

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DENR
IN THE NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR mandates 'biodiversity conservation' to be key consideration in evaluating projects

THE Environment department has issued an order that requires the consideration of biodiversity factors in what is thought to be the first official recognition of biodiversity as a contributor to economic and social development.

"All DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) offices shall ensure that Biodiversity conservation is considered in the planning and implementation of various programs and projects, and in the issuance of tenurial instruments," read the agency's Memorandum Circular No. 2016-745 issued on Nov. 28, and posted on the Facebook account of Biodiversity Management Bureau Chief Theresa Mundita S. Lim.

Tenurial instruments are those that grant a project proponent a lease over government land, subject to certain environmental management conditions.

The order authorizes the BMB to create a team of biodiversity experts to participate in mining audits, environmental impact assessment reviews, and performance evaluations of tenurial agreements issued by the DENR.

"It should benefit the entire country because for the longest time biodiversity has been seen as not contributing to development. So for the first time, there is an official recognition of biodiversity, especially for the Philippines... We have many species that exist only here and we also have many ecosystems that can

contribute to a community's resiliency," said Ms. Lim on Thursday via phone.

The circular references Executive Order 578, which establishes the national policy on biodiversity as prescribed for implementation throughout the country, particularly in key areas like the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecosystem and the Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor, which is the strait between Luzon and Mindoro.

The law provides for an inter-agency effort "to protect, conserve, and sustainably use biological diversity to ensure and secure the well-being of present and future generations of Filipinos."

DENR Administrative Order 2016-12 also outlines the Philippine Biodiver-

sity Strategy and Action Plan of 2015 to 2018.

The priority of the three-year biodiversity action plan, according to Ms. Lim, is "to ensure that biodiversity is taken into account in our development paradigm."

The Philippines, which is rich in both terrestrial and marine biodiversity, is recognized as one of 18 mega-biodiversity countries that collectively make up two-thirds of the earth's biological diversity,

The country is also known as one of the biodiversity hot spots where biological diversity is under constant threat due to unsustainable resource use practices, overexploitation, population pressures, and poverty, among other factors. —

Janina C. Lim

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Partnership for forest biodiversity protection

THE Energy Development Corp. (EDC), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the US Embassy in the Philippines' United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recently forged an agreement for the enhanced protection of the country's biodiversity.

The agreement among the three entities creates a partnership, called the Global Development Alliance (GDA), to apply the LAWIN Forest and Biodiversity Protection System in selected EDC forest sites.

LAWIN is an innovation that was jointly developed by DENR and USAID to address threats to the country's biodiversity. It enables forest and biodiversity protection authorities to regularly monitor, analyze and respond to threats to the natural forests.

LAWIN is now being spearheaded by the DENR as part of the national strategy for forest and biodiversity protection in the Philippines.

EDC, the country's largest geothermal energy company, is the first corporate partner that will use the system for watershed protection.

Under the GDA partnership, nearly 24,000 hectares of natural forest within EDC's areas of operation will be placed under improved protection through LAWIN.

The covered EDC sites included three conservation areas - Mount Apo in North Cotabato, Leyte and Negros Occidental.

EDC will also contribute more than P2 million in cash to support the protection and conservation efforts, while USAID will provide over P2 million in the form of technical assistance to help establish and implement LAWIN.

LAWIN combines science-based planning, user-friendly technology, and indigenous knowledge to protect forests and enable communities and the governments to focus conservation efforts in areas where they are needed most.

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Mining, LGU dealings to come under closer scrutiny—Dominguez

By REA CU  @ReaCuBM

THE government has its eyes keenly trained on so-called extractive industries, such as mining, and recently ordered the monitoring of their contributions to the nation's coffers via the electronic receipt and expenditure system, or eSRE.

This developed after the Department of Finance (DOF) ordered local government treasurers to include in their financial reports all environment and natural-resource transactions, particularly payments made by mining and allied industries.

According to the DOF, local treasurers should report on an annual and quarterly basis the fiscal and financial operations of their respective local government units (LGUs) through the eSRE.

