

27 DEC 2013

DATE : _____

DAY : Thursday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



27 DEC 2018

TITLE:

PAGE 1

DATE

Indigenous people key in mitigating climate change – DENR

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

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

"We are greatly aware that our IP brothers and sisters have a bigger part to play in helping us in combatting the effects of climate change and global warming, and even our increasing problems in managing our solid waste," DENR Undersecretary for field operations Miguel Cuna said.

Cuna said the IPs, particularly the Aetas, have played an important part in the success of DENR programs, including the National Greening Program

(NGP), 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 para sa Kalikasan" event of the DENR and Katutubong Aetas" held in Porac, Pampanga recently.

"Salugnayan" is a term derived from two Filipino words, *salu-salu* (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, and current issues

and problems on the environment.

It also served as an occasion to somehow celebrate Christmas with the IPs, especially the children, who were treated to a free breakfast and each given a pair of slippers as gift.

Another important part of the event was the tree-planting activity conducted by local community leaders and DENR officials to symbolize their commitment to environmental protection.

The Salugnayan is a joint project of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office in Pampanga, DENR central office, local community leaders and the Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte National Executive Coordinating Council in the province.



Trusted Since 1898

The Manila Times

B4
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

27 DEC 2013

DATE

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR gets tougher vs Manila Bay pollution

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will further intensify the crackdown on pollution in Manila Bay starting next year to help improve its quality and save the water body from further environmental degradation, as the Supreme Court ordered.

DENR is scheduled to meet next month with stakeholders to discuss measures to reduce the volume of indiscriminately disposed garbage in areas along Manila Bay, including untreated discharges from informal settlements that eventually flow into the bay and raise its level of coliform bacteria.

"The objective is to bring down coliform level in Manila Bay," Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

He highlighted the urgency for action, noting coliform level in Manila Bay already surged to over 300 million most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100 ml).

"Manila Bay is unfit for swimming at present," he said.

According to DENR, the safe coliform level is 100 mpn/100ml.

Cimatu targets lowering the coliform level in Manila Bay to an even safer level of less than 100

mpn/100 ml, so its waters can be fit again for swimming and other forms of recreation.

Coliform bacteria level is commonly used as an indicator of water pollution, according to experts. Pollution in Manila Bay has been mainly linked to land-based human activities, including discharge of municipal, industrial and agricultural wastes aside from land runoff.

In 2008, the Supreme Court ordered DENR and other agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay so its waters can be fit for recreation.

The planned crackdown against pollution in Manila Bay is in accordance with the high tribunal's order.

While Manila Bay is the premier international gateway to Metro Manila, its coastal area includes parts of Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan and Cavite.

DENR said seven major rivers intersect Manila Bay's 190-kilometer long coastline that are major sources of pollution.

Issue on informal settlers

Environment Undersecretary Ben-

ny Antiporda said DENR is coordinating with the Department of the Interior and Local Government regarding informal settlers in areas bordering Manila Bay, so government can relocate them eventually.

Local government units (LGUs) must no longer tolerate further proliferation of informal settlements, he said.

"We'll file charges against local officials for environmental problems stemming from such settlements in their areas," Antiporda said.

Informal settlers' dwellings generally lack sanitary facilities and they discharge feces and other wastes directly to the environment.

Republic Act 9003, or the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act," tasks LGUs nationwide as front liners in implementing solid waste management (SWM) programs in their areas of jurisdiction.

Solid waste "shall refer to all discarded household, commercial waste, non-hazardous institutional and industrial waste, street sweepings, construction debris, agricultural waste, and other non-hazardous/non-toxic solid waste," according to the Act.

SWM is "the discipline associ-

ated with the control of generation, storage, collection, transfer and transport, processing, and disposal of solid wastes in a manner that is in accordance with the best principles of public health, economics, engineering, conservation, aesthetics, and other environmental considerations, and that is also responsive to public attitudes," it added.

Measures to reduce garbage dumping and informal settlements' untreated discharges, including possible use of technologies like silt curtains for containing waste, will form part of the rehabilitation plan for Manila Bay.

Cimatu said DENR aims to use some of its funds to help rehabilitate Manila Bay.

"We have fines paid for violation of environmental laws, so we'll try to find out if these can be used for the rehabilitation," he said.

He expects the plan's implementation to result in a cleaner, less coliform-tainted Manila Bay by Christmas next year.

"I'm very optimistic this can be done so I hope everyone will join us in this endeavor and hand over Manila Bay to the next generation," Cimatu added.

PNA



Villar cited for work on fishing regulation, Manila Bay rehab

By PAOLO ROMERO

Sen. Cynthia Villar was cited by two government departments for her crucial role in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF) as well as her work in the clean up and rehabilitation of the Manila Bay.

During the First command conference of the Philippine Committee against IUUF at the Philippine International Convention Center last Monday, the Department of Agriculture (DA) recognized Villar "for her pivotal role in the enactment of Republic Act 10654, which is the country's legal backbone in the fight against IUUF."

Villar as chairperson of the committee on agriculture and food, principally sponsored the bill which also resulted in the lifting of the yellow tag on Philippine fish imports.

If not immediately ad-

ressed, the yellow tag would cause a ban on the Philippines to export fish products to Europe, one of the country's largest markets.

It also caused the inclusion of the country in the European Commission's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) and allowed duty-free entry of over 6,000 Philippine products to Europe. "With the enactment of this law, we were able to address two important things - one is to ensure the sustainability of our oceans and two is to ensure the livelihood of our fishermen. It also helped the Philippines diversify trade, increase exports and attract foreign direct investments," Villar said.

The law, which was signed on Feb. 27, 2015, amended the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998. The law sanctions IUUF and modified penalties for a more deterrent effect.

The law also provides for the creation of the Fisheries Management Fund from the fines and penalties collected. The fund will provide livelihood and scholarship programs, among others, to fisher folks and their family.

With the enactment of the law, Villar said the country was able to fulfill its commitment to the international community to protect marine life and resources.

The senator also got recognition for her Manila Bay advocacy from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in a ceremony marking the 10th year anniversary of the issuance of a mandamus directing 13 government agencies to lead the rehabilitation of the bay.

Villar cited the work of environmental lawyer and Magsaysay awardee Antonio Oposa for filing the case that led to the SC landmark decision.



Foreign cruise ships barred from Boracay

By MA. STELLA F. ARNALDO [@akosistellaBM](#)
Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

NO FOREIGN cruise ships will be allowed to make port calls in Boracay Island beginning January 2019, pending the finalization of guidelines to be drawn up by an assessment team headed by the Department of Tourism (DOT).

This was confirmed by DOT Undersecretary for Tourism Regulation Coordination and Resource Generation Arturo P. Boncato Jr., who said the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) met on December 21 where a suggestion to form a committee to assess the cruise ships visiting the island was approved, to be "chaired by the DOT, with its members from the DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources], DILG [Department of the Interior and Local Government], PPA [Philippine Ports Authority], PNP [Philippine

National Police], the Maritime Industry Authority, and the LGU [local government unit]. We will also invite the private stakeholders if need be."

