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IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Big firms vow to address Metro Manila's garbage crisis

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLORE

Companies like Coca-Cola Philippines and Unilever Philippines – tagged as Manila Bay's worst polluters – have committed to address Metro Manila's so-called garbage crisis.

A statement showed that top executives of major companies have responded and committed to support Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu's call for collaboration between the government and the private sector to address worsening waste problems in the Capital.

In a forum hosted by the Stratbase Group, Coca-Cola Philippines General Manager and President Winn Everhart said the company is on track to build a P1-billion PET bottle recycling facility, the first in Southeast Asia.

The move is seen to "substantially reduce the waste leakage in the Mega-Manila area", he said.

Meanwhile, Unilever Philippines chairman Benjie Yap discussed his company's "Zero Waste to Nature" program and its "ambitious new commitments to collect and process more than it sells and halve use of virgin plastic".

The initiative commits to produce 100-percent reusable, recyclable and compostable packaging by 2025 and invest in technical solution to recycle sachets produced by the industry.

Unilever also presented ongoing environment programs such

as the "Misis Walastik" which collects sachet waste in more than 300 communities in Metro Manila; the "Kole Kilo Kita para sa Walastik na Maynila" which incentivizes plastic waste collection under the "May Pera sa Basura" project of Manila; and other innovations in sustainable packaging and alternative delivery systems.

"A smarter approach other than the traditional regulatory tools imposing bans or taxes is to focus on instilling discipline for consumers to responsibly dispose of trash in parallel with enabling policies that encourage new innovations for packaging materials and waste management systems," said Dindo Manhit, managing director and CEO of Stratbase Group.

"Stewardship of the environment should be everybody's concern. The task to protect and preserve the environment is not just the government's business, it's everybody's business," he added.

A data from the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) showed that almost 164 million pieces of sachets are used in the Philippines daily, equating to around 59.7 billion pieces of sachets yearly.

It also specified that almost 57 million shopping bags are used throughout the country everyday, or roughly 20.6 billion pieces a year, while around three million diapers are being discarded on a daily basis. That's 1.1 billion diapers annually.



ESTERO RANGERS NG MAYNILA UMARANGKADA

BUMUO ng "Estero Rangers" ang Manila Department of Public Safety na siyang tututok sa paglilinis ng mga estero sa Maynila.

Pahayag ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno sa kanyang lingguhang ulat sa mamamayan na itinatag ang nasabing grupo upang maglinis ng basura sa mga estero.

Ayon sa alkalde, napakaraming ilog sa Maynila ang kailangang limisin kaya naman nakiusap ito sa publiko na huwag nang magtapon ng basura sa mga daluyan ng tubig.

Aniya, kapag nagbarang mga basura sa mga estero ay magiging stagnant water at ito ang dahilan para pamugaran at pangitlogan naman ng lamok na may dalang dengue.

Kapag nagkasakit naman aniya ng dengue ang ating mga anak ay mangangailangan din ng dugo at gagastos sa gamot kaya dapat aniyang ilagay sa tamang sisidlan ang basura at hintayin na lamang ang trak ng basura. **PAUL ROLDAN**



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Wood is the perfect material to replace single-use plastics

ONE of the most popular options for those who are looking for more environmentally friendly materials is wood. Wood is a versatile material that can be made into various products. From wooden spoon and forks that are perfect for your next picnic to wooden toothbrushes, there are various products now available that can replace plastic products that you have come to rely upon.

"Wood has been a trusted material since time immemorial," Charlie Liu, chairman of the Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) said. "Now, people are realizing that wood is not only reliable as a building material, but also sustainable and flexible enough to be used in various applications, including eating utensils and various forms of packaging."

PWPA is an organization that

is dedicated to the wider usage of wood. They believe that through sustainable forest management we can continue to meet the demand of our country for sustainable wooden products while ensuring that our environment is protected from further degradation. This can be done through sustainable wood farming where trees that are harvested are replaced with more seedlings that can



sequester more carbon from our air. For more information, visit <http://www.pwpa.org.ph>.



