice in the climate conversation, after representatives from nearly 200 countries reached an agreement on a platform that will allow the participation of the IPs in addressing the climate crisis.

The adoption of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform in the UN climate talks was a welcome development among delegates who had been at loggerheads over implementing guidelines of the Paris Agreement.

The platform will strengthen the knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of indigenous communities in addressing and responding to climate change.

Francois Paulette, a representative of the IPs, said that its

adoption was a positive move, as their lands and waters were "rapidly being destroyed" in front of their very eyes.

According to the United Nations, IPs make up 5 percent of the world's population, but care for around 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity.

Despite their huge contribution in protecting forests and other natural resources, they bear the brunt of climate change impacts, said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Corpuz, a Filipino indigenous activist with Kankana-ey Igorot roots, also underscored the importance of climate finance to support indigenous communities that are disproportionately affected by global warming.

She said, for instance, if indigenous communities wanted to protect their forests, there should be resources to support forest guards in their area. —REPORTS FROM AFP, REUTERS AND JHES-SET O. ENANO INQ



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The Manila Times

D-2
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

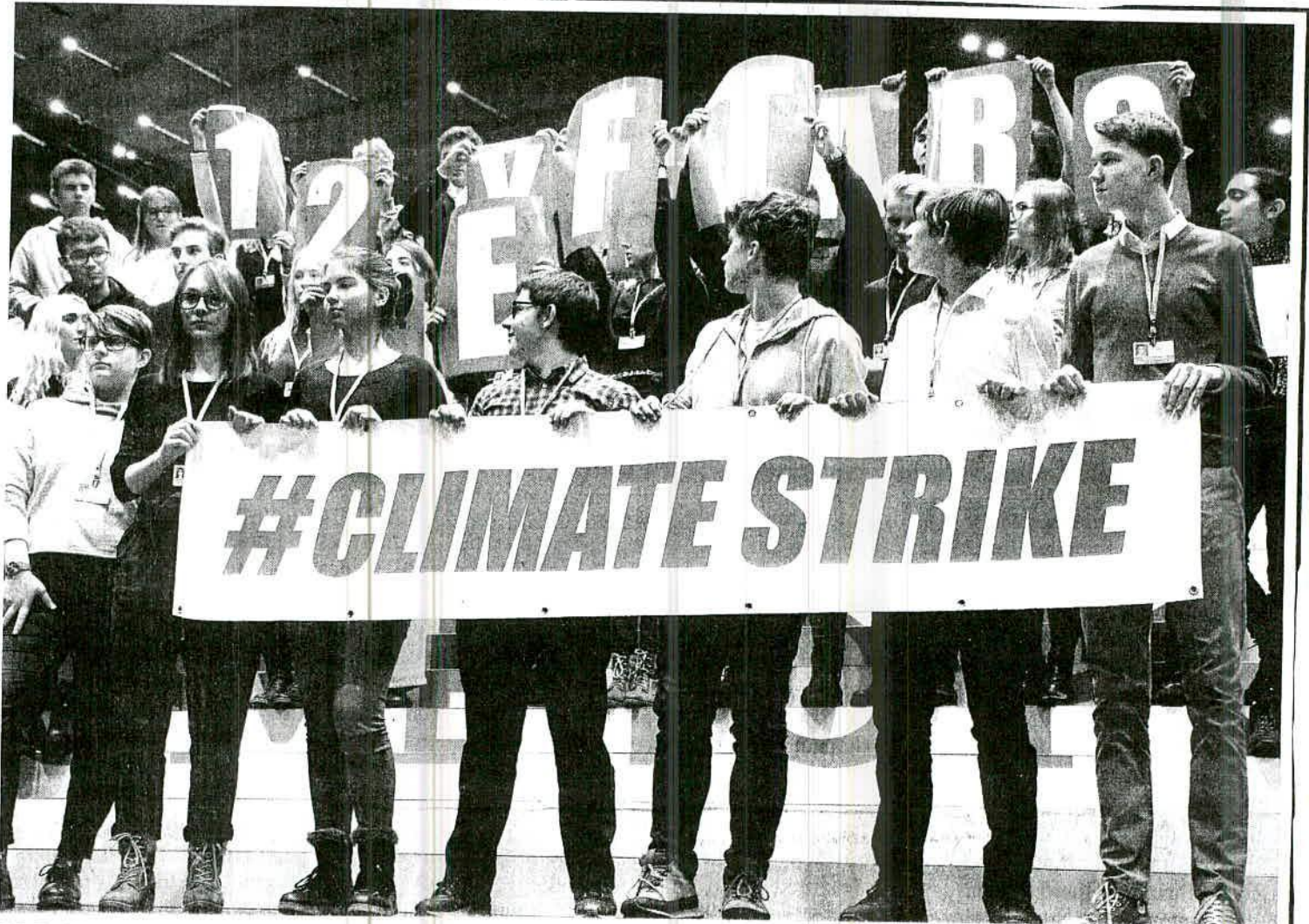
EDITORIAL

CARTOON

16 DEC 2013

DATE

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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YOUNG VOICES Polish teenagers stage a protest in the United Nations climate conference venue on the last days of talks to urge negotiators from almost 200 countries to reach an agreement on ways of keeping global warming in check in Katowice, Poland on Friday. AP PHOTO



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The Manila Times

A-6
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

16 DEC 2013

DATE

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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Oceans of garbage prompt war on plastics

As faced with images of turtles strangled by plastic bags, beaches littered with garbage and islands of trash floating in the oceans, environmentalists say the world is waking up to the need to tackle plastic pollution at the source. Stories on social media of giant seas of floating waste or beached whales found in India with six kilos (13 pounds) of plastic in its stomach are bringing plastic pollution into spotlight.

