

DATE : 09-30-10

DAY : Saturday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



# DENR seeks new agency to manage Boracay

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

**Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu proposed yesterday the creation of a new agency that would permanently manage the world-famous Boracay Island.**

Cimatu said he would ask Congress to pass legislation to establish the new body that would be called the Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA) and would replace the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) that is set to be dissolved in May 2020.

"Under the proposal, the Boracay Island Development Authority or BIDA will be an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) since environmental sustainability will be its main concern," said Cimatu who is also concurrent chair of the BIATF.

He said that for the meantime, the DENR might request

President Duterte to extend Executive Order (EO) 53 that created the BIATF.

On May 8, 2018, Duterte issued EO 53 creating the BIATF and designating Cimatu as chairman. The EO provides that the BIATF shall be deemed dissolved two years after its creation.

The BIATF said the agency continues to make steady progress in its effort to rehabilitate Boracay.

Duterte ordered the closure of Boracay to tourists on April 26, 2018 to give way to the six-month rehabilitation of the polluted and overcrowded island. The island reopened on Oct. 26, 2018 with stricter

regulations on the use of its famous white beach and the entry of tourists.

Natividad Bernardino, general manager of the Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group, said the rehabilitation is right on schedule for completion by May 2020, in time for the expiration of BIATF.

"We are on track and if everything goes smoothly, all our targets for the two-year rehabilitation program will be met by the time the task force is dissolved," Bernardino said.

In her presentation before the BIATF alternate members recently in Boracay, Bernardino reported that 67 percent of the 339 commercial and residential structures along the beachfront are already compliant with the 25+5-meter shoreline easement rule.

Bernardino also reported that

the island's maximum carrying capacity of 19,215 tourists at any given time has been strictly observed.

She said the average number of tourist arrivals from October 2018 to November 2019 was 5,639 per day.

The rehabilitation of the main road on the island is expected to be completed by yearend and other roads by April or May 2020, she said.

Bernardino said the delay in the total rehabilitation of Boracay was caused by the continued infrastructure projects and the big number of workers who stay in boarding houses on the island, which has aggravated overcrowding in the area.

"The biggest problem we still have right now and even after the two-year rehabilitation is decongesting the island," Bernardino said.



# Boracay's poor air quality explained

Based on the study presented, calcium carbonate has reached 22,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup> level and Pabroa described this as high against the World Health Organization standards

**By Jun N. Aguirre**

Boracay Island — A scientist from the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) noted that the air quality in this resort island is poor because of too much calcium carbonate.

Dr. Preciosa Corazon Pabroa, chief of the Nuclear Services Division of the PNRI, said that they had conducted a study last year in this resort island together with that of Valenzuela and the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM).

Pabroa presented her study here at Pink Patio Resort together with different students of Boracay.

Based on the study presented, calcium carbonate has reached 22,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup> level and Pabroa described this as high against the World Health Organization (WHO) standards. It was not clear what is the WHO standard.

The study has been undertaken in numerous days last year at the height of the Boracay closure. Pabroa uses the Nuclear and Related Analytical Techniques approach in the conduct of the study.

"I am not sure what were the effects of health among Boracay residents on the high calcium carbonate in the air. It still needs further study," she said.

The high calcium carbonate content was because of the emissions of tricycles in this resort island, emissions coming from nearby boats, the ongoing road rehabilitation of roads where dust particles are emitted among others.

For this, Pabroa recommended updating the Philippine National Air Quality Guidelines Values, asking the Environmental Management Bureau to institutionalize APM Source apportionment, addressing vehicular emissions problem, addressing in-land pollution, and for the local government to initiate monitoring of air particulate pollution levels in their areas and adopting APM Source apportionment study for better air quality management.



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## LEBEL NG TUBIG SA ANGAT DAM TUMAAS, BALIK-NORMAL NA BA ANG SERBISYO SA TUBIG?

**NOONG** ika-24 ng Oktubre ng taong ito, ang Manila Water at Maynilad, ang dalawang water concessionaires na nagbibigay-serbisyo ng tubig sa Metro Manila, ay nag-annunsiyo ng 'rotational water interruption' dulot ng patuloy na pagbaba ng lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam.

Marami ang nagtaka sa anunsyong ito. Oktubre? Panahon ng tag-ulan ay magpapatupad ng rotational water interruption? Tuloy, marami ang nag-suspetsa na tila isang mabigat na pahiwatig ang nasabing pansamantalang putol-putol na suplay ng tubig sa

mga kabahayan. Maaaring nais nilang imulat sa atin na malaki talaga ang problema natin sa suplay ng tubig. Kadikit dito ay ang mainit na pagtutol ng karamihan sa pagtatayo ng Kaliwa Dam na umano'y sagot sa kakulangan ng suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

Marami kasing isyu ang bumabalot sa pag-apruba ng pagtatayo ng Kaliwa Dam. Isa na rito ay ang posibleng paglubog sa tubig ng mga komunidad na nakapaligid sa Kaliwa Dam. Nandiyan din ang lumabas na COA report na tila kaduda-duda ang pagkapanalo ng isang Chinese contractor dahil

may kuntsabahan umano sa dalawang natalong bidder.

Kaya naman nagkaroon nga ng palaisipan na maaaring ang rotational water interruption na isinagawa ng Manila Water at Maynilad ay utos ng MWSS upang maramdaman ng mga taga-Metro Manila na kailangan nang umpisahan ang Kaliwa Dam upang umayos ang suplay ng tubig natin. Maaaring hindi ito totoo... ngunit maaaring ito ang tunay na dahilan.

Ramdam ko ang hindi tuloy-tuloy na suplay ng tubig sa aming lugar. Akalain ninyo, alas-4 pa lang ng hapon ay wala na kaming tubig? Magkakaroon ulit kami ng tubig pagsapit ng alas-4 ng madaling araw. Para sa

mga ibang nagtatrabaho, ano ang magagawa nila sa paglilinis at pagluluto sa bahay pagdating nila mula sa opisina pasado alas-5 ng hapon? Paano sila makakaligo nang matiwasay kung walang tubig sa gabi? Pagod na mula sa trabaho, hirap pa maglinis at magrelaks pag-uwi sa bahay!

Ngayon, napabalita na tumaas na raw ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam, ayon sa Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office. Ito raw ay dulot ng patuloy na pag-ulan nitong nakaraang mga araw. Nasa 187.80 meters na raw ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam noong Miyerkoles at tumaas pa raw noong Huwebes ng 188.14 meters. Subalit ayon sa kanila, kailangang umabot sa

mahigit 200 meters ang lebel ng tubig ng Angat Dam upang masabi nila na sapat ang maaaring maibigay na suplay ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

May nagbabantang bagyo na papasok sa ating bansa sa mga susunod na araw. Ito ay ang bagyong 'Tisoy'. Medyo malakas daw ang nasabing bagyo ngunit ayon sa PAGASA, hindi naman kailangan na mabahala tayo dahil hindi ito maituturing na 'super typhoon'.