Under Department Order (DO) 049-2016, Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III mandated local treasurers to include in their regular eSRE reports all payments made by extractive industries along with the detailed account of their share from the nation's wealth and their expenditures using the receipts and collections.

Other monetary and nonmonetary benefits received by LGUs from the extractive industries must also be included in their quarterly eSRE reports.

"It's high time for local treasurers to properly account for what the extractive and related sectors contribute to local economies, and how the local communities benefit from them and from the utilization of their natural resources," Dominguez said.

Finance (BLGF). The eSRE is the official fiscal and financial-management reporting system for the LGUs to the DOF and BLGF.

The Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (PH-EITI) and the Philippines Poverty-Environment Initiative (PPEI), under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Environment Programme, has supported the development of the ENRDMT, according to BLGF Officer in Charge (OIC) Niño B. Alvina.

Alvina said the BLGF, in coordination with the DOF and the Department of the Interior and Local Government

“It's high time for local treasurers to properly account for what the extractive and related sectors contribute to local economies, and how the local communities benefit from them and from the utilization of their natural resources.”

—DOMINGUEZ

(DILG), is leading the training and roll-out of the new policy on the Web-based

surers to include in their eSRE the following direct and nondirect payments made by the extractive industries to their LGUs, namely, local taxes, fees and other charges; receipts of shares from national wealth in their localities; expenditures of LGUs coming from receipts and collections from the extractive industries and shares from national wealth; and such other monetary and nonmonetary benefits received by LGUs from extractive industries and shares from national wealth.

In recent reports, Dominguez ordered the imposition of penalties on local treasurers for the mishandling of government funds. He ordered the BLGF to dismiss from the service municipal treasurer Angelita Roble of Tudela, Cebu, and to suspend for one year without pay Local Treasury Operations Officer IV Marilou Rivera, OIC of the Office of the Provincial Treasurer in Misamis Oriental.

Municipal treasurer Cherryl Aguirre of Valladolid, Negros Occidental, was also suspended for three months without pay, and municipal treasurer Rosita Siniclang of Emilio, Ilocos Sur, for one month and one day. The aforementioned was found guilty by the Ombudsman of serious dishonesty, and also being found guilty of oppression and neglect of duty, among others.

LGUs must report mining revenues – Finance

BY MAYVELIN U. CARABALLO

TREASURERS of local government units are now required to include in their quarterly and annual financial reports to the Department of Finance (DOF) all environment and natural resources revenues and expenditures, particularly payments made by mining and other extractive industries to their respective local governments.

In a statement on Thursday, the DOF explained that since 2011, local treasurers have been required to report to the DOF on a quarterly and annual basis the fiscal and financial operations of their respective LGUs through the electronic Statement of Receipts and Expenditure (eSRE) system.

Under Department Order 049-2016, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez 3rd has mandated

local treasurers to include in their regular eSRE reports, from here on, all payments made by extractive industries along with the detailed account of the shares from national wealth and their local governments' expenditures using the receipts/collections from these businesses and from the development and utilization of national wealth.

Other monetary and non-monetary benefits received by local

governments from extractives industries must also be included in their quarterly eSRE reports to the DOF.

"It's high time for local treasurers to properly account for what the extractive and related sectors contribute to local economies, and how the local communities benefit from them and from the utilization of their natural resources," Dominguez said.

Under the new directive, local treasurers will submit their reports through a web-based Environment and Natural Resources Data Management Tool (ENRDMT), which is a data management system associated with the eSRE system that is being maintained by the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF).

The said bureau is a DOF-attached agency, while the eSRE is the official fiscal and financial management reporting system for the LGUs to DOF. Local treasurers are required to prepare and submit

their reports to the DOF and BLGF on a quarterly basis, and their consolidated annual reports at the end of each year.

The development of the ENRDMT was supported by the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (PH-EITI), and the Philippines Poverty-Environment Initiative (PPEI) under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, according to BLGF officer-in-charge Niño Alvina.

The BLGF, in coordination with the DOF and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), is leading the training of trainers and rollout of the new policy on the web-based reporting platform from October this year to February 2017.