BRING JOY TO EARTH

How to cut your holiday waste, carbon footprint

EVERYBODY is rushing to buy the right gifts, putting up festive decorations for the home, and planning food for the holiday table, and outfits for holiday parties.

What happens next after the holidays — mounds of trash everywhere. Keeping Christmas green lessens the negative impact on our environment.

A large portion of holiday waste is product packaging or gift wrappers. Opting to buy local greatly decreases the amount of packaging needed.

Here are ways to cut your carbon footprint and keep our environment clean and green:

* **Shop at your local stores with re-usable bags.** This will eliminate the use of plastic bags or paper bags.

* **Avoid buying new**

gift wrappers. Rather than wrapping gifts in newly purchased gift wrap, opt for no wrappings and just tie up with natural hemp or flax string, pop in a re-usable bag, or use items around the house that can be recycled.

Pieces of fabric like old sheets or pillow cases, newsprint, or old maps, decorated with items like old buttons or ribbon, make interesting gift wrap and support the effort of saving our forests.

Crafting your own gift wrappers would also boost your kids' creativity and will have fun making their own wrappings.

If you still opt to buy new wrappings, purchase from an eco-friendly store wrapping paper made from recycled paper or sustainable fibers such as hemp.

* **Avoid decorations made of plastics.** Plastic has a huge negative impact on the environment and the more we can keep out of landfills the better. Avoid Christmas decorations and gifts made from new plastic or that use any kind of petroleum. There are many more eco-friendly options available.

Decorating with ornaments made from recycled paper embedded with wildflower seeds can be planted after the holidays; holiday eco home decor like recycled glass serving trays and dishes add elegance to holiday entertaining while eliminating stress to the environment resulting from new glass production; natural fragrance soy wax candles avoid petroleum, and bring a soft holiday glow to any room.

* **Avoid food wastage.**



Holiday celebration also means abundance in food. Fruit, bread, and dairy products are the most common items that get thrown out, so these are a good place to start. If you find that once again you have made an entirely too much food, give it to homeless people. Many are starving and feeding the hungry is soul warming, especially during the holiday season. It also sets a good example for chil-

dren. Scraps left from plates can also be used to feed animals or added to the compost pile.

Avoid using Styro-foam plates. Re-usable tableware is the way to go to keep things eco-friendly with the added benefit of a shared family activity... washing dishes after the party.

Remember, be creative, re-use or up-cycle, save Mother Earth.



Publiko pinayuhan: Umiwas sa 'paputoxic'

INILUNSAD ng EcoWaste Coalition ang kanilang taunang kampanya na "Iwas Paputoxic" at muling iginiit ang masamang naidudulot ng pagpapaputok.

Kamakailan ay nanawagan ang EcoWaste sa mga estudyante ng San Antonio Elementary School sa Quezon City na huwag

magpaputok ang mga ito.

Dumalo sa pagbubukas ng kampanya sina Miss Philippines Earth 2019 Janelle Lazo Tee at Miss Philippines Earth Eco-Tourism Karen Nicole Picclo bilang suporta sa kampanya.

"The misuse of firecrackers and fireworks can cause blast injuries or burns that may require am-

putation, eye damage that may lead to blindness, tetanus, poisoning and even death with children as the most affected," ani Thony Dizon, Chemical Safety Campaigner ng EcoWaste.

Ayon sa Department of Health, 340 ang firecracker-related injuries sa pagsalubong ng 2019, bumaba kumapara sa 550 kaso sa pagsalubong ng 2018.

Nagdudulot din ng polusyon ang paputok

bukod sa natitirang mga paglagyan nito ay nakakaperhuwesyo rin ito sa kalidad ng hangin.

"The warlike bursting of firecrackers and fireworks also pollute our environment with toxic smog that can trigger or worsen respiratory and other health disorders, while generating equally toxic litter that only adds to our garbage woes," ani Dizon. -**Leifbilly Begas**



After Boracay, Palawan rehab, Baguio is next

After the successful rehabilitation of Boracay and ongoing efforts in Palawan and other beach destinations, the government is now setting its sights on the highlands, in the country's so-called Summer Capital, Baguio City.