Kaya naman inaasahang babalik ulit sa normal ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam. Ang tanong, kailan naman kaya ititigil ng Manila Water at Maynilad ang ipinatutupad nilang rotational water interruption? Maawa naman po kayo sa amin... hirap na po kami!



## Program launched on responsible use of water

**By Joel E. Zurbano**

THE government on Friday launched a program to promote responsible use of water.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority led the campaign in coordination with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, National Water Resources Board, Department of the Interior and Local Government and water concessionaires Manila Water Co. and Maynilad.

Dubbed "Oplan Tubig Para sa Kinabukasan", the project seeks to encourage the people to be informed of the current water situation; to be prepared at all times in cases of water shortage and to be involved in a greater cause of using water conscientiously.

"We all need water to live, and we can all do something to ensure that we continuously enjoy this precious resource even in our own little ways," said MMDA chairman Danilo Lim.

According to Lim, water is very vital and every drop must not go to waste. He also said that water plays an important role most especially during disaster.

"We use water in our every day use and we use it more when natural disaster hits us. The demand for potable water increases in areas where calamities strike."

Victims of calamities often ask for water as the supply is either always lacking or completely cut off.

"There is clearly a need for us to work together in this campaign especially with our current water situation. We need to reach as many Filipinos as we can and educate them on how we can help from the demand side," Lim added.

Lim also said that the MMDA, as lead agency, will actively push for the participation of the local governments in Metro Manila.

Each of the Metro Manila LGUs also have their own advocacy videos to show their constituents their commitment for responsible water usage.

Based on the last data, Angat Dam, which is the primary source of water in Metro Manila, is currently at 188.6 meters—23.4 meters lower than the expected 212 meters elevation by the end of the year.



# ANGAT DAM LEVEL STILL FAR FROM IDEAL MMDA pushes responsible water use

There are more than 15 million people who source their water from Angat Dam, and this number continues to grow each year

By **ALVIN MURCIA**  
*@tribunephil\_alvi*

With the water level in Angat Dam still below optimum level, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and other concerned agencies along with the private sector banded together to promote water consumption.

Data from the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) showed Angat Dam, which is the primary source of water in Metro Manila, is currently at 188.6 meters – 23.4 meters lower than the expected 212 meters elevation by the end of the year.

According to NWRB executive director Dr. Seville David, there are more than 15 million people who source their water from Angat Dam, and this number continues to grow each year.

This prompted the MMDA, together with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), NWRB and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and water concessionaires Manila Water Company and Maynilad to launch "Oplan Tubig Para sa Kinabukasan" in a bid to promote responsible use of water.

The project seeks to encourage the public to be informed of the current water situation, to be prepared in case of a water shortage, and to be involved in using water conscientiously.

MMDA chairman Danilo Lim said, "We all need water to live and we can all do something to ensure that we continuously enjoy this precious resource even in our own little ways."

He stressed water is very vital and every drop must not go to waste. He also said that water plays an important role, most especially during times of disaster.

"We use water daily and we use it more when a natural disaster hits us. The demand for potable water increases in areas where calamities strike," Lim expressed.

Victims of calamities often ask for water as its supply is either always lacking or completely cut off.

Thus, Lim emphasizes the need to work closer together in the campaign to save water, especially with the current situation, and the need to reach as many Filipinos in order to educate them on how help can be given from the demand side.

The MMDA chief said the agency will actively push for the participation of the local governments (LGU) in Metro Manila.

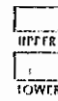
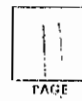
Each of the Metro Manila LGU also has its own advocacy videos to show its constituents its commitment for responsible water usage.

MWSS administrator Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat encourages the public to be responsible in using water and to prepare especially for the dry season.

"We have limited water supply and it will take years for us to have new water sources," Salamat said.

With the DILG's participation in the campaign, "Oplan Tubig Para sa Kinabukasan" will hopefully get its message across the different cities and municipalities.

"We hope that with this campaign, individuals and communities will be inspired and encouraged to use water responsibly and to abide by the water-related initiatives set by their respective LGU," said Interior Secretary Eduardo Año.



## WATER STAKEHOLDERS MOVE TO AVERT WATER SHORTAGE

IN a bid to promote responsible use of water, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), National Water Resources Board (NWRB), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and water concessionaires Manila Water Company and Maynilad launched yesterday "Oplan Tubig Para sa Kinabukasan"

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formed of the current water situation, to be prepared at all times in cases of water shortage and to be involved in a greater cause of using water conscientiously.

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pected 212 meters elevation by the end of the year.

According to NWRB Executive Director Dr. Seville David, there are more than 15 million people who are getting water from Angat Dam, and this number continues to grow each year.

**Edd Reyes**



# Gov't ordered to pay Manila Water P7.39 B

By **LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON**

An international arbitral court has ordered the Philippine government to pay the Ayala-led Manila Water Co.

P7.39 billion in indemnification for losses incurred after being barred from raising rates.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration  
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## Gov't **From Page 1**

in Singapore issued the ruling, according to Manila Water.

"The tribunal ruled that Manila Water has a right to indemnification for actual losses suffered by it on account of the Republic's breach of its obligation," it said.

The P7.39 billion represents the actual losses Manila Water suffered from June 1, 2015 to Nov. 22, 2019.

The tribunal also ordered the government to pay 100 percent of the amounts paid by Manila Water to the PCA and 85 percent of Manila Water's other claimed costs.

Manila Water said it will work with the

government for an orderly and managed implementation of the decision.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), which approves or rejects water rate adjustments, refused to comment as the case is against the national government.

The water firm sued the government after losing a case filed in 2015 by MWSS, which rejected its plea for rate hike.

It was in 2015 when MWSS won the case filed by Manila Water against it so the water firm decided to instead sue the Philippine government.

In rejecting Manila Water's rate hike petition, the MWSS disallowed the recovery of corporate income tax (CIT), saying CIT is not supposed to be recoverable be-

cause the concessionaire is a public utility.

The disallowance of the CIT recovery translated to P2.77 per cubic meter downward adjustment.

The Manila Water ruling came more than two years after the arbitral tribunal ruled on a similar case filed by the Pangilinan-led Maynilad Water Services Inc.