Meanwhile, Department Order 8-2011 mandates the official reporting and monitoring of all local governments' fiscal and financial operations via the eSRE.

LGUs told to report mining revenues

THE Department of Finance (DOF) has required treasurers of local government units (LGUs) to include in their financial reports to the DOF all environment and natural resources revenues and expenditures, particularly the payments made by the mining and other extractive industries to their respective LGUs.

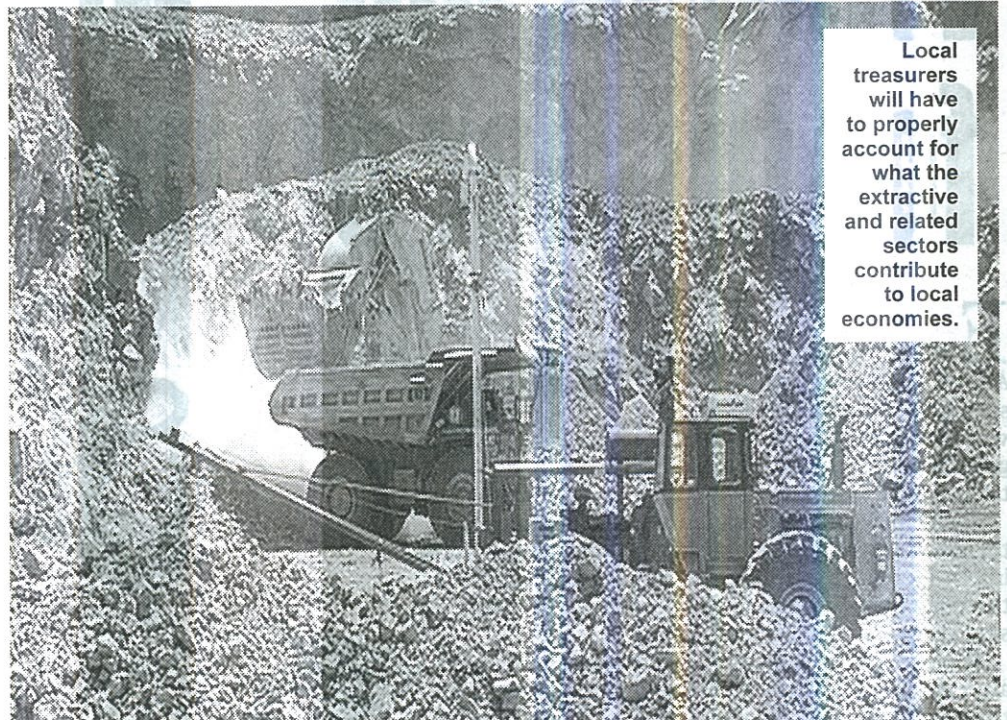
Since 2011, local treasurers have been required to report to the DOF on a quarterly and annual basis the fiscal and financial operations of their respective LGUs through the electronic Statement of Receipts and Expenditure (eSRE) system.

Under Department Order No. 049-2016 issued just recently, Carlos Dominguez III, DOF secretary, has mandated local treasurers to include in their regular eSRE reports from hereon all payments made by extractive industries along with the detailed account of the shares from national wealth and their LGUs' expenditures using the receipts/collections from these businesses and from the development and utilization of national wealth.

Other monetary and non-monetary benefits received by LGUs from extractives industries must also be included in their quarterly eSRE reports to the DOF.

"It's high time for local treasurers to properly account for what the extractive and related sectors contribute to local economies, and how the local communities benefit from them and from the utilization of their natural resources," Dominguez said.

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Industries Transparency Initiative and the Philippines Poverty-Environment Initiative under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, according to BLGF officer-in-charge Niño Alvina.

Alvina said BLGF, in coordination with DOF and the Department of the Interior and Local Government, is leading the training of trainers and rollout of the new policy on the web-based reporting platform from October this year to February 2017.

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LGUs ordered to report revenue generated from extractive industries

DEPARTMENT of Finance (DoF) Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III has issued a Department Order requiring all local government treasurers to account for all revenue and expenditures from environment and natural resources industries like mining.