The city government led by Mayor Benjamin Magalong has prohibited the cutting of trees and ordered a stop to all new construction of homes and office buildings as he sets out to turn Baguio into a "smart city," according to Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat.

To revive the City of Pines, the city and national governments also plan to relocate structures, mostly private homes, that have been built along the slopes, to new developments being planned in the outskirts of the city and neighboring municipalities, Puyat said.

Facing "The Chiefs" on Signal TV's *One News* last Friday, Puyat disclosed that more detailed discussions are set in January among the Baguio government, the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other agencies involved in the revival of the country's top travel destinations.

"Mayor Magalong already told us that he has prohibited cutting of trees, no more new buildings," Puyat said.

She said Magalong, a former police officer, had given assurance that Burnham Park at the heart of Baguio would not be converted into a parking lot, as envisioned by the previous city administration.

"We have given him P400 million to rehabilitate Burnham Park," Puyat said, with the money to be used to install more lights, improve sanitation and develop pedestrian areas.

The DOT, through its infrastructure arm the Tourism Infrastructure Enterprise Zone

Authority (TIEZA), is releasing an initial P500 million to the city, of which P400 million is for Burnham Park.

Among the projects that TIEZA will help the city implement are the rehabilitation of the public market, the creation of pedestrian-only areas and phase one of the upgrading of water and sewerage facilities, Puyat said.

The city used to be redolent with the scent of pine trees as well as dahlias, hydrangeas and other flowers that thrive only in the highlands.

Over the years, however, the city's slopes were progressively cleared of pine trees to make way for houses and commercial establishments.

Puyat pointed out that the slopes are mostly danger zones that should be off-limits to homes and offices.

Seismologists have warned that a strong earthquake could cause grievous loss of lives in the city that has become overcrowded. Baguio City was isolated for two days and was among the hardest hit when a magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck Luzon on July 26, 1990. The

quake left over 1,600 people dead, mostly in Baguio and Nueva Ecija.

Puyat said the government is drawing up plans for new property development outside the city, where affected slope dwellers can be relocated.

"It's so exciting that we have the government helping us out," Puyat said. "It cannot be just the national government. *Kailangan tu-long-tulong* (Everyone must help)."

Filipinos who have been regular visitors to the city have complained about the disappearance of pine trees

and the replacement of the bracing scent of trees and flowers with noxious fumes from traffic jams.

"I told *nga* mayor, I don't like to go to Baguio anymore, it's so traffic," Puyat said. "(And he said) no, no, no, I'll convert it into a smart city."

In July last year, Baguio became the first city to be included in the Creative Cities Network of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Puyat wants to build on this, highlighting the unique artistry and culture of the Cordilleras and reviving the

landmarks of Baguio such as its popular public market, Burnham Park, Mines View Park and the cathedral at the top of now overcrowded Session Road.

She told The Chiefs that local government executives across the country have become more cooperative with the national government in rehabilitation efforts following the successful cleanup of Boracay.

The national government provides funding and other forms of assistance to cooperative local officials in cleaning up and reviving their areas, Puyat said.



Fighting climate change, protecting nature go hand in hand

BY LAURE FILLON

MADRID: The preservation of Earth's pristine wildernesses and oceans, long treated as a separate issue to curbing climate change, is taking on more importance as scientists say they really need to go hand in hand.

The year 2020 will be crucial as nations submit their commitments to the fight to curb global warming ahead of the COP26 conference in Glasgow, Scotland.

At the same time, they will also be drawing up their plans for protecting biodiversity over the next decade in preparation for the COP15 summit in China.

While the focus at COP25 in Madrid these past two weeks has been on climate change and the growing urgency to cut greenhouse gas emissions, organizers have made an effort to put the natural environment into the mix.

COP25 chair Chile for example has put the stress on protecting our oceans, under threat on all fronts — pollution, acidification, coral loss, over-fishing to name a few.

"We cannot approach global problems in separate compartments, we must look for synergies," Andres Landerreche, coordinator for the Chilean conference presidency, told the Agence France-Presse (AFP).