The same tribunal ordered the Philippine government in July 2017 to reimburse Maynilad P3.4 billion for losses from March 2015 to August 2016, and ruled that Maynilad is allowed to recover its losses from September 2016 onwards.

Maynilad has yet to receive indemnification from the government for the case it won in 2017.





## Paggamit ng coal itigil – Power for People Coalition

IGINIIT kahapon ng climate justice group na Power for People Coalition (PPC) na tapusin na ang paggamit ng coal sa enerhiya.

Nabatid sa isinagawang kilos-protesta ng PPC kung saan nagsuot ang mga miyembro ng PPC ng costume ng Spanish-speaking cartoon character na si Dora the Explorer para igiit sa mga global leader na dumalo sa COP 25 sa Madrid, Spain. Nagsalita ang mga ito ng 'hasta la vista' na ang ibig sabihin ay 'good-bye' sa madumi at mahal na halaga ng enerhiya mula sa coal.

"It has been a quarter of a century since COP negotiations to avert catastrophic climate change

began. Yet after 25 years of talks and pledges, we are seeing emissions rise to an all-time high. In

2018, global energy-related emissions rose to a historic 1.7%. Just this week, the WMO reported that we have already reached the critical level of 400 ppm CO2 concentration. And how could this not be, when 85% of the world's energy comes from coal and other fossil fuels?" ayon kay Gerry Arances, Convenor of P4P

Sinabi naman ng National Coordinator of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ) na si Ian Rivera na ang ambisyon itinakda ng COPs ay may kakulangan.

Nabatid na 40% ang naiambag ng coal sa

global fossil fuel at sa kabila ng mga ebidensiya na hindi itong magandang pagkunan ng enerhiya ay mayroon pa rin na gumagamit nitong mga bansa.

Ang panawagan na tapusin na ang paggamit ng coal sa pagpo-produce ng kuryente ay sinuportahan ng iba't ibang komunidad sa bansa kabilang na ang La Union, Quezon, Palawan, Masbate, Pangasinan, Cebu, Negros Occidental, Leyte, Lanao del Norte, Davao, at Cagayan De Oro.

Ayon kay Rara Ada ng Youth for Climate Justice, nanganganib ang kanilang buhay sa ginagawa nilang pagmamartsa sa mga kalsada sa Mindanao. (JDL Cudia)



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**The Manila Times**



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# DENR support sought for mercury-free mining

BY EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ

**T**AIWANESE mining company Xin Ye Precious Metal Technology Co. Ltd. seeks the endorsement of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the adoption of its eco-friendly, cyanide-free ore-stripping technology for small-scale gold mining in the Philippines.

In a statement, Xin Ye President Michael Yao said the initiative would be done through the company's local subsidiary, Philippine Xi Ye Industry Ltd. Inc.

"We are committed to the protection of our environment and natural resources by responsible mining," he added.

According to him, Xin Ye's locally patented GP-860 solution, which uses cyanide- and mer-

cury-free nontoxic gold stripping method can help small-scale miners abide by government policies on responsible mining practices.

The method aims to replace the traditional extraction process, which usually involves using mercury, which is still widely used by small-scale miners.

"Basically, our technology allows artisanal and small-scale gold mining to extract gold using [an]

environment-friendly alternative to mercury," Yao said.

Compared to the traditional artisanal and small-scale gold mining extraction method, which usually requires two to eight days for dissolution, GP-860 can shorten the ore-to-gold process to six to eight hours with a gold stripping rate at 98 percent. Refined gold purity of 99.9 percent is also achieved.

The statement came as Xin Ye launched on Monday its first gold processing facility in Jose Panganiban town, Camarines Norte province in partnership with Johnson Gold Mining Corp.

Xin Ye Executive Vice President Steven Liao said the \$1-million plant could process 11.5 metric tons of concentrate a day, with potential gold yield of 50 grams per ton. "That's 550 grams of gold on a daily basis," Liao added.

He said the firm was in talks with at least eight mining companies in Baguio and Bicol, adding that it expected to close deals on the acquisition of the technology early next year. The firm, Liao said, wants to expand to Mindanao within the year, with discussions with two other mining firms in Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga cities being planned.

It hopes to collaborate with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in the promotion of its technology, particularly in the "Minahang Bayan" areas.

There are only 29 such mines. There are around 300,000 to 500,000 miners who depend on small-scale mining as their source of income. Small-scale miners produce about 70 percent of the country's annual gold production.



# DENR body challenges mining firms

By Rio N. Araja

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources Mines and Geosciences Bureau on Friday challenged mining companies to meet higher standards on safety and environmental protection.

"We are challenging mining companies to meet the higher standards we've set in terms of protecting the environment and communities in mining areas. We know it's not easy for them, but the MGB will leave no stone unturned in making sure all mining operations are compliant, safe, well-rehabilitated and responsible to their environment," MGB director Wilfredo Moncano said.

"This goes for large-scale mining companies as well as small-scale mining players. You either mine responsibly or you don't mine; there is no middle ground," he added.

He encouraged the six companies that were presented with the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award during the recently concluded Annual National Mine Safety and Environment Conference as "good examples" for the rest of the mining industry to follow.

The companies awarded were Agata Mining Ventures Inc. and Cagdianao Mining Corp. for the surface mining category; Holcim

Mining and Development Corp. and Republic Cement and Building Materials Inc. for quarry operations category, Republic Cement and Building Materials Inc.; Mindanao Mineral Processing and Refining Corp. for mineral processing category, and Mt. Labo Exploration and Development Corp. for mineral exploration category.

"For these awards, we don't only award based on the safety and sustainability of their mining operations. We scrutinize what they do after mining. How fast and thorough was rehabilitation done? How was the area reforested and how many trees were planted? How did they translate their economic gain to good public facilities such as schools and clinics for the local community? How were they able to work with indigenous communities?" Moncano asked.

"Definitely it's good to have these examples to highlight the work that's already being done in the industry, but so many other operators must catch up," he said.



## 'BALYENA' DIES ON BATAAN BEACH

**MARIVELES, Bataan:** A huge whale commonly known to villagers as *balyena* was found dead on a beach in Sityo Boracay, Barangay Townsite here at dawn of Friday.

No one could still say as to what species the mammal belongs, but fisherman Ramon Francisco at first said it was a blue whale but later identified it as a humpback whale.

Inspectors from the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (Menro) of Mariveles said it was

a sperm whale.

They, however, were one, in saying the mammal was a baby whale.

Francisco said the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) provincial office told him to send them a portion of the skin and meat of the dead whale.

"*Matigas ang balat* (It had thick skin)," he noted while he tried to cut some meat from the whale with a bolo.