The BIATF has come under fire from stakeholders on Boracay after its officials announced during the island's reopening that the arrival of cruise ships would be suspended. Immediately after, however, about four cruise ships made port calls on the island, the last one being Genting Cruises's *MS World Dream*, on December 16. The cruise ship can carry about 3,400 passengers

26

The number of international cruises that have Boracay Island in their itineraries from January to October 2019, according to the Clean Cruising web site

and a crew of 2,000.

In a separate interview, DENR Undersecretary Sherwin S. Rigor told the BUSINESSMIRROR, "the arrivals of cruise ships have been held in abeyance until further notice, because of the creation of the DOT of this assessment team to create guidelines on how to handle cruise ships. A month from now they will release the guidelines."

He added, "arrangements have already been made with the PPA" to pull the docking permits of the foreign cruise ships that are scheduled to arrive on Boracay. The island, acclaimed as having one of the best beaches in the world by international travel pub-



lications, had reopened on October 26 after being closed for six months for rehabilitation.

According to the Clean Cruising web site, 26 international cruises have Boracay Island in their itineraries from January to October 2019. Next month alone, Windstar Cruises's *Star Legend* is scheduled to make a port call on Boracay on January 20. The *Star Legend* is a 443-foot ship that can carry 208 passengers and 164 crew. Windstar Cruises, with headquarters in Seattle, is a subsidiary of the Xanterra Travel Collection, whose parent firm owns and runs the popular Coachella Music Festival.

Boracay stakeholders point to the cruise ship industry as among the world's worst polluters with the local economy not benefiting from its visits. The DENR had earlier announced that it would require passengers on cruise ships making port calls on the island to purchase local tours instead of just swimming on the beach. **(See, "Cruise passengers have to book activities on Boracay, DENR says," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, December 19, 2018.)**

Meanwhile, it will be a sedate New Year's Eve celebration for visitors on Boracay, as fireworks have been banned. Rigor said in Filipino, "when there are fireworks, the resorts will ask if they can put chairs and tables on the beachfront. That's why there are fireworks, because it's a show that is financed by the hotel owners. In return, they use the tables and chairs on the beachfront and charge P10,000 per table."

He said 40 resorts and hotels had already "requested the use of the beachfront including the fireworks. But [DOT] Secretary Berna [Romulo Puyat] decided on the ban, saying it was the directive of the President [Duterte] to maintain the cleanliness of Boracay." Duterte, when he was a mayor, had prohibited public smoking and fireworks in Davao City.

Pressed why the government permits the annual Philippines International Pyromusical Competition in Manila Bay, which generates more air pollution from fireworks shows by different countries over six nights, and yet bans a 10-minute display held

away from the shore in Boracay, Rigor said it was because "the island is still under rehabilitation."

A report from the Washington D.C.-based environmental group, Friends of the Earth (FOE), said cruise ships had dumped more than a billion gallons of sewage in the ocean in 2014, "much of it raw or poorly treated."

Further, FOE stated that while "some of the 16 cruise lines graded are slowly getting greener; more than 40 percent of the 167 ships still rely on 35-year-old waste treatment technology. Such antiquated treatment systems leave harmful levels of fecal matter, bacteria, heavy metals and other contaminants in the water." Under US laws, "wastewater dumped within three nautical miles of shore must be treated, but beyond that, ships are allowed to dump raw sewage directly into the ocean."

Rigor said the assessment team welcomes reports on environmental pollution caused by cruise ships and encouraged the private tourism stakeholders "to send us studies and reports so we can agenda these for discussion in our next meeting."



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Manila Standard

B31
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

27 DEC 2013

DATE

Globe, SPS back biodiversity gab for Boracay seas

BORACAY may have opened again for international and local tourists to enjoy, but local leaders and authorities are still keeping an eye on businesses to ensure that all enterprises remain compliant to environmental policies, and that new measures to preserve this highly-popular destination are strictly followed.

In support of the government's efforts, Globe Telecom, together with Save Philippine Seas (SPS), facilitated a one-day marine biodiversity workshop for some 30 business stakeholders, including hotel and owners of various establishments in the island.

In response, participants pledged their commitment to implement immediately the sustainable practices they learned at the workshop.

Yoly Crisanto, Globe Chief Sustainability Officer and SVP for Corporate Communications, said: "We work with the community to promote environment-friendly practices so that collectively we can contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals."

"Boracay Island is a Philippine pride. All stakeholders in Boracay have a responsibility to preserve its pristine beauty. One truly impactful way of achieving this is by actively participating in its conservation," Crisanto added.

"Our awareness campaign and workshops resonate with our mission to responsibly manage our environmental impacts by implementing sustainable practices—with the intention of improving the lives of the local communities," she said.

The event was graced by top marine experts like Boracay Marine Biologist Haron Deo Vargas, who continues to lead efforts in saving turtles found within the island's waters.

Essential points of the workshop included sharing the current Philippine environmental situation, and how business establishments can integrate sustainable best practices into their day-to-day operations.

The workshop also discussed simple but conscious efforts that go a long way in helping save one of the world's most beautiful beaches from further damage.

These include offering refillable containers for personal care products for guests to use in hotels and resorts; encouraging guests to bring reusable shopping bags and utensils; refraining from using sand, seashells, corals, and sea stars as decorations; avoiding balloon or lantern releases; and avoiding the use of all single-use plastics like straws, to name a few.



27 DEC 2013

DATE
9
PAGE

✓
UPPER HALF
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Boracay balik sa dating problema after 2 months ng re-opening

MULI umanong nagsilabasan ang mga dating problema sa Boracay, dalawang buwan makaraan itong buksan sa publiko noong Oktubre 26.

Batay sa reklamo ng mga stakeholders at residente sa Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force na idinaan sa isang liham, inireklamo ng mga ito ang mahal daw na singil sa pamasaha sa public transport katulad ng mga tricycle lalo na sa mga turistang pasahero.

Nariyan din ang mahal din na bayad sa mga bangka patawid sa isla, at ang muling paglaganap ng mga souvenirs shop sa beach front.

Kaugnay nito, hiniling nila na dapat maging seryoso ang gobyerno sa pagmonitor at paghihigpit sa mga panuntunan na ipinapatupad sa tanyag na isla.

Una rito, umapela ang mga residente sa pamahalaan na ipatigil ang pagdaong ng mga cruise ship dahil maliban sa nagpapasikip lamang ang mga dayuhang turista ay nagdadala pa ang mga ito ng basura sa naturang tourist spot.

Ito rin ang isang dahilan kaya lumampas sa 6,000 ang limit na bilang ng mga turista sa Bocaray na naunang itinakda ng Department of Tourism.