"It's high time for local treasurers to properly account for what the extractive and related sectors contribute to local economies, and how the local communities benefit from them and from the utilization of their natural resources," Mr. Dominguez said.

The order requires monetary and non-monetary benefits received by LGUs from extractive industries to be included in their quarterly electronic Statement of Receipts and Expenditures (eSRE) reports.

Reports are to be submitted to the Web-based Environment and

Natural Resources Data Management Tool (ENRDMT).

The eSRE is managed by the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF). Its use has been mandatory since 2011, but currently does not include inflows and outflows from extractive industries.

The DoF directive requires the recording of transactions with extractive industries including: local taxes, fees, and other charges and receipts of shares from national wealth in their localities.

The BLGF was ordered, in turn, to supply stakeholders with data on local taxes, fees and user charges directly collected from the extractive industries, detailed accounts of shares of the national wealth received by LGUs, expenditure items from such proceeds, among others. —

E.J.C. Tubayan

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HARNESSING THE INDUSTRY'S FULL POTENTIAL

NEDA BACKS MORE POLICY REFORMS IN MINING

By Daxim L. Lucas
@daxINQ

Despite the controversies surrounding the industry, mining has a role to play in helping the Philippine economy grow further as well as generate jobs for more Filipinos if policies to ensure the responsible operations were in place, the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said.

According to Economic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia, the Philippines—despite its relatively small land area—“is one of the world’s most well-endowed countries in terms of mineral resources.”

According to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, about 30 percent or 9 million hectares of the country’s total land area have a high mineral potential. In addition, from 2011 to 2015, the mining sector has been able to generate an average of 236,400 jobs annually.

Despite this, the mining sector’s contribution in terms of gross value-added still remained relatively low at an average of 0.7 percent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) and 5.6 percent of the total exports.

“Considering its small contribution to the economy and the contentious debate on mining and its links with issues on land-use, environment and social acceptability, the question for us is: How can we harness the full potential of the country’s mineral resources to

contribute to economic growth, generate employment and reduce poverty?” Pernia said.

Speaking before mining industry stakeholders earlier this week, the Neda chief praised the efforts of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to push for responsible mining in the country through its ongoing mining audits.

Plagued by issues

Pernia pointed out that the mining sector has been plagued by issues and challenges for decades, including the proliferation of illegal small-scale mining activities that adopt destructive mining practices and standards, the limited number of processing plants to create added value to mineral products and the lack of an efficient revenue collection and distribution that ensure the equitable and timely distribution of the mining income to legitimate beneficiaries.

“We in Neda believe that it is necessary to implement further policy reforms to enable the mining sector realize its full potential and increase its role in nation building,” he said. “However, developing sound and effective policies entail the use of quality data that are not usually easy to obtain, especially in the environmental sector.”

To this end, Pernia endorsed the Philippines Wealth

Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (Phil-Waves), which began its implementation in late 2013. Its main outputs are the estimation of macroeconomic indicators and the development of national accounts and ecosystem accounts, which aim to assist in evidence-based decision making.

He also cited the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) for the launch of the physical and monetary asset accounts for the four metallic minerals—gold, copper, nickel and chromite.

“These accounts are not merely a set of numbers, but are relevant inputs in the assessment and development of policies for the mining sector,” the Neda chief said.

“One critical use of the mineral accounts is in the analysis for an appropriate fiscal regime. However, the bill on fiscal regime and revenue-sharing arrangement was not enacted in the 16th Congress. Thus, this is a great opportunity to revisit and put forward new calculations for an appropriate tax rate that will be levied on mining companies using the resource rents estimated from the mineral accounts.”

“Altogether, if properly utilized, these will be useful in formulating policy recommendations on how to operationalize responsible mining in the country,” Pernia said. INQ

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02 DEC 2016

DATE

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PAGE

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lopez, fishpen owners in dialog

By Anna Leah E. Gonzales

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Lopez plans to talk to fishpen and fishcage operators in Laguna de Bay before the imposition of a moratorium on the issuance and renewal of their permits in January next year.