"*Iiksaminin daw kung ano nang-yari, kung ano nakain,* plastic bag o

*namatay sa lason* (They will examine the dead mammal and determine if it had swallowed a plastic bag or it died from poisoning)," the fisherman said.

According to him, the whale measured 2.3 meters wide and 5.3 meters long.

"First time *pa lang kaming nakakita ng ganitong balyena* (It is the first time for us to see this kind of whale)," he said.

Francisco added that the whale was pushed by waves to Sityo Boracay

during high tide and remained on the beach when it was already low tide.

The sitio can be reached by hiking more than a kilometer-long stretch along the beach.

The fisherman said they would wait for the decision of BFAR and Menro on what to do with the whale.

Last Monday, fishermen tried to rescue two bottlenose dolphins in Samal, Bataan, but both died while being transported.

**ERNIE B. ESCONDE**



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## RESCUED TIGERS FIND HOME IN SPAIN

**VILLENA:** Five of nine tigers that narrowly survived a grueling journey across Europe will be moved to a new home at an animal refuge in Spain after spending weeks recovering at zoos in Poland. The tigers will leave on Sunday for the "Primadomus" Wildlife Refuge in the south-eastern Spanish town of Villena, Malgorzata Chodyla, spokesman for the zoo in Poznan, western Poland, said on Thursday. Polish border

authorities found ten emaciated and dehydrated big cats in the back of a truck taking them from Italy to a zoo in Russia's Dagestan Republic.

AFP



# Baguio ASEAN Clean tourist city awardee

The city garnered enough points for complying with the requirements of the Asean Clean Tourist City Standard early this year

**By Aldwin Quitasol**

BAGUIO CITY – Aside from being one of the recognized creative cities by UNESCO for its folk arts and crafts, the nation's summer capital is set to receive the Association of Southeast

Asian Nations (ASEAN) Clean Tourist City Award for 2020-2022 on 16 January next year at Brunei Darrusalam.

The city garnered enough points for complying with the requirements of the Asean Clean Tourist City Standard (ACTCS) early this year. The other two

cities receiving the same award in the Philippines are Iloilo City and San Carlos City of Negros Occidental.

Department of Tourism-Office of Tourism Standards and Regulations Director Rebecca Villanueva-Labit confirmed in a letter to the Baguio

City government that Baguio City has successfully garnered the number of points required to be one of the three Philippine winners to receive the award.

"The award is given to cities that have endeavored to beautify their public areas, improved the environmental sanitation, enhanced urban spaces and promoted their man-made natural resources," Villanueva-Labit stated.

In the official website of the ASEAN, awardees were assessed in their

commitment to sustainable tourism particularly in seven indicators: Environmental Management; Cleanliness; Waste Management; Awareness-Building about Environmental Protection and Cleanliness; Green Spaces; Health Safety, Urban Safety, and Security; and Tourism Infrastructure and Facilities.

The city is also famous for its annual Panagbenga Flower Festival featuring drawing over a million visitors for the month-long event.



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## Body of missing Zamboanga environment worker found

By ROEL PAREÑO

**ZAMBOANGA CITY** — Members of a search and rescue team found yesterday the body of one of the four missing city environment workers near Sta. Cruz Island, said.

Maj. Elmer Solon, Zamboanga City police Station 11 commander, identified the victim as boatman Mudzmar Habing, one of the maintenance workers of the city's

Protected Area Management Office (PAMO), who was reported missing since Tuesday morning after their motorized boat might have been rammed by an unidentified speeding vessel.

Still missing are Badzair Attan and Ibrahim Hassan, both employees of PAMO, and boatman Rasbi Ambiting.

The three victims were maintenance workers of PAMO assigned in the pro-

tected area of Sta. Cruz Island, which is famous for its pink sand beaches.

The floating body of Habing was found by relatives who joined the search and rescue operations and deployed 20 of their boats in the area.

Solon said the victim was positively identified by his family through his clothes and sandals, and an identification card in his possession.

The victims were enroute to the mainland at dawn last

Tuesday, but they did not arrive at their destination several hours after leaving the island aboard a motorized pumpboat.

Authorities recovered the debris of the pumpboat on Wednesday, but the passengers and boatman were missing.

Police are investigating the possibility that the victims' motorized banca could have been struck by an unidentified watercraft.



# NAPASLANG NA PULIS ITINURING NA BAYANI

**MISAMIS ORIENTAL - KINI-KILALANG** bayani ang isang pulis na namatay matapos sumabog ang dalang granada nang nag-amok na lolo sa loob ng college campus sa bayan ng Initao.

Ayon sa ilang saksi, nawalan sila ng mabuting pulis sa pagkamatay ni Master Sergeant Jason Magno, na palaging rumeresponde sa mga kaguluhan sa kanilang lugar.

Inihayag pa nito na isang Maranao ang

suspek na nag-amok matapos na hindi ni-release ng mga tauhan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang nahuling dalawa niyang truck na may kargang mga kahoy.

Tinanggalan na umano ng pin ang nasabing granada pero doon pa lamang sa DENR office at dahil katabi lamang ang Initao College kung kaya't doon na ito sa gymnasium nag-amok.

Kaagad na naka-respond si Master Sergeant Magno at

isa niyang kasamahan habang isang criminology ang nakipagbuno sa suspek dahil kaya nabitawan nito ang granada na mabilis namang kinuha ni Magno upang itapon sana ngunit sumabog habang hawak pa ng pulis dahil nang agaran niyang pagkamatay.

Dito na rin pinagbabaril ng kasamahang pulis ang nasabing suspek habang isinugod naman sa ospital ang dalawang mag-aaral na nadamay sa insidente.

**PMRT**





# Wanted: A Department of Maritime Affairs

**D**IVINE Providence appears to have chosen the Philippines and its people for a leading role in the conservation and protection of the marine environment, ecosystem, and biodiversity in the central Indo-Pacific maritime region by putting it in the central and strategic position that it is in. The Philippines is an archipelago in mid-ocean, with one of the longest coastlines in the world. The country's maritime domain is bordered by the Philippine Sea to the east and beyond toward the international seabed area in the Pacific Ocean. It is adjacent to other archipelagic states, such as Indonesia and Palau toward the south and the Papua New Guinea further south, with which it has overlapping jurisdictions and ocean connectivity at some points. It borders the South China Sea to the west and international straits to the north. The Philippines is host to the greater part of the Coral Triangle, which is the breeding and feeding grounds of important commercial fish species such as tuna. And many other fish species, for indeed the Philippine archipelago has the highest marine biodiversity in the world and by itself alone encompasses a large marine ecoregion. The Philippines is thus one of the world's leading producers of fish.