Sa kabilang dako, naunang sinabi ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources Usec. Benny Antiporda, na batay sa kanilang pag-aaral ay hindi naman nakakaapekto sa carrying capacity sa isla ang mga turistang sakay ng ilang cruise liner.



SHOOTING STRAIGHT

BOBIT S. AVILA

2018 in a nutshell is a historic year!

Other news with historic magnitude was the closure last April of the fabled island of Boracay for six months, which reopened last October. This event emboldened me to challenge the new Commodore of the Manila Yacht Club Robert "Bobby" Joseph to be on top of the clean up of Manila Bay in the same spirit and determination as we cleaned up Boracay and he accepted that challenge last Nov. 17 when he was installed as Commodore.

Since then DENR's Roy Cimatu also showed his determination to clean up Manila Bay and last Dec. 20 the **Philippine STAR** headlined this "An attainable objective" with clean up plans for Boracay, El Nido and Manila Bay. Now many journalists have joined the chorus that if Boracay can be cleaned up, Manila Bay can also be cleaned up.





Trusted Since 1898

The Manila Times

A7
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

27, DEC 2013

DATE

Ex-rebels retained as forest guards

BACOLOD CITY: With the recent approval of P9.6 million for their P8,000 per month honorarium for 2019, 100 members of the Kapatiran Para sa Progresong Panlipunan Inc. will continue to serve as forest guards in Western Visayas.

"The Kapatiran" is an association of former rebels, particularly of the Rebolusyonyong Partidong Manggagawa Pilipinas and Revolutionary Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPM-P/RPA-ABB).

Simon Elmer Colacion, regional coordinator of the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (Pamana) program, said the forest guards are spread across the four provinces of Western Visayas, with Negros Occidental getting 58; Antique, 22; Aklan, 14; and Iloilo, 6.

"They are profiled members of the Kapatiran and have been assessed by the Opapp (Office of the President Adviser on the process)," he said.

If there are requests for additional guards, these will have to go through the Opapp.

The program is implemented by the Opapp in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and hires Kapatiran members as forest guards under the National Greening Program (NGP).

The Pamana program is the national government's peace and development framework to respond to and strengthen peace-building, reconstruction and development in conflict-affected area.

In support of the program, the DENR is committed to provide employment to members of the RPM-P/RPA-ABB Tabara Paduano Group (TPG), enroll the Kapatiran to the NGP, and identify peace and development community sites for the group.

Colacion said the group has been responsible for maintaining peace and order in the region.

"At present they (rebel returnees) are engaged in various income-generating projects and some were hired as forest guards," he said.

The Aklan and Negros Occidental chapters of the Kapatiran were awarded a tenurial instrument called community-based forest management agreement (CBFMA).

With the CBFMA, members have tenurial security to develop, use and manage specific portions of forest lands within their peace and development community (PDC) sites, promote forest protection and utilize and sustain forest products.

Two of the four PDC sites in Aklan and Negros Occidental were awarded the CBFMA — Iba Jay, Aklan and Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental.

The PDCs in the cities of Cadiz and San Carlos in Negros Occidental entered into an agreement with the DENR to develop and protect portions of the Northern Negros Natural Park.

EUGENE Y. ADIONG



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



12
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

RANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

FILE:

RIZAL PARK

(A) 1/2

PAGE 1

DATE

12 truckloads of trash hauled from Rizal Park

By ROBERTZON RAMIREZ

At least 12 truckloads of garbage left by families who celebrated Christmas in Rizal Park were collected from the popular tourist destination in Manila, officials said yesterday.

Task Force Manila Clean-up head Che Borromeo said an estimated 204 cubic meters of trash, mostly plastics, mats and empty food materials were hauled from the park as of 9 a.m.

Personnel of the Metro Parkways Clearing Group of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority said they collected 13.7 tons or four truckloads of trash on Christmas Day alone.

Photos of Rizal Park and plazas that have been littered with trash after the Christmas celebrations were posted on social media.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) expressed dismay over the volume of garbage left by the park-goers.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said they are disappointed to know that people disrespect the country's tourist attractions despite their efforts to boost tourism.

"While we are happy by the people's continued patronage of Rizal Park, we are frustrated because there are individuals who do not value our tourist sites, especially the park that commemorates our national hero," Puyat said.

"We would like to remind everyone that preserving our country's destinations is also the duty of the people. Let us be responsible tourists; let us keep our tourist spots clean by throwing trash in bins,"

she added.

Around 5,000 people flocked to Rizal Park on Christmas, according to the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) of the DOT.

More Filipinos are expected to welcome the New Year in Rizal Park.

"While we continue our efforts to maintain the cleanliness of our tourist sites, we appeal for public cooperation during the New Year revelry," Puyat said.

Penelope Diaz Belmonte, executive director of the NPDC, said they would mobilize personnel to clean the park.

She asked the visitors to practice "clean as you go" scheme and be responsible park-goers.

'Keep parks clean'

The EcoWaste Coalition appealed to the public to value the environment and

keep public spaces clean.

"Just like how we keep our homes orderly and clean, we should do the same with our surroundings," the EcoWaste Coalition said in its Facebook page.

The group reminded the public that littering is penalized under Republic Act 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Act, which prohibits "littering, throwing, dumping of waste matters in public places such as roads, sidewalks, canals, esteros or parks and establishment, or causing or permitting the same."

Violators will be fined up to P500 and community service for one to 15 days.

"Littering is a bad behavior, which reflects our disrespect and lack of concern for Mother Nature and for other people," EcoWaste Coalition said.

- With Helen Flores, Marc Jayson Cayabyab



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



12
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

TITLE:

RIZAL PARK (B) 2/2

PAGE

1

DATE

12

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

metro

EDITOR: DULCE A. SANCHEZ

THURSDAY | DECEMBER 27, 2018

A street sweeper
collects trash left
by people who
spent Christmas
in Manila's Rizal
Park.

KRIZJOHN ROSALES





Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE

PAGKATAPOS NG CHRISTMAS 60 toneladang basura nahakot sa Luneta

Umabot sa 60 tonelada o 12 trucksload ng basura ang nahakot ng pwersa ng Metro Parkways Clearing Group (MPCG) ng Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) at Manila Department of Public Safety (MDPS) sa Rizal Park matapos ang Pasko.

Nabatid na tinatayang nasa kalahating milyon katao ang nagtungo at namasyal sa Rizal Park nitong Pasko.

Kung saan nag-iwan ang mga ito ng tambak na basura tulad ng mga bote, plastik at tira-tirang pagkain, na umabot sa ka-

habaan ng Maria Orosa St. Nang mawala ang tao sa park, mistulang dinaraan ng tsunami o bagyo ang park dahil sa nagkalat na basura.