"It is the first time (at a COP summit) that there are so many official events linked to biodiversity," said Alexandra Deprez of the Institute for Durable

Development and International Relations (Iddri).

Climate change, nature linked

The link between global warming and biodiversity is and should be self-evident -- climate change spells changing habitats and upheaval in the animal world, just as it will mean for mankind.

"The effects of climate change stoke the biodiversity crisis," said Grethel Aguilar, acting head of the International Union for Conservation (IUCN) whose Red List estimates 30 percent of all animals and plants to be at risk.

Yet, it is nature which may offer solutions to help tackle climate change, Aguilar says.

One of the best known examples is planting trees to help absorb some of the billions of tons of carbon dioxide being pumped out but it should not be seen as an easy pass on the pressing need to reduce our emissions outright.

Similarly, alternative fuels, such as those based on plants like maize can help — but they have a price in diverting food crops into energy.

Lola Vallejo, who runs IDDRI's climate program, said the issue of bio-diversity was on the agenda and had attracted support from key countries such as France, China, Costa Rica or New Zealand.

At Madrid, there has been some meeting of minds on the idea of enlisting nature to combat climate change, which may prove better than some of the

technological or engineering solutions suggested up to now.

It is also important not to think that such solutions absolve us of our responsibility on commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, said Karin Zaunberger of the European Commission.

"We have to be ambitious, unconventional and work together," Zaunberger said.

Li Shuo of Greenpeace International noted that the two conventions — on climate change and biodiversity — have different objectives and reflect different cultures.

"I can sum up the UN convention on climate change in one phrase — reduce CO2 emissions," Li said.

"But can I do the same for the Convention on Biological Diversity? No!"

The biodiversity convention seems to assume that the main task is fixing objectives without putting in place the actual means to achieve them, he said, while the Paris climate accord lays down exactly what steps need to be taken.

Zaunberger of the European Union said there was some concern that the focus on climate risks bio-diversity getting forgotten.

For some the answer is to combine the two conventions, along with a third perhaps on desertification.

"I do not know if they need to go that far but [the two sides] must at least really talk," said French Minister for Ecological and Inclusive Transition Elisabeth Borne. **AFP**



U.N. TALKS DEADLOCKED, DETACHED FROM CLIMATE EMERGENCY

**By Marlowe Hood
and Patrick Galey**

UNITED Nations climate negotiations were deadlocked deep into overtime and through the night, with even the best-case outcome likely to fall well short of what science says is needed to avert a future ravaged by global warming.

The COP25 summit in Madrid arrives on the heels of climate-related disasters across the planet, including unprecedented cyclones, deadly droughts and record-setting heatwaves.

It began on Dec. 2 and the talks were supposed to end on Friday evening, but—as is often the case at such summits—they were still under way early Saturday, with new statements expected to be released in the coming hours.

Scientists have amassed a mountain of evidence pointing to even more dire impacts on the near horizon, while millions of youth activists are holding weekly strikes demanding government action.

Sixteen-year-old activist Greta Thunberg led student marchers in Turin, Italy Friday, and chastised world leaders for acting “as if there is no tomorrow.”

Briefing journalists as talks sailed past their provisional deadline, host Chile’s coordinator Andres Landarretche

admitted “the eyes of the people are on us.”

“We must show the world that we are capable of delivering the agreements that are needed to tackle the unprecedented challenge before us,” he said.

As pressure inside and outside the talks mounted, however, old splits between rich polluters and developing nations re-emerged over who should slash greenhouse gas emissions by how much, and how to pay the trillions needed to live in a climate-addled world.

Newer fissures, meanwhile, between poor, climate-vulnerable nations and emerging giants such as China and India—the world’s No.1 and No.4 emitters—also blocked progress.

DEADLOCK

The narrow aim of the Madrid negotiations is to finalize the rulebook for the 2015 Paris climate accord, which enjoins nations to limit global temperature rises to “well below” two degrees Celsius.

Earth has already warmed 1C, and is on track to heat up another two or three degrees by 2100.