The western maritime jurisdiction of the Philippines bordering the South China Sea is crisscrossed by regional shipping and commercial fisheries vessels. More significantly, it is traversed by sea lanes of communications conveying \$5.3 trillion worth of commercial goods annually, more than 50 percent of the world total (including dangerous and toxic cargo). Its eastern seaboard is likewise exposed to international vessel traffic.



## AMBASSADORS' CORNER

**JAIME J. YAMBAO**

It has thus seemed to us that it is incumbent on the Philippines to be concerned about governance of the maritime region to which it belongs. Mankind has a constitution of the oceans in the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. But its provisions, including particularly those of cooperation among littoral states, have yet to be translated into reality. The need for oceans governance or management in this part of the world is made even more pronounced by experts' pronouncements that South China Sea fisheries which officially employ 8.7 million people and help feed hundreds of millions more are on the brink of collapse due to, among other factors, overfishing and destruction of the coral reefs that serve as the breeding grounds of fish.

### Proactive leadership role

The Philippine Ambassadors Foundation Inc. (PAFI), through this "Ambassadors Corner," has long advocated that the Philippines should take on a leadership role in promoting regional oceans governance or management. Basing our representations on the monographs of PAFI resident environment guru Ambassador Alberto Encomienda, we in fact suggested through channels that it be the overriding theme of the country's chairmanship in 2018 of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean). But as everyone knows, the Philippine chairmanship chose to put more emphasis on the administration's war on drugs. The PAFI paper was, however, inputted in a projected Asean-China Declaration on a Decade of Cooperation in the Establishment of an Integrated Governance Regime for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Living Resources of the Sea and the Security and Safety of Navigation.

What is keeping the Philippines from assuming a more proactive leadership role in pursuing and realizing a system of governance or management in at least the waters of this region?



Wanted: A Department

On reflection, it seems that, apart from the country having other ambitions, an important reason why the country cannot go out and put order in our maritime environment is close to home. Our own house is not in order. Our marine affairs are in disarray. Our fisheries, for instance, are handled by a mere bureau in the Department of Agriculture, while the protection of the coral reefs and other breeding grounds of fish is in the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources. The Philippine Coast Guard, which takes care of the enforcement all laws and regulations protecting our marine resources, is in the Department of Transportation and Communication. The solutions to the present crisis of depletion of fish stocks like fishing moratoriums and marine-protected areas cannot be handled by the Bureau of Fisheries alone. These undertakings may need the cooperation of

several agencies providing alternative means of livelihood while fishermen cannot fish. Certainly they require collaboration with local governments.

In several countries, fisheries are a ministry or department, which at the same time handles all other affairs involving the oceans. Our neighboring archipelago, Indonesia, for example has a Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. It is about fish and the environment that breeds and sustains it. The effect of global warming and climate change on marine life, specifically on corals, falls under this ministry. One can surmise that the Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries can talk with his counterpart in the Ministry of Education about the education of school children on the archipelagic doctrine.

The idea of the Philippines having a Department of Maritime Affairs is not new. The late senator and ambassador Leticia Ramos Shahani, who believed that because of its archipelagic nature, the destiny of the Philippines was to be a great maritime nation, filed the first bills relating to the activation of a Department of Maritime Affairs. There were several bills filed later, including the latest one in 2010 by then senator Antonio Trillanes 4th, but they all did not get sufficient support from the lawmakers and stakeholders, and failed to pass into law. In historical accounts of these efforts, mention is made of the refusal of affected agencies to accept the changes that the measures proposed for these agencies.

**In-depth study**

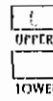
It is perhaps the failure of these bills that Ambassador Encomienda in a new monograph does not outrightly recommend the revival of these efforts. To put order to the disarray in our maritime affairs, he proposes as a first step the commissioning of a national review and study on the root problems, concerns, current practices, initiatives, priorities, and potential opportunities in the maritime sector and its affairs. That could well focus on issues related to food security and sustainable livelihood. A desirable output of such a study would be the determination of a national agenda involving the formulation of laws and regulations and the identification of necessary actions to be worked out bilaterally and multilaterally with other countries. Another output could be a scientific/technical operating and maintenance manual for critical sectors of the Philippines' archipelagic state.

It could well be that such an in-depth study will lead to the formulation of an improved bill on a proposed Department of Maritime Affairs. Such a bill, it seems to us, would be of greater importance and urgency than the proposal for a Department on Overseas Workers. The protection of nationals abroad is the primordial role of diplomacy, of the Departments or Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the world and is bound by the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Practice.

With the Department of Foreign Affairs, which has the protection of overseas nationals as the very pillar of its foreign policy, an adequately funded Office of Migrant Workers, and the support of a corps of attaches from the Department of Labor, we have more than we need to protect Filipino workers abroad.

A Department of Maritime Affairs well-conceived to address the problems of the maritime sector is a looming life-and-death matter. The current condition of fisheries in the Philippines and worldwide is bleak. Fish catch is declining. The contribution of fisheries production in the Philippines to agricultural production since 2010 has been negative. Retail prices of fish have been going up. Protein deficiency among the population is increasing at an alarming rate. All these have been largely the result of the destruction of coral reefs and various forms of pollution of the seas, including that of non-biodegradable plastic materials

The hosting by the Philippines last Nov. 17 to 19, 2019 of the East Asia Summit Workshop on Maritime Cooperation: Sustainable and Responsible Fisheries Management was absolutely a step in the right direction. The workshop provided a venue for substantive and technical dialogue and the sharing of best practices on the following themes: 1) science-based fisheries management; 2) climate change, disaster risk reduction management, and sustainable small-scale fisheries; 3) initiatives to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; 4) addressing post-harvest losses; and 5) sustainable aquaculture/inland fisheries. The workshop had for speakers and participants experts from the Philippines and Asean countries, as well as China, India, Australia, New Zealand and the US, and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. We could learn from such workshops valuable lessons on the sustainable and responsible governance or management of our internal and regional maritime affairs.



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# CLIMATE PROTESTS

## Global climate protests kick off in smoke-covered Sydney

**By Andrew Beatty**

**SYDNEY** - Protesters in smoke-covered Sydney kicked off a fresh round of global protests against climate change on Friday, with activists and schoolchildren picketing the headquarters of bushfire-ravaged Australia's ruling party.

Hundreds of people gathered at the conservative Liberal party's offices, as protesters in several Asia-Pacific cities heeded the call to action from 16-year-old climate change campaigner Greta Thunberg.

The protests have taken on extra urgency in Australia — the country's southeast has been devastated by hundreds of damaging bushfires in recent weeks.