Dahil sa insidenteng ito, labis na nadismaya ang Department of Tourism (DOT) sa kawalan ng disiplina at tambak na basura na iniwan ng mga taong namasyal sa

**Nina LORDETH BONILLA,
DORIS FRANCHE at LUDY BERMUDO**

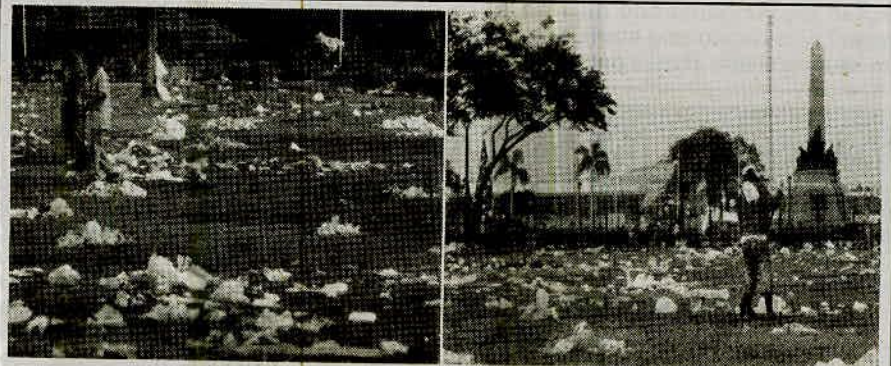
naturang parke.

Inaasahang sa Bagong Taon ay dadagsain na naman ng tao ang Rizal Park at panawagan ng MMDA, na pairalin ang disiplina hinggil sa pagtatapon ng basura.

Hindi lang sa Rizal Park nasumpungan ang kawa-

lang disiplina ng marami, maging sa Quezon Memorial Circle na dinagsa rin ng tao noong Pasko, sangkaterbang basura rin ang iniwan ng mga ito.

Nagpahayag naman ng pagkadismaya si Eco-Waste Coalition Chemical



Matapos dagsain ng may kalahating milyong tao ang Rizal Park noong Kapaskuhan, ito naman ang naging tanawin kahapon sa parke ang nagkalat na sangkaterbang basura. (Kuha ni KJ Rosales)

Safety Campaigner Anthony Dizon sa kawalan ng responsibilidad mula sa pami-pamilya at grupo na nagtipon sa nasabing pook pasyalan.

Batay sa pag-aaral ng

EcoWaste Coalition, higit 40,000-pounds ng basura ang naiipon ng mga tao kada-araw.

Dumodoble pa ito pagdating ng mahahalagang okasyon gaya ng Pasko.



27 DEC 2013

DATE

TAMBAK na basura, ito ang pamas-ko ng ilan nating kababayan na nagdiwang sa Luneta Park, kamakalawa.

Nakahihiya hindi ba? Araw ng Pasko, pero wala pa rin tayong disiplina. Tsk!

Sa totoo lang, hindi na dapat paulit-ulit na itinuturo ang tamang pagtatapon ng basura sa lahat dahil kahit noon pa man ay alam na nating ang basura ay itinatapon sa tamang lagayan at hindi kung saan-saan.

‘Yun nga lang dahil sa kulang talaga sa disiplina ang karamihan, kahit maliliit na bagay ay dapat pa ring ituro para lamang tumatak sa kanilang isipan.

Nakalulungkot na mayroon sa atin ang nag-aalaga ng kapaligiran kung saan bumubuo ng mga organisasyon at nagsasagawa ng mga proyekto na makagaganda sa ating kalikasan, pero ilan din sa atin ang sumisira nito.

‘Yung naghahangad tayo ng pagbabago, pero wala tayong malasakit sa bayan, paano tayo uunlad n’yan?

Kaya ang panawagan natin sa mga kinauukulan, kung kinakailangang taasan ang multa sa mga mahuhuling nagtatapon ng basura kung saan-saan,

Iniwang basura ng mga bumisita sa Luneta Park noong Pasko, tambak!

gawin!

Marami pa rin kasi ang hindi natututo, mula sa pagpapabaya sa Boracay Island, Manila Bay, Ilog-Pasig at marami pang iba, tila hindi tayo nangangamba, gayung kaunting ulan nga lang, eh, lahat apektado na ng baha kahit ‘yung mga matataas na lugar pa.

Samantala, ang paalala natin sa lahat, huwag nating hayaan na tuluyang masira ang kalikasan nang dahil sa ating kapabayaan.



Surigao del Sur tribes join hands to protect forests

BY KATHLEEN D. ZAMBAS

FOR the first time, the Manobo and Mamanwa tribes of Lanuza, Surigao del Sur have joined forces as “Bantay Banwa” or forest wardens of Mount Hilong-Hilong.

Part of the larger Mount Diwata Mountain Range, Mount Hilong-Hilong straddles the highlands of Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur of the Caraga Region to Compostela Valley of Davao Region. It is believed to be a nesting site of the critically endangered Philippine Eagle, containing one of the few remaining primary forests in the country — a home of many plants and animals that can be found nowhere else in the planet.

Organized by the Haribon

Foundation, tribal leaders of the Manobo and Mamanwa groups joined a multi-sectoral consultation meeting participated in by representatives from the local government unit of Lanuza, Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Lanuza, National Committee for Indigenous People (NCIP), Armed Forces of the Philippines and other community members.

According to Melchor John Largo of the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office

in Lanuza, Surigao del Sur, the participation of both Manobo and Mamanwa tribes in working together for the forest advocacy is a rare sight in Lanuza.

“Kung walay akahuyan, walay kalasangan. Kung walay Kalasangan, mudangat ang katalagman. Kay ang kalasangan, mao ang atong kinabuhi (Without trees, there is no forest, without forest, there will be disasters. With forest, there is life),” Datu Pedrito Agustin, tribal leader of the Manobo group, said.

Under the Forest Governance Project or FoGoP by Haribon and BirdLife International, the two tribes, and the NCIP signed a memorandum of agreement for the implementation of the conservation project in the areas of Mount Hilong-hilong.

“Nalipay ko [kami] na nakakat-on sa pag tulun-an para mapanalipdan ang atong kinaiyahan (We are glad that we have gained knowledge on how we could help more in protecting our forest and environment),” said Mimie Bongcayao from the Mamanwa tribe.

During the meeting, Manobo and Mamanwa tribes identified and designated members as forest wardens. A series of forest warden trainings will follow the consultation meetings.

FoGoP is a five-year project funded by the European Union in partnership with Birdlife International. In the Philippines, there are three key biodiversity areas identified including Mount Hilong-hilong, which encompasses the ancestral domains of the Manobo and Mamanwa tribes.



Compostela Valley gets non-polluting gold plant

NABUNTURAN, Compostela Valley: The Department of Science and Technology (DoST) and the University of the Philippines (UP) turned over an environment-friendly gold-copper mineral processing plant to the provincial government of Compostela Valley.

Located in Nabunturan, the plant is the fourth facility in the Philippines that utilizes what is called community-led integrated non-mercury, non-cyanide gold extraction method (CLINN GEM), which was developed by scientists from UP. Three other plants are in use in Benguet, Camarines Norte and Agusan del Norte.