There is no question plastic is having a moment," said George Leonard, chief scientist of the Ocean Conservancy.

"We are in a moment in time where we are starting to stare at the problem in the face, and we're feeling optimistic and hopeful that we can solve it."

Leonard and other environmental experts are optimistic the awareness will make the problem of plastics hard to ignore and push attention on how best to deal with such waste.

Eight million tonnes of plastic are dumped into the oceans each year, according to a study in the Science journal.

But that is only what comes ashore on the land, said Francois Galgani, researcher with the French institute Ifremer, estimating another two million tonnes could come from ships and especially fishing vessels.

As a consequence more than 100 species are impacted, including turtles who confuse plastic bags with the jellyfish they eat, Galgani said.

More than 5 billion plastic bags



Eight million tons of plastic are spilled into the oceans each year, according to a study in the Science journal AFP PHOTO

are used every year, and a ban is under way, the first phase towards a possible general ban. Bags could be followed by bans on plastic straws and cotton swabs.

The European Union wants to ban certain single-use plastics by the end of 2021. For Galgani, that would be good news, as it would represent around 30 to 40 percent of the plastic that ends up in the oceans.

"Everyone is working for the good cause, even industries," he said.

Cleaning up?

But according to a study in Science Advances review, from the 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic produced between 1950 and 2015, 6.3 billion tonnes became garbage that was not very biodegradable material and only 9 percent was recycled.

For Greenpeace's Mirjam Kopp, though, recycling is not enough.

"We cannot continue this business as usual, we need to change the throw-away culture we have developed," Kopp said. "We need to tackle the problem at the source."

"Industries are putting the blame on the consumers, saying they should recycle more, but we don't think it will help. They are responsible for the single-use

plastics they put on the market."

The UN Environment agency has already declared war on plastics in the oceans and made it the environmental theme of 2018.

"We need stop treating plastic as something that we can just throw away after we have used it, and start treating it as a material that has real value," said Petter Malvik, campaign manager for the Clean Seas campaign launched by UN-Environment in 2017.

Already around 60 countries have joined in the campaign started in 2017 to ban non-reusable plastics.

"Although bans alone won't solve the problem, they are definitely more than just a drop in the bucket," Malvik said.

Another problem is so-called "ghost nets" - fishing nets lost at sea or left intentionally abandoned which continue to catch fish for months after.

When it comes to cleaning the oceans, though, experts say the task may be far more complex. Scientists, for example, have doubts for over a giant floating clean-up device proposed by the Ocean Cleanup foundation which aims to clear half of the huge waste deposit floating in the Pacific in the next five years.

Dubbed the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch", the abnormal mass of floating debris caused by marine turbulence has now reached 80,000 tonnes spread over an area three times the size of France, according to a study in Scientific Reports.

And if you want to clean up the ocean, Leonard says, then the surface is not the place to start.

What floats on the surface -- particles of micro-plastic and larger objects -- is nothing compared to what ends up on the ocean floor, experts say.

So what is the solution? "Degradation," says Galgani of France's Ifremer institute, referring to the breakdown of plastics. But for some plastics that means a process that may take "hundreds of years". AFP



ANTIPOLO LIGHTS UP EARTH-FRIENDLY XMAS TREE

THE City Government of Antipolo paid homage to Mother Earth as it recently lighted its Disneyland-themed Christmas tree which is made up of some 12,000 recycled plastic bottles, cups and cartons gathered.

According to Mayor Casimiro "Jun" Ynares III, Antipolo has been implementing the earth-friendly concept for the Christmas celebrations in the past few years as the city's commitment to environmental sustainability in its governance programs.

He said that their earth-friendly thrust is in compliance with the YES (Ynares EcoSystem) to Green Project which covers clean and green

environment, and livelihood opportunities through recycling and utilization of raw materials and by-products of local produce. The project is based on Executive Order 11 issued in 1993 by Rizal Provincial Gov. Rebecca Ynares.

The city is a recipient of the Environmental Compliance Audit (ECA) Platinum Award 2017 from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), which includes the enactment of its Basura Code, regular tree-planting activities, Linis Creek Program, and other environment-related measures.

The tree lighting was attended by Ynares, Vice Mayor Josefina Gatlabayan, Antipolo City first lady

Andrea Ynares, Reps. Romeo Acop, Chiqui Roa-Puno, and Robbie Puno, Antipolo city and barangay officials, and provincial board members.

The event served as the kickoff to the City's monthlong tourism-oriented Christmas Fiesta which included a grand parade, drum and lyre contest and marching band contests, the Mutya ng Antipolo pageant, the earth-friendly YES *parol* and belen design contest, musical concerts featuring rock bands Imago and Grace Note, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the traditional *Simbang Gabi*, the Bida ng Kusina Series, and the Bigsayawit to mark the 143rd Don Juan Sumulong Day.