Environment undersecretary Arturo Valdez said the dialog between Lopez and the fishpen and fishcage operators aimed to reassure the government's commitment to providing small fisherfolk priority access to the 90,000-hectare lake.

Valdez heads the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force that recently conducted demolition operations on a 13-hectare illegal fishpen in Laguna Lake falling within the jurisdiction of Muntinlupa City.

"The thrust there is to send the message that the DENR, under Secretary Lopez, will rationalize the lake and the bias will be for the fisherfolk to have access to their traditional fishing ground," Valdez said.

"Secretary Lopez has made it very clear that the fisherfolk should enjoy the lake," he said.

He said the dialog was in line with President Rodrigo Duterte's directive to dismantle vast tracts of corporate and private fishpens and fishcages so that small-time fisherfolk would have access to their traditional fishing ground.

The lake's current carrying capacity allows up to only 9,000 hectares for aquaculture, but fishpens and cages were occupying 12,375.18 hectares of the surface water, showing a total of 3,375 hectares of excess area for demolition.

Valdez said the actual area could be bigger. "I would say it is more than that," Valdez said.

He said that the demolition "was to send a strong message" to the operators of illegal structures to self-dismantle before they enforced the president's order to dismantle illegal aqua facilities by the second week of December.

02 DEC 2016

DATE

13

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR, LAGUNA DE BAY FISH PEN OPERATORS TO HOLD DIALOGUE

ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez is planning to sit down with fish-pen and fishcage operators in Laguna de Bay before the imposition of a moratorium on the issuance and renewal of their permits starting January next year.

According to DENR Undersecretary Arturo Valdez, the dialogue between Lopez and the operators aimed to reassure

the government's commitment to provide small-time fisherfolk priority access to the 90,000-hectare lake.

Valdez is also the head of the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force that recently conducted demolition operations on a 13-hectare illegal fishpen in Laguna Lake within the jurisdiction of Muntinlupa.

"The thrust there is to send the message that the

DENR, under Secretary Lopez, will rationalize the lake and for the fisherfolk to have access to their traditional fishing ground," Valdez said.

Valdez said that at the heart of the effort is Lopez's agenda to make Laguna Lake "a showcase for social justice."

"Secretary Lopez has made it very clear that the fisherfolk should enjoy the lake," he said.

President Rodrigo

Duterte in his directive, ordered to dismantle vast tracts of corporate and private fishpens and fish-cages in order for small-time fisherfolk to have access to their traditional fishing ground.

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Valdez said that the demolition "was to send a strong message" to the operators of illegal structures to self-dismantle before they enforce the President's order to remove illegal aqua facilities by the second week of December.

"We will give them all the chance to harvest their stock," Valdez said.

Joel dela Torre

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR raises ultimatum on illegal fish pens

BY ANGELA LOPEZ DE LEON

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday warned operators of illegal fish pens in Laguna de Bay to prepare for demolition if they do not dismantle their fish cages before the middle of the month.

DENR Undersecretary Arturo Valdez, who also heads the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force

(NAECTF), said the DENR is giving owners of the illegally constructed fish pens until the second week of December to harvest their produce before demolishing their fish pens.

"We will give them all the chance to harvest their stock," he said.

Duterte earlier ordered the removal of illegal fish pens in Laguna de Bay in order to give small fishermen a chance to fish for their daily livelihood.

The lake's current carrying capacity

allows up to only 9,000 hectares for aquaculture, but fish pens and cages are occupying 12,375.18 hectares of the surface water, showing a total of 3,375 hectares of excess area for demolition.

But Valdez believes the actual area could be bigger.

Latest data from the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) showed that there are 1,018 registered or legitimate fish pen and cage operators in Laguna Lake, occupying 9,519 hectares.

02 DEC 2016

DATE

4

PAGE

UPPER HALF

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Let a million hectares of bamboo bloom

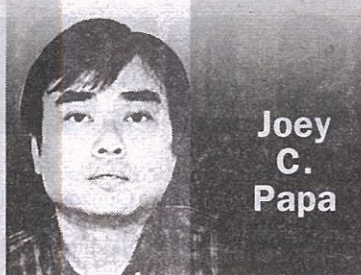
THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources, together with the Climate Change Commission and other government agencies and stakeholders, has launched a six-year bamboo program to address the challenges of climate change and increasing poverty, according to a DENR press statement emailed to me.