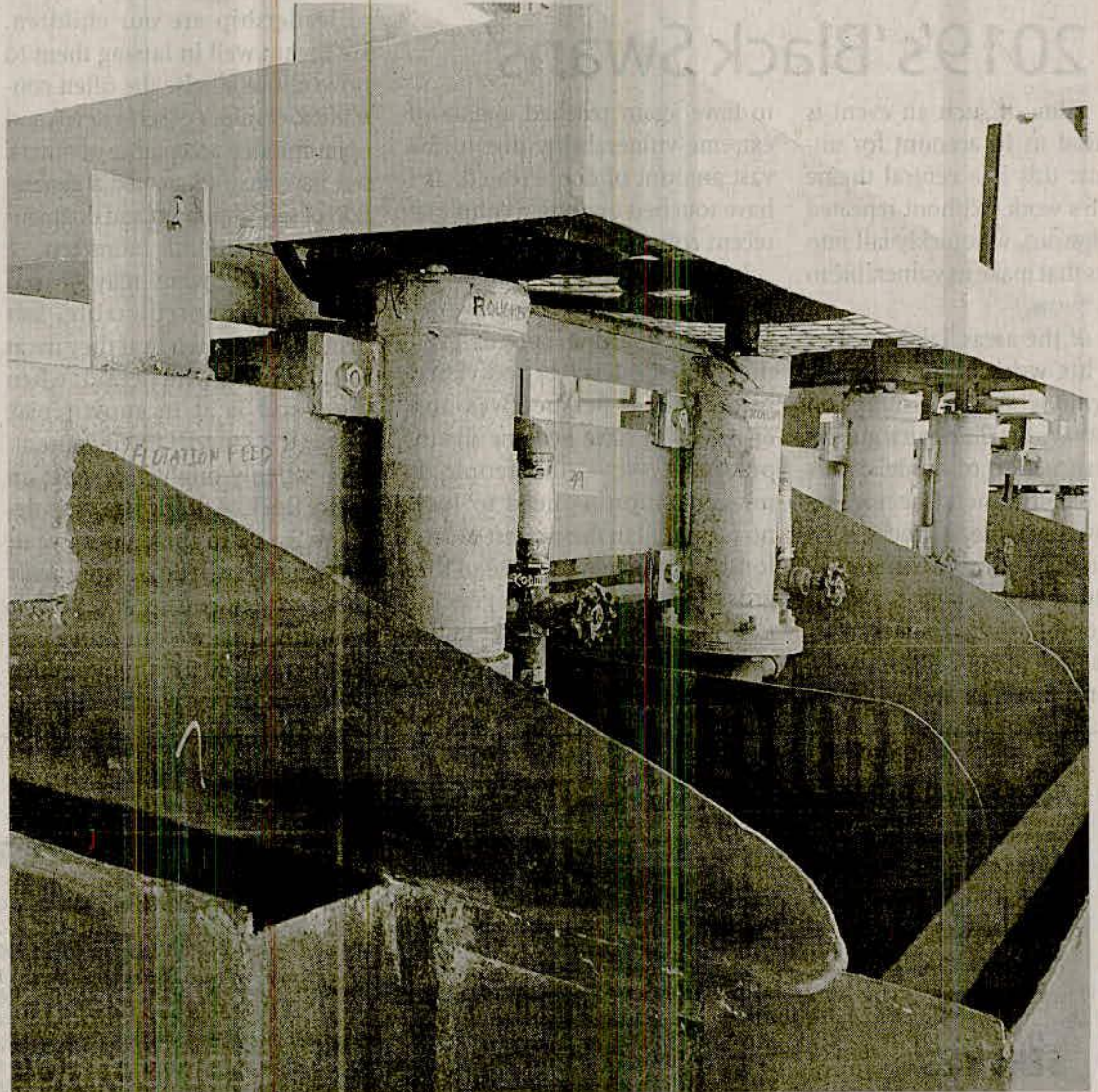
The P50-million project was funded by the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development under DoST.

According to UP professor Herman Mendoza, the plant employs practical technology so it no longer requires cyanide or mercury to dissolve rock and soil from raw gold or copper. The technology could improve the operations of small-scale miners.

"This facility should remain a research facility for the mean time where people, the small-scale mining communities, should learn to use this technology, the CLINN GEM technology," Mendoza said.

During the field testing, it was reported the CLINN GEM technology offers a more faster and cheaper way of extracting gold from the ore.

Mendoza added that more researches were needed to upgrade the plant because the ore found in Compostela Valley had



■ Photo shows the environment-friendly gold-copper mineral processing equipment developed by scientists from the University of the Philippines, which was recently turned over to the provincial government of Compostela Valley for use by small miners in the province. PIA PHOTO

unique characteristics compared to other provinces.

The local miners expressed gratitude and support to the project, hoping it will improve their livelihood.

"Pasalamat usab mi nga gitanaw

sa gobyerno kung unsaon makatabang dinha sa mga gagmay mga minero pinaagi sa mga proyekto nga magamit aron nga maminimal ang gasto ug aron makatabang pud sa environment (We thank the government for looking

at how they can help the small miners through projects that can be used to minimize cost and to also help the environment)," said Gil Indino, chairman of the Nabunturan Integrated Miners Development Cooperative. PIA



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

27 DEC 2013

DATE

Planning for climate change



DUTY CALLS
FLORENCIO FIANZA

IT IS only the 27th and there are already 14 reported firecracker victims. At this rate, firecracker casualties will increase compared to last year. People cannot seem to learn at all. It is time to ban the sale and manufacture of the dangerous types of firecrackers that could maim or kill. Losing fingers, a hand or getting killed is never the way to celebrate the coming of the New Year. Instead we should simply try to celebrate with wholesome family activities instead of lighting firecrackers that could bring us harm.

The tsunami in Indonesia that killed several hundred people was triggered by the volcano Anak Krakatau when it erupted causing an underwater landslide that killed many unsuspecting people. This once again signals the importance of disaster preparedness.

Anak Krakatau is what remained of the gigantic Krakatau volcano that erupted in 1883 killing 36,417 people. This tsunami a few days ago came without any warning whatsoever and therefore caught the people totally by surprise. To top it all, the tsunami early warning devices have been out of service for the last six years and were never repaired. This disaster came just three months after another earthquake and tsunami that killed about 2,556 people when a volcano erupted in Palu, Central Sulawesi.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo has now ordered the purchase of new tsunami warning devices and the repair of those unserviceable tsunami early warning devices. This action sort of remind us of the way we do things in this country. For countries located along the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, natural disasters is a real and present danger that could strike anytime without any warning. This is as good a time as any

to ask our government what it is doing to mitigate the effects of natural disasters brought about by climate change.