The protesters — brandishing placards that read "You're burning our future" and chanting "we will rise" — turned out as Sydney was again enveloped in toxic smoke caused

by the fires that have blanketed the city for much of the last month.

Six people have died and hundreds of homes have been destroyed in the crisis, which scientists say has been worsened by rising temperatures.

Drought and unseasonably hot, dry and windy conditions have fuelled the unprecedented blazes.

The target of the protesters' ire was Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who has angrily denied any link between the fires and climate change while defending his support for fossil fuels.

"Our government's inaction on the climate crisis has supercharged bushfires," said school strike leader Shiann Broderick. "People are hurting. Communities like ours are being devastated. Summer hasn't even begun."

Australia, with a population of 25 million, has low carbon emissions compared with the planet's biggest polluters, but is

one of the world's leading coal exporters.

"The suggestion that (in) any way shape or form that Australia, accountable for 1.3 percent of the world's emissions, that the individual actions of Australia are impacting directly on specific fire events, whether it's here or anywhere else in the world, that doesn't bear up to credible scientific evidence," Morrison claimed earlier this month.

Protests also took place in Melbourne and Tokyo, where hundreds marched through the teeming Shinjuku district to raise awareness of the issue.

"I feel a sense of crisis because almost no one in Japan is interested" in climate change, said 19-year-old student Mio Ishida.

"I was really inspired by Greta's actions" she said. "I thought if I didn't act now, it would be too late. I wanted to do something I could do."

Last month, millions of people took to the streets

in nearly every major global city for a series of "climate strikes".

The latest demonstrations come as 200 nations prepare to gather in Madrid next week for a 12-day UN climate conference.

The meeting will focus largely on finalizing the "rulebook" for the 2015 Paris climate treaty, which becomes operational in 2021.

Scientists have warned that efforts to cap warming to 1.5 Celsius are failing, and that carbon emissions — which are on the rise — would need to fall 7.6 percent a year to meet the target.

The UN has reported that greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere, the main driver of climate change, hit a record high last year.

The organisation has also warned that global temperatures are on pace to rise almost four Celsius by the end of the century — an increase that could make some places virtually uninhabitable. AFP



## 2020 pinadedeclarang 'Disaster Climate Emergency Consciousness Year'

NAGHAIN kamakailan si Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda sa Kamara ng House Resolution 535 na humihiling na ideklara ang taon 2020 bilang "Disaster and Climate Emergency Awareness Year" na ang layunin ay ipanawagan ang pagpapaligtas sa kamalayan ng bansa sa banta ng lalong lumalakas na mga bagyo dulot ng climate change.

Ang HR 535 ay bilang tugon sa panawagan ng Philippine Councilor's League na dumalaw sa Kamara malapos ang 'First PCL Conference on Climate-Disaster Resilience and Federalism Governance' nina sa Quezon City.

Pinangunahan ni Albay Board Member Jesiel Richard Salceda kasama si House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano na ikonsidera ang 'working output' ng kanilang PCL climate change conference na madeklara ang 2020 bilang 'Disaster and Climate Change Awareness Year.'

Ayon kay Salceda, sobra na ang paghihirap ng Pilipinas sa pananalasa ng mga kalamidad kaya kailangan na nito ang 'whole-of-government and whole-of-nation policy response'.

Sa pulong noong 2016 ng United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change kung saan kasama ang Pilipinas at kung saan pinagtibay ang Paris Agreement, kinilala roon ang kahalagahan ng wastong paggamit ng agham at mga teknolohiya na tugon sa 'climate change' at maging ligtas ang sangkatauhan.

Kamakailan lang ay inaprubahan ng UN-Green Climate Fund ang \$10-milyong ayuda sa Pilipinas para sa 'multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and early warning system' ng bansa at susundan pa ito ng \$58-milyon sa Pebrero 2020 para sa kahalintulad na mga proyekto.

Si Salceda ang unang Asyang at Pilipinong hahalal na co-chairman ng UN-GCF kung saan inihalal siyang kinatawan ng 172 mga bansa sa Africa, Latin America at Asia, kasama ang China at India.

JAY REYES



# Pollution covers climate protests

SYDNEY, Australia (AFP) — Protesters in smoke-covered Sydney kicked off a fresh round of global protests against climate change on Friday, with activists and schoolchildren picketing the headquarters of bushfire-ravaged Australia's ruling party.

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on specific fire events, whether it's here or anywhere else in the world, that doesn't bear up to credible scientific evidence," Morrison claimed earlier this month.

## Missed targets

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The latest demonstrations come as 200 nations prepare to gather in Madrid next week for a 12-day UN climate conference.

The meeting will focus largely on finalizing the "rulebook" for the 2015 Paris climate treaty, which becomes operational in 2021.

Scientists have warned that efforts to cap warming to 1.5 Celsius are failing, and that carbon emissions — which are on the rise — would need to fall 76 percent a year to meet the target.

The UN has reported that greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere, the main driver of climate change, hit a record high last year.

The organization has also warned that global temperatures are on pace to rise almost four Celsius by the end of the century — an increase that could make some places virtually uninhabitable.



**A PERSONAL, INDIVIDUAL PROBLEM**

# 'CLIMATE ANXIETY' HITTING AMERICANS, SAYS PSYCHIATRIST

WASHINGTON—In the melting Arctic, communities are racing to maintain their way of life. In the rising Pacific, residents are sounding alarm bells. And in Rhode Island, Kate Schapira and her husband are not having a baby.

Fears about climate change are prompting worldwide action, but one knock-on effect in the United States is mounting anxiety about everything from plastics to class-based environmental disparities.

Schapira, a 40-year-old senior lecturer at Brown University, treated global warming "like a personal, individual problem"

and she wanted to know if others felt that way also.

So in 2014, Schapira set up a "climate anxiety" booth in public spaces, such as farmers' markets. It's a bit like Lucy's psychiatry stall from the beloved comic "Peanuts."

"Climate anxiety counseling, 5 cents. The doctor is in," the booth's sign reads, welcoming passersby in Providence to talk about their fears. As it turns out, Schapira was far from alone.

About six in 10 Americans say they are at least "somewhat worried" about global warming and 23 percent say they are

"very worried," according to a survey conducted by Yale and George Mason universities in March and April.

For Lise Van Susteren, a Washington-based psychiatrist who has been studying the mental health impacts of climate change for 15 years, refusal to recognize the potential hazards is common for "people who are trying to deny that they too are vulnerable."