But “raising ambition” on emissions remains the overarching goal in Madrid and especially next year, when Glasgow will host the last climate summit before the Paris treaty becomes operational.

The draft Madrid agreement under

negotiation, which must be approved by consensus, lays out two options.

The first—favored by nations reluctant to enhance their targets in the short term, including the US, India, China and Saudi Arabia—simply repeats language in the 2015 treaty.

But a group of more than 80 poor and climate-vulnerable nations backed by the European Union are insisting on a stronger commitment from all.

“[We] will not walk away without a clear call for all countries to enhance their ambitions,” said Marshall Islands climate envoy Tina Stege.

“On ambition, this will be the key fight tonight, and probably well into tomorrow,” said Alden Meyer, policy and strategy director at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

‘RED LINE FOR US’

Another potential deal-breaker is so-called “loss and damage”—how countries already counting the cost of the climate emergency can be compensated.

The United States, which is leaving the Paris agreement, has aggressively blocked any provisions that might leave them and other developed countries on the hook for damages that could total more than \$150 billion per year by 2025, observers and diplomats have said.

“This is a red line issue for Washington,” said Meyer.

“There can be no acknowledgement of the need for additional finance because that would push the button of a certain man in the Oval Office.”

Some countries historically aligned with the emerging giants China, India and Brazil over the course of the 25-year talks broke rank this week.

In a statement, the Association of Small Island States coalition accused Australia, the United States, Canada, Russia, India, China, and Brazil of “a lack of ambition that also undermines ours.”

The talks received a shot in the arm Friday after the EU pledged to make the bloc carbon-neutral by 2050 despite the refusal of Poland—a major emitter—to sign on.

But the EU Commission stopped short of setting a crucial intermediate target of reducing emissions by 55 percent or more by 2030.

The UN said this month that in order for the world to limit warming to 1.5C, emissions would need to drop over seven percent annually to 2030, requiring nothing less than a restructuring of the global economy.

In fact, they are currently rising year-on-year, and have grown 4 percent since the Paris deal was signed.

“It’s basically like what’s happening in the real world and in the streets, the protesters, doesn’t exist,” said Meyer.

“We are in a fantasy land here.” AFP



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Unity for Palawan's biodiversity and its people

Poverty is a major issue that continues to affect Palawan's biodiversity, thus four of the country's leading funding institutions—Peace and Equity Foundation (PEF), Foundation for a Sustainable Society, Inc. (FSSI), Forest Foundation Philippines (FFP) and Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE) — joined hands to protect the environment and provide livelihood opportunities in the towns of Roxas, San Vicente and Taytay.

THE STAR TREK PROJECT

In 2010, PEF, FSSI and FPE started the Star Trek Project in partnership with the Palawan Center for Appropriate Rural Technology, Inc. (PCART). The name was derived from the popular American science fiction film about explorers whose ship was called "Enterprise NX-01." Like these explorers, PCART and partners are working "to go where no man has gone before" in achieving their objectives.

The partnership continued in 2013 to expand the barangays covered by the project and enable the participating household partners to produce enough cash income through scaling up of livelihood projects in the communities.

Through this project, barangay ordinances and resolutions were passed for the delineation of areas, conservation of watershed areas, providing more opportunities for household to have a steady livelihood income source. At present, average household income increased by about 54 percent from rice and vegetable farming and hog and goat raising.

Anchoring on the gains of the first two undertakings, a new project emerged with FFP joining the three organizations. The new project currently supports 23 barangays around 185,000 hectares of predominantly lowland forests along the Northern Palawan Corridor.

GAINS OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

During the recent visit of representatives from the four organization on Oct. 23-24 in Puerto Princesa and Roxas, PCART executive director Laurence Padilla showed the gains of the initiatives through its newly renovated herbal processing facilities and community dryer, which support 400 farmers in the area.

Lagundi, banaba, sambong and turmeric leaves are some of the herbal leaves processed in the facility. The powdered leaves are then sold to pharmaceutical companies such as New Marketlink Pharmaceutical Corp. and Unilab that produce cough medicines and other supplements. Another buyer is organic product provider Yamang Bukid.