The answer to this question is unfortunately hardly enough. A simple glance at the map will tell us that our country which is already one of the most natural disaster-prone countries in the world and has also been identified as one of many countries that will be affected most

“Poor countries suffer more.”

by climate change. Even in the best of times, typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis often batter the nation causing so much misery. As we are now learning, it no longer matters where one lives. One can live by the sea or away from it and no one is spared the wrath of natural calamities. Although there are still people who deny that climate change is caused primarily by human activity, climate change as a result of global warming is very real.

We, Filipinos are experiencing this already. Typhoons are getting stronger and can come even when we least expect it. The strongest storm that ever hit land hit the country in 2013 under the international name of Haiyan. It had sustained winds of 315 kph and gusts of 380 kph. Never before in the history of our country did we experience such a typhoon. It killed more than 10,000 people, many of them were never found. The government stopped counting when the figure reach seven thousand plus because of the desire of the incompetent Aquino government to minimize the destruction.

The storm caused destruction never before experienced in this country that it is now the accepted yardstick on how the government prepares for disaster mitigation. People are now more conscious and willing to evacuate when required to do so. But unfortunately, there are still many people who do not seem to have

learned any lessons or simply refuse to follow sensible government suggestions to vacate areas when strong typhoons that can cause landslides and flooding might hit the country. This is where the government must be firm and resolute.

The impact of global warming and climate change will only get worse if government fails to put in place sensible policies to strengthen the country's resilience to climate change. We know that the government already has the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change which is supposed to coordinate the government response to climate change. But nothing insignificant has come out of this body. Let me also quote a statement from NEDA Secretary Ernesto Pernia, the principal planning official of the government. "The NEDA Climate Change Strategy is a four-part initiative that will be implemented from 2018 to 2021 to catalyze behavioral change among the NEDA employees. With this strategy, we aim to reduce the agency's energy and water consumption and per capita greenhouse emissions while maximizing productivity of our agency."

If this is the government strategy, then it is sadly lacking. The good secretary wants to start small and is hoping to influence all government offices to follow suit but what this country needs is a program that can be implemented all over the country like for instance stopping the building of coal-fired power plants which seem to be picking up instead of going down. The more sensible policy should be to concentrate on renewable energy. One absurd news item that I read is that the pork worth P8 billion intended for the Bicol region was in fact flood control measures to mitigate climate change. The thing about global warming and climate change is that no country will be left unaffected. If our government officials think that climate change is more the problem of the developed world and we do not have to do our share, they should think again. In fact, poorer countries will suffer more because these countries have less resources to spend to surmount the problem.

A Happy New Year to one and all.

www.emiljurado.weebly.com



Trusted Since 1898

The Manila Times

B4
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

27 DEC 2013

The business of climate change

I AM very happy to be back on my desk and share with you my 35th article, which means that I have been writing this column, *All About Choices*, for the past 35 weeks. I am truly grateful, deep inside, to *The Manila Times*, to its leadership led by its President and Chief Executive Officer, Dante "Klink" Ang 2nd, and Peter Conrad Cariño (who edits the Green Industries page among other special sections), for providing a once-a-week discussion on the environment, climate change and sustainability in a national broadsheet.

For my last article this year, I will focus the discussion on the business of climate change.

The past weeks, including the adoption of the "rulebook" during the recently concluded United Nations Climate Change Conference in the Polish City of Katowice, have seen a significant shift in the debate on climate change. No longer the preserve of scientists and political activists, it has started to occupy the mainstream of everyday discussion.

In the world of business and finance, climate change has developed from being a fringe concern, focusing on the company's brand and its corporate and social responsibility, to an increasingly central topic for strategic deliberation and decision-making by executives and investors around the globe.

Driving all this is an emerging consensus on three broad points: that the Earth is warming and science is very clear about it; that this is the result in large part of mankind's emission of greenhouse gases; and that there will be significant consequences for Earth's environment.



ALL ABOUT CHOICES

LUDWIG O. FEDERIGAN

invented, and in most countries enacted, to enable the inventor to benefit from his or her invention. Thus, patent laws "internalize the externality."

A typical case of a negative externality is pollution by a firm: while nuisance or harm is visited upon others, this damage largely falls outside the cost structure of the polluter. Similarly, emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere imposes costs on present and future generations, yet the emitters themselves face at most a fraction of the consequences, including the costs, of their actions.

It is therefore a recognized role of public policy to internalize such external costs into the cost structure of the polluter, so that the polluter becomes obliged to take into account the full economic costs of his or her actions, a policy often referred to as the "polluter pays" principle.

Some characteristics of climate change differ from more customary externalities, however, are:

- The causes and consequences are global — this poses particular welfare-economic issues, not least because climate change is likely to have substantially different impacts across countries.

- Impacts will persist — once greenhouse gases have entered the atmosphere, some remain there for hundreds of years. This raises the question on how to account for the interests of future generations.

- Uncertainties and risks are large — this raises the general issue of decision making under uncertainty, and in particular, the extent to which policy should be directed at the risk, even if deemed small, of a potentially catastrophic event.

Global warming is likely to prove one of those tectonic forces that — like globalization, artificial intelligence, migration or the ageing of populations — gradually but powerfully changes the economic landscape. Climate change poses many challenges but also presents many business opportunities.

Firms that recognize the challenge early, and respond imaginatively and constructively, will create opportunities for themselves and thereby prosper. Others, slower to realize what is going on or electing to ignore it, will likely do markedly less well.

Climate change is an economic issue

In addition to being a scientific and an ethical issue, climate change is an important economic issue, given the scale of the costs that it may impose on society. Furthermore, the characteristics of the origin of this potential cost are well recognizable by the economist: climate change is a classic case of an "economic externality."

Economic externalities — which may be positive or negative — arise when an action, whether by an individual, a firm or a country, imposes costs (or benefits) on parties other than the entity taking the action.

A typical example of a positive externality is an invention: once made and accessible to the public, others benefit by exploiting it, without rewarding the inventor. Hence, the patent law was

Climate change brings challenges and opportunities

While governments arguably should focus — as they do with the risk of nuclear or terrorist attacks — on minimizing the likelihood of extreme and catastrophic events, businesses should in general plan on the basis of more likely, central, estimates.

For firms, climate change, like globalization and technological change, is likely to be another powerful force that inexorably shapes the economic environment.

Businesses are likely to be affected both by climate change itself and by policies to address it through: regulatory exposure; physical exposure; competitive exposure; and reputational — including litigational — exposure.

Many firms will find ways of turning change to their advantage, while others will fail to adapt.

The firms that will prosper in a climate-changed world will tend to be those that are: early to recognize its importance and its inexorability; foresee at least some of the implications for their industry; and take appropriate steps well in advance.

The pace of a firm's adaptation to climate change and related policy is thus likely to prove to be another of the forces that will influence whether, over the next several years, any given firm survives and prospers; or withers and, quite possibly, dies.

Advanced Happy New Year to everyone!