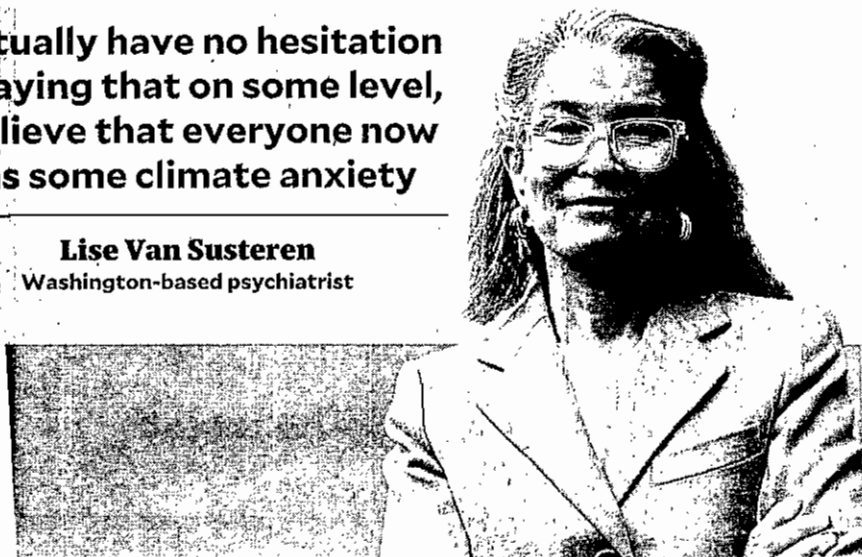
"I actually have no hesitation in saying that on some level, I believe that everyone now has some climate anxiety," Van Susteren said. —AFP



**ANXIOUS** Kate Schapira sits behind her "climate anxiety" booth in a public space in Providence, Rhode Island, on June 9, 2018. For psychiatrist Lise Van Susteren "everyone now has some climate anxiety." —AFP

**I actually have no hesitation in saying that on some level, I believe that everyone now has some climate anxiety**

**Lise Van Susteren**  
Washington-based psychiatrist





# Climate change 'tipping points' too close for comfort

PARIS (AFP) — Loading the atmosphere with five million tons of CO2 every hour has pushed Earth dangerously close to a no-return threshold, beyond which lies an unlivable hot-house world, top climate scientists have warned.

There are 15 known tipping points in the planet's complex climate system, and nine of them — including permafrost, the Amazon rainforest, the Greenland icesheet, Arctic sea ice, and the Atlantic Ocean's circulation — are alarmingly "on the move," they reported in the journal Nature.

Locked inside the tundra of Russia, Alaska and Canada, for example, is twice as much CO2 ▶6

## Climate change 'tipping... 1◀

and methane as there is already in the atmosphere. If humanity cannot manage its own carbon pollution, what will we do if Earth turns from sink to source, adding even more?

AFP spoke to two of the authors + Tim Lenton, director of the Global Systems Institute at the University of Exeter, and Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

### Losing control

Q: How has scientific understanding of tipping points changed over the last decade or two?

ROCKSTROM: Today, we are reaching a point of unequivocal scientific evidence that these tipping elements are real. The Earth system is an interconnected, self-regulating bio-geophysical system that can exist in different stable states. You can have rainforests, such as in the Amazon, that can tip over and become savannah. You can have stable icesheets, or ice-free conditions.

We have come to realise that two degrees Celsius (35.6 degrees Fahrenheit) is not just a political temperature target, it is actually a planetary

boundary. Go beyond that and we are at risk of unleashing self-reinforced warming — this is what Earth system scientists fear most.

The moment that the Earth system flips over from being self-cooling — which it still is — to self-warming, that is the moment when we lose control.

In 2001, the threshold was seen to be around 5C or 6C of warming. Today, the IPCC estimate is between 2C and 3C. Coral reefs, Arctic sea ice and the West Antarctic icesheet have either crossed the tipping point already or are very close. You could call them the first planetary victims of Anthropogenic climate change.

### 'Toppling dominoes'

Q: Does that mean we need to shift our focus to preparing for the inevitable impacts that will follow?

LENTON: We will have to adapt to some changes that may now be unavoidable. The Amundsen Sea Embayment of West Antarctica might have passed a tipping point — the "grounding line" where ice, ocean and bedrock meet is retreating irreversibly.

When this sector collapses, it

could destabilize the rest of the West Antarctic icesheet like toppling dominoes, leading to about three meters of sea-level rise on a timescale of centuries to millennia. Models suggest that the Greenland icesheet could be doomed at 1.5C of warming, which could happen as soon as 2030.

For long-term sea level rise, then, we should be looking seriously at relocation.

But what we know about tipping points should strengthen the argument for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The fact that we start to see some unexpected shifts in the system should give an extra impetus to meet the Paris goals of limiting the warming as close to 1.5 as we can.

We've got a short-term challenge which is to try and get to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in the next 30 years. That should be the focus of the most urgent attention. We need a joined-up strategy — it has to be a two-pronged approach.

### 'Cascading impacts'

Q: You highlight the ways in which different facets of Earth's climate system interact, and how that may amplify the risk of dire impacts.

ROCKSTROM: The cascading combinations are critically important, and

pose a challenge to the scientific community. We see three in evidence today.

There is a connection, for example, between the Arctic and Antarctica via the ocean circulation system in the Atlantic. The slowdown in the so-called Atlantic overturning leads to more warm surface water in the Southern Ocean, which in turn leads to faster melting of the West Antarctic icesheet.

Changes in the Arctic and Greenland,

meanwhile, can also help explain the more intense droughts in the Amazon basin, which result in more forest fires and pulses of CO2 into the atmosphere.

About 17 percent of the Amazon has been lost since 1970. Estimates of where an Amazon tipping point could lie range from 40 percent to just 20 percent of forest-cover loss. Finding the tipping point will require models that include the interaction of deforestation and climate change.



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# Climate emergency declared by PH faith communities

**F**OR the very first time, leaders of various religions and faith communities gathered a week ago for a landmark dialogue that resulted in the declaration of a climate emergency.

In my sincere efforts to show support for this laudable initiative, I am sharing here the entire text of the "Philippine Interfaith Declaration on Addressing Climate Emergency."

"We, the representatives from different religious and faith denominations of the Philippines, express our solidarity in recognizing the imbalance that envelops both natural ecosystems and human societies today. This imbalance has led to the immeasurable degradation of our environment and the unjust suffering of billions of people, placing current and future generations at an unimaginable unprecedented risk.