Aside from buying herbal leaves, PCART also helps in improving



Lawmakers realign P527 B in 2020 budget

By JESS DIAZ

The two chambers of Congress have realigned a total of almost P527 billion in their common version of the proposed P4.1-trillion national budget for next year.

As expected, the bulk of the realignments, or P318.4 billion or more than 60 percent, was made in the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

The changes are reflected in the 220-page report of the conference committee that reconciled the divergent budget versions the House of Representatives and the Senate had approved.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson has vowed to inform President Duterte which realignments are pork barrel funds, hoping the Chief Executive would veto or delete them from the budget.

Asked to comment on Lacson's statement, Davao City Rep. Isidro Ungab, who chairs the House appropriations committee, said the President "can very well identify pork allotments in the budget, if there are any."

"I had worked with him for a long time. He was the city mayor when I was chairman of the city council's appropriations committee. He had consistently reminded us to 'prepare a budget for the poor because the rich can take care of themselves,'" he said.

He said if Duterte vetoes any appropriation in the 2020 budget, it would "be based on whether a particular item will truly benefit our poor countrymen."

The thick conference committee report reflects the reductions and additions lawmakers made in the appropriations of agencies to fund their projects, together with the net change, if any, and the resulting totals. The exercise is what Albay Rep. Joey Salceda has called "*dagdag-bawas* (add-cut)."

Congress does a zero-sum juggling process because it cannot increase the budget ceiling proposed by the President. This means that what is added to one agency, appropriation or project/program is taken from another office, funding item or project.

The total realignments agreed in the budget conference are more than twice the P206 billion the Senate had juggled in its version of the proposed budget and the P9.5 billion realigned by the House.

The conference committee report shows that lawmakers first cut the DPWH budget by P267.3 billion before restoring the same amount and adding P51.1 billion, increasing the agency's funding for next year to P581 billion.

Like the DPWH and most departments, the DepEd went through "*dagdug-bawas*," with Congress taking away P14.8 billion before adding P16.5 billion, for a net addi-

tion of P1.7 billion, which is just a fraction of what was added to the DPWH. DepEd ended up with P51.4 billion for 2020.

In the Department of Agriculture, P8.9 billion was cut and P16.2 billion was added, for a net addition of P7.4 billion, increasing its budget to P62.3 billion.

In the Department of National Defense, P16.8 billion was taken away before the same amount was restored and P2.1 billion was added, bringing the agency's funding total to P191.7 billion.

The biggest realignment of more than P16 billion in the defense outlay was made in the Philippine Navy. It is not clear what this was.

The Department of Health is another recipient of a net augmentation amounting to P12.1 billion, increasing its budget to P101 billion. Another is the Department of Information and Communications Technology, whose budget was padded by P6.2 billion, from P37 billion to almost P10 billion.

The other departments and agencies that received net increases include interior and local government, P2.6 billion; social welfare and development, P5.5 billion; trade and industry, P3.3 billion; labor and employment, P3 billion; Commission on Higher Education, P7.1 billion; and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, P1.1 billion.

Only two departments suffered net reductions: Department of Transportation (DOTr), whose funding was cut by P46.6 billion to P99.4 billion; and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, whose budget was slashed by P500 million to P25.5 billion.

It is not clear why P46.6 billion was taken away from the DOTr, one of the implementers of the Duterte administration's Build Build Build program.

It is these reductions that partly funded the augmentations lawmakers gave to the DPWH and other departments. Aside from these cuts, Congress also took away P74 billion from the pension and gratuity fund and P6.8 billion from the miscellaneous personnel benefits fund.

In the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), P9.5 billion was cut before the same amount was returned. This means that irrigation projects worth P9.5 billion were removed or their funding was reduced, after which the same amount was added for projects identified by lawmakers. The cut-add exercise did not affect NIA's total funding of P36.3 billion.

Upon the initiative of the Senate, lawmakers also relegated P37 billion worth of appropriations to the uncommitted part of the budget, which could be used only in case of excess revenues, freeing up the same amount for their own projects.