'Sustainable forest management is way of the future'

Forests play an important role in the wellbeing of the planet. Often called the lungs of Earth, they draw in massive amounts of carbon dioxide and in turn release oxygen, a primary building block of life.

But because of modernization, forestlands were cleared for farms, industrial zones, residential areas. Coupled with irresponsible and illegal logging, the depletion of forests contributed to the creation of one of the biggest threats facing mankind – climate change.

There have been steps taken to address climate change or global warming – from a mandated reduction of carbon emissions agreed upon during the Paris accord, to the banning of greenhouse gases like chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and tree-planting activities spearheaded by both the public and private sectors.

While many fear that action came too late, the fight is not over.

Sustainable forest management, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO), addresses the significance of forest degradation and deforestation while increasing direct benefits to people and the environment. The concept recognizes the inherent need of people for products directly derived from trees like timber and paper while also ensuring that forests are protected and will continue to be ecologically viable for generations.

Socially, sustainable forest management contributes to livelihoods, income generation and employment. By helping communities and individuals who primarily rely on forestry as their source of livelihood, this ensures that people can still earn off the land while protecting it from further damage.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has committed itself to the promotion of sustainable forest management, saying the National Greening Program aims to expand forest cover, mitigate and adapt to climate change, conserve biodiversity, poverty alleviation and inclusive growth

while adhering to the principles of good governance.

An executive order has also been issued in 2004 that further cements the country's commitment to sustainable forest management as an effective way to promote the protection of forest cover while alleviating poverty around the archipelago.

"In the Philippines, we believe that sustainable forest management is the only way forward," Charlie Liu, chairman of Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) said. "By ensuring that we are balancing the needs of our people and the viability of our forests we can reach a more prosperous and sustainable future."

PWPA is one of the leading voices pushing for wider adaptation of sustainable forest management practices. The organization, whose members come from the forestry sector, believes that Filipinos can become more involved in the protection of forests while also pursuing the interests of many whose livelihoods depend on forest-based industries.



The death of us?

I was born in the year of the First Quarter Storm. It was the same year that a 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit Luzon that killed 15 and injured 200, that Typhoon Sening left 575 dead in Camarines Sur, and that Typhoon Yoling ravaged Manila and killed 611. It was also that year that Pope Paul VI visited the Philippines and survived an assassination attempt.

That year, a constitutional convention was also called to revise and amend the 1935 Constitution, and a young constabulary officer led the New People's Army in raiding the armory at the military academy. A Marcos was president, a Lopez was vice-president, a Laurel was House Speaker, and Roberto Concepcion was chief justice.

At the time, soft drinks, beer, and other beverages came in glass bottles. So did chocolate milk and pasteurized milk, which were sold in grocery stores. And people brought home groceries in boxes or brown paper bags. Processed food came either in a can or in waxed paper packaging, and "modern" supermarkets had only started using plastics for wrapping.

Over four decades after, the Philippines is now reportedly the third-largest contributor of plastic waste in oceans. And the culprit is mainly single-plastic products, according to the World Wildlife Fund. It noted on its website, "The low cost and convenience of plastic sachets, as well as inefficient waste disposal, has made the Philippines one of the

world's leading plastic polluters, with tremendous negative impacts on the environment."

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) also noted in its website, "our planet is drowning in plastic pollution," and I believe that unless something drastic is done soon to better manage plastic production and plastic waste, mankind's most important invention will also be its downfall. According to most accounts, the damage done in the last 50 years is severe.

"While plastic has many valuable uses, we have become addicted to single-use or disposable plastic — with severe environmental consequences. Around the world, one million plastic drinking bottles are purchased every minute, while up to five trillion single-use

plastic bags are used worldwide every year. In total, half of all plastic produced is designed to be used only once — and then thrown away," UNEP noted.

It added, "Researchers estimate that more than 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic has been produced since the early 1950s. About 60% of that plastic has ended up in either a landfill or the natural environment. We're seeing some other worrying trends. Since the 1950s, the rate of plastic production has grown faster than that of any other material. We've also seen a shift away from the production of durable plastic, and towards plastics that are meant to be thrown away after a single use."

It also said, "More than 99% of plastics are produced from chemicals derived from oil, natural gas and coal — all of which are dirty, non-renewable resources. If current trends continue, by 2050 the plastic industry could account for

20% of the world's total oil consumption." It also noted that by 2050, "our oceans could contain more plastic than fish."

I truly believe that the present situation calls for stronger action from the national government, and more local governments, in restricting the production and use of single-use plastic, and in finding ways to better manage plastic waste production. This comes from the conviction that there will be no plastic packaging to throw and recycle if it was never produced and used in the first place.

It doesn't seem like the plastic industry and businesses using them particularly for packaging can be expected to police and restrain themselves. Moreover, it can be easy enough for them to argue that if plastic was never used, then something else could have taken its place that could have resulted in just as much environmental damage or even

STATIC MARVIN A. TORT

We are now paying a steep price for our plastic addiction. Unless we curb this addiction, the cost to our environment will continue to go up.

worse. In addition, there is no actual data to prove that plastic bags can stay in landfills for hundreds of years considering that such bags have been in use only for about 50 years.

However, I still believe that plastic use is contributing significantly to environmental degradation, and that policies and regulations can still be calibrated to better manage plastics production and plastic waste management. One need only to look at our cities' rivers and waterways, open canals, and bodies of water like Manila Bay to realize the damage caused by plastics.

Clean-up activities can only do so much. The same goes for efforts

to make communities more aware of the damage caused particularly by single-use plastic and plastic packaging and limited recycling initiatives. Even limiting the use of items such as plastic bags cannot have as much positive impact as banning the production of certain plastic products altogether.

As UNEP noted, "From the 1950s to the '70s, only a small amount of plastic was produced, so plastic waste was relatively manageable. By the 1990s, plastic waste generation had more than tripled in two decades, following a similar rise in plastic production. In the early 2000s, our output of plastic waste rose more in a single decade than it had in the

previous 40 years. Today, we produce about 300 million tonnes of plastic waste every year. That's nearly equivalent to the weight of the entire human population."

We are now paying a steep price for our plastic addiction. Unless we curb this addiction, the cost to our environment will continue to go up. I understand that the world will have to accept, to some degree, the continued use of plastics. They have their benefits, admittedly. However, there should be better management of production and waste. And we should look into more technologies that will help in improving plastic production, recycling, disposal, and elimination. ■

MARVIN TORT is a former managing editor of *BusinessWorld*, and a former chairman of the Philippines Press Council.
matort@yahoo.com





Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

8
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

27 DEC 2018

DATE

Yearend Report

House passes more than 400 bills in 2018

By **CHARISSA M. LUCI-ATIENZA**

2018 saw the House of Representatives pass more than 400 measures.

Since the third session of the 17th Congress opened in July this year under the leadership of Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the House of Representatives has processed about 1,361 bills, 492 of which have been approved.