"Taking care of all life on Earth is integral to all religious doctrines. Climate crisis is, as a matter of fact, a moral crisis. Humanity is not meant to treat nature as its property; rather, we are meant to be a part of it, to be its caretaker, live with it and maintain its health and well-being. Yet through our pursuit of our current notion of development, we have neglected our connection with others in favor of fulfilling self-interests. This has resulted in a system where the relentless wants of a few are frequently prevailing at the expense of the needs of the many.



ALL ABOUT  
CHOICES

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FEDERIGAN

"We acknowledge the science of the climate crisis, caused by excessive greenhouse gas emissions from harmful human-induced activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels. These gases are creating a more unpredictable global climate system that will trigger more extreme weather events and increase the likelihood of disasters. They also worsen slow onset events, including sea level rise, ocean acidification, droughts and land degradation, whose damages on ecosystems and societies could be truly irreversible. There is, indeed, a climate emergency, an ecological crisis.

"We recognize that the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of this crisis. We emphasize that this crisis affects everything and everyone, and that it could further worsen other manifestations of environmental degradation. These effects have disproportionate impacts on the poorest, marginalized and most vulnerable sectors of our society, all of whom have contributed the least to this crisis.

"We also acknowledge the link between solving the climate crisis and eradicating poverty. We have heard the cries of our brother and sisters, including indigenous peoples, during times of catastrophic events. It is unjust that these peoples are not only deprived of the necessary resources and opportunities to realize their right to a healthy and prosperous life, but also bear the brunt of climate change, environmental degradation and harmful human practices. As faith leaders, we call for justice to be at the forefront of all actions taken to address climate change that for every solution we plan and implement, no one is left behind.

"To address the climate crisis, we, the leaders of our faith and religious groups, commit to supporting all efforts in forging a path towards low-carbon development. We commit to hold up the surge in religious calls to support climate action. We support endeavors for strengthening climate-change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk-reduction management, in line with the goals of the Paris climate agreement, especially limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. We call for an urgent reduction of our use of fossil fuels, especially coal, and a rapid development of cleaner renewable energy.

"We call on the policymakers to repeal laws and policies, such as the Mining Act of 1995, which contributes to the worsening impacts of the climate crisis, violates the patrimony and sovereignty of the country with the expropriation of the people's land for foreign corporations, which lead to the destruction of forests; siltation of river systems; land, air and water pollution; and displacement of communities. The ecology

and environment must be protected from the destruction of widespread deforestation, mining, dam projects, big plantations and corporate farms. The land, forests, air, ocean and damaged bodies of water, pollution, negligence and natural calamities must all recover. It is also important to protect the ones that have not been damaged yet.

"We also commit to inspiring within our respective constituencies a behavioral change as a response to the climate crisis. We commit to educating our peoples about the importance of human values, responsibilities and rights at the center of our current and future actions for economic and social development and environmental conservation. We pledge to become living examples of sustainability by not only empowering our communities on living an eco-friendlier lifestyle, but also ensuring that our operations and financial resources comply with the principles of sustainable development.







# Editorial

## President Duterte should pursue climate sanction idea

**L**AST WEEK, President Rodrigo Duterte raised an interesting suggestion concerning management of climate change. Speaking at the inauguration of a new coal-fired power plant in Sarangani province — an ironic venue for a conversation about climate change — Duterte opined that the United Nations-backed Paris Agreement on Climate Change would be more effective if it had provisions for sanctions against violators.

More accurately, Duterte expressed the opinion that without sanctions, the Paris Agreement would not be effective at all, and no real action to curb harmful emissions would be taken.

"[The] UN should better understand [the Paris Agreement]. It has to have a sanction for violators," he said. "Without a sanction, I do not think that it will succeed. It will only fail and worsen the situation for the coming generation."

Then-President Benigno Aquino 3rd committed the Philippines to a 70-percent reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions by 2030 under the Paris Agreement in 2015, but with the caveat that the target would only be achievable with financial and technical assistance from developed countries. President Duterte was initially skeptical of Aquino's commitment, which was seen by many as an ill-advised attempt on the latter's part to gain international attention given the Philippines' relatively minor contribution to global emissions. Duterte reportedly briefly considered withdrawing the Philippines' participation in the global climate pact, but decided to keep the Philippines on board and spare the country unnecessary negative attention.

As the President pointed out, the Paris Agreement contains virtually no provisions for sanctions against countries that do not honor their emissions-reduction commitments. It probably should, but the nature of global-scale UN agreements that prioritizes consensus over substance makes that virtually impossible.

Take the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), which has bedeviled the Philippines for years in its maritime dispute with China. Almost every country that signed it (and some important ones like the US never did) attached their own conditions to their accession, such as declaring that it could not be applied to sovereign territorial claims (a condition the Philippines joined many countries in applying), or that the signatory country would only submit to arbitration of disputes on a voluntary basis. These conditions have rendered the Unclos largely toothless, as can be seen by the fact that the contested claims in the South China Sea remain just as unresolved now as they were prior to the convention being written and signed.

Thus, getting any significant number of signatories to the Paris climate accord to agree to subject themselves to sanctions in case of violations is a vain hope. What the Philippines might consider instead, however, is imposing sanctions on climate violators on its own.

This would be an aggressive step, and one that would surely provoke a strong negative reaction from the countries who are most likely to be the targets of such punitive measures, such as the US, China and India. But the Philippines has ample justification for imposing sanctions, being the country most at risk from multiple climate hazards, according to several recent studies.

Since the Philippines has committed to an ambitious climate mitigation target of its own, the country in a sense holds the moral high ground in demanding that other countries, whose emissions cause climate effects that impact the Philippines, honor their Paris commitments as well. Those who do not could be sanctioned in various ways — through restrictions on trade and tourism, restrictions on investment, or other means.

This could of course backfire, with whatever country being sanctioned imposing sanctions on the Philippines in response. The bad public image of a big polluter punishing a climate-vulnerable country, however, may very well be enough to prevent that sort of tit-for-tat, and in fact, may be compelling enough to force the offender to do the right thing. That, after all, is the whole point of sanctions. And if the Philippines successfully accomplishes this, it will set a pattern that other countries in the world might follow.

We share President Duterte's frustration with the lack of urgency displayed by the world in responding to our growing climate emergency. He is, however, in a position to do something about it, and we believe that he should.



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

100% OCEAN

The Manila Times



PAGE 1



UPPER

LOWER



PAGE 1

STORY



BRIEF

STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

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**I CAME OUT** A worker holds a baby of an Asian giant tortoise at the Turtle Conservation Center at a forest reserve in Rajendrapur. These little giants — among 41 babies born to several Asian Forest Tortoises brought together at a conservation park in Bangladesh — carry the weight of their species on their backs. AFP PHOTO