Of the 492 approved measures, 95 were passed into law and 39 are ready for the President's signature, according to Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

"We have processed an average of 33 measures per day," she said during her plenary speech before the Congress' adjournment of its session on December 12.

Of the approved bills, 27 were ratified Bicameral reports, 25 were pending at the bicameral conference committee, 22 were approved on second reading, and 38 approved resolutions.

"Shortly after I assumed the speakership, I told my colleagues that my goal is to implement the Legislative Agenda of President Duterte. And you have seen in the Legislative that the House has prioritized these past six months with the priority bill announced by the President in his 2018 State-of-the-Nation Address," Arroyo said.

She noted that the House already passed the President's entire legislative agenda as he announced in his 2018 State-of-the-Nation Address. "My concern is not my legacy as Speaker. My concern is to support President Duterte's legacy in the year that I have as Speaker," Arroyo said.

Before Congress adjourned for a month-long Christmas break, the 291-man Lower Chamber passed the priority measures of the administration, which include the Resolution of Both Houses (RBH) No. 15 or the draft federal charter, the proposed Traffic Crisis Act, the tax reform packages, and the proposed Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR).

Extension of martial law in Mindanao

The House, in a joint session with the Senate also approved on December 12 President Duterte's request to extend martial law and suspend the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.

After more than three hours of deliberations, a total of 235 members of Congress voted in favor of the martial law extension, while 28 thumbed it down and only one abstained. The Senate voted 12-5 with one abstention, while House of Representatives voted 223-23.

'Reconsider the appointment'

The Lower Chamber also adopted House Resolution No. 2365 urging President Duterte to "reconsider the appointment" of Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno.

According to the resolution, authored by Minority Leader Danilo Suarez, Diokno failed to explain "how one sole proprietorship construction company was able to obtain numerous projects from the government in Sorsogon, amounting to billions of pesos."

Term limits

A day before the adjournment, RBH 15, principally authored by Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, was passed by the chamber. It calls for a presidential-bicameral-federal system of government and removal of the term limits for lawmakers.

RBH 15 proposes the adoption of a bicameral Legislature wherein the House shall be composed of no more than 300 members and the Senate shall be composed of 24 Senators.

RBH 15 mandates that the President and Vice President maintain the same powers and functions as that of the 1987 Constitution. It provides that a vote for the President shall also be a vote for the Vice President and the President and Vice President must be from the same party. Their term of service under the draft constitution is also limited to four years with one year for re-election.

Traffic Crisis Act

House Bill 6425, or the "Traffic Crisis Act of 2018. Makiisa. Makisama. Magkaisa", which designates the Secretary of the Department of Transportation as the Traffic Chief, also hurdled the chamber. The bill, which is among the priority measures identified by the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC), mandates the development within three years a comprehensive framework to address traffic congestion in Metropolitan Manila, Metropolitan Cebu and Davao City.

TRABAHO

In September this year, the chamber approved House Bill 8083, also known as the Tax Reform for Attracting Better and High-Quality Opportunities (TRABAHO) bill or the second package of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (CTRP), which seeks to lower the corporate income tax rates and rationalize fiscal incentives.

It provides for two-percent cuts in the corporate income tax every two years from January 1, 2021 to January 1, 2029.

The package 3 of the CTRP or House Bill 8453 also hurdled the Lower Chamber. The bill seeks to institute reforms in real property valuation and assessment and calls for the reorganization of the Bureau of the Local Government Finance.

In December, the Lower Chamber also expeditiously approved the three remaining tax packages of the CTRP. These include House Bill 8645 or proposed Passive Income and Financial Intermediary Taxation Act, which is the fourth package of the CTRP. The measure seeks equitable, simpler and more efficient taxation of passive income and financial transactions.

Excise tax on tobacco, alcohol products

The House also approved bills seeking to increase the excise tax on tobacco and alcohol products. HB 8677, which proposes to impose additional P2.50 excise tax on tobacco products starting July 2019, was ap-

proved on final reading.

House Bill 8618, which was passed on third and final reading, will raise excise tax on alcohol products by P6.60. It provides that starting January 2019, an ad valorem rate of 22 percent including specific tax rates per proof liter of P30, P35, P40, P45 from 2019 to 2022 will be imposed on distilled spirits; and it will be increased by 7 percent annually starting 2023.

Mineral agreements

The House also approved House Bill 8400 which seeks to rationalize and institute a single fiscal regime applicable to all mineral agreements. The bill mandates mining contractors of large-scale metallic and non-metallic mining operations outside of mineral reservations to pay to the government a margin-based royalty on income from mining operations.

Department of Disaster Resilience

The House also approved a measure creating the Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR), which is a legislative priority of the Duterte administration.

House Bill 8165, principally authored by Leyte Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez, tasks the DDR to serve as "the primary government agency responsible for leading, organizing and managing the national effort to reduce disaster risk, prepare for, and respond to disasters, recover and rehabilitate, and build forward better after the occurrence of disasters."

Bangsamoro Basic Law

This year also saw the passage of House Bill 6475 or the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), which was signed into law by President Duterte in July.

Officially called as the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (OLBARMMD), the BOL seeks the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region which replaces the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The measure was principally authored by former Speaker and Davao del Norte Rep. Pantaleon D. Alvarez.

Pro-women bills

Pro-women measures, including the proposed 100-Day Maternity Leave Law and the proposed "Expanded Anti-Sexual Harassment Act" also got the nod of the House of Representatives.

House Bill 4113 or the proposed 100-Day Maternity Leave Law benefits both government and private sector employees.

On October 3, the Senate and the House of Representatives ratified the bill granting 105 days of paid maternity leave to all working mothers. The Expanded Maternity Leave Act of 2018, which provides that a total of 7 out of the 105 days of leave may be transferred to fathers, is now awaiting the President's signature.

Anti-Sexual Harassment Act

House Bill 8244 or the proposed "Expanded Anti-Sexual Harassment Act" seeks to impose graver punishment on individuals committing sexual harassment. Violators shall be slapped with a penalty of imprisonment of one to six months, or a fine of P50,000 to P200,000, or both, at the discretion of the court.

National bills

Among the national bills approved on third reading are: HB 7773, "Institutionalizing the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) to Reduce Poverty and Promote Human Capital Development"; HB 8014, "Mandatory PhilHealth Coverage of All Persons with Disability"; HB 7735, "Replacing the Quantitative Import Restrictions on Rice with Tariffs and Creating the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund"; HB 7437, "Prohibiting the Privatization and Corporatization of Public Hospitals, Public Facilities and Health Services"; HB 7373, "Green Building Act"; HB 7544, "Declaring the Last Monday of January of Every Year A Special Working Holiday in Observance of 'National Bible Day'"; HB 7749, "National Youth Day Act"; HB 8139, "Tulong-Trabaho Act"; and HB 7774, "Bill of Rights of Taxi, Tourist Car Transport Service and Vehicle for Hire Passengers."