At the recent National Symposium and Exhibit on Bamboo in which 300 experts, policy makers and bamboo sector stakeholders discussed what bamboo can do in the face of such challenges, Secretary Gina Lopez said that the program will promote bamboo for "adaptation because that's protection, and then mitigation because it absorbs carbon and then we do inclusive growth.... the result of that creates an economic-stimulus and then you keep on growing the money until people's lives come up in time. It has to be impact-oriented and results-gearred."

Lopez reiterated what those of us who have long been promoting, planting, and making good use of bamboo have been saying.

Anyone who knows bamboo cannot help but love and grow and use this longest and most beautiful grass and it is a puzzle that the Philippine government's interest in it has not been as intense in past administrations as the great potential it holds. Bamboo sequesters so much carbon, so much more than trees can do, so there is your answer to beat the climate heat. The DENR statement in fact cites studies saying that "compared to some trees, bamboo has the capacity to sequester 400 percent more carbon per unit area."

BANGON KALIKASAN



Joey C. Papa

At the same time, bamboo gives off much more oxygen than trees, to resuscitate the tubercular state of health of our environment and our very own lungs, while it holds water very effectively in its roots and can thus greatly prevent landslides, erosion, and floods. Bamboo, therefore, can re-green denuded forests, create new forests, and watersheds, and rehabilitate ravaged lands like dumpsites and abandoned mine sites.

After the first year, the culms planted would be taller than the ordinary height of a person, conservatively speaking, considering that bamboo grows at the rate of some 3 centimeters per day while one culm multiplies at the same time—around it, from its roots, like grass does.

Thus bamboo is also a very good source for so many of our needs for food, clothing, shelter, implements for household, farming, manufacturing; health maintenance, protection, restoration; recreation, travel; livelihood and enterprise, name it, bamboo has it. And yet while using it, its number need not be reduced unlike the cutting of trees for timber, because it continues to multiply even as one harvests poles

We look forward to the realization of the DENR target of one million hectares of bamboo plantation to be established over the next six years under the Enhanced National Greening Program, to cover watersheds and critical areas. Lopez, according to the statement, is very hopeful of the success of the Bamboo Program. This, she said, could help the country access the Green Climate Fund, a financial mechanism under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

"We need to make this work because if it works, then the country can be a recipient of a lot of money," said Lopez, referring to the pledge of US\$1 billion a year by 2020 under the Paris Agreement to assist developing countries in their efforts to adapt to climate change.

We would just like to bring up at this point the issue about continuing quarrying and conversion of watershed and agricultural areas into resorts, shopping malls, and other commercial uses by well-connected individuals and businesses, and even into garbage dumpsites, as is happening in many parts of the country. If not checked, these destructive activities would considerably negate the anticipated benefits from the bamboo program.

There is so much in bamboo that those engaged in destructive and purely commercial activities at the expense of the environment could pause for a moment to study the bamboo, and they might discover that they could benefit much more doing good, through bamboo growing and development.

(bangonkalikasan@yahoo.com)

02 DEC 2016

Malaya

Business Insight

DATE

UPPER HALF

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PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CLIMATE

PAGE 1/2

Climate disasters can wipe out gains in

BY ANGELA CELIS

HIGHLIGHTS

poverty reduction: UN

WITHOUT climate-oriented development, climate change could force more than 100 million people from Asia-Pacific into extreme poverty by 2030, wiping out the gains in poverty reduction achieved over the last decades, a paper released by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) said.

According to the working paper - The Economics of Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific Region - newest estimates for the Asia-Pacific region show that growth will be significantly impacted by climate change.

"Without climate action, GDP (gross domestic product) in the region could decrease by as much as 3.3 percent by 2050 and 10 percent by 2100, relative to the base case," the report said.

"The economic costs associated with disasters across the region are also increasing. Damage to property, crops and livestock from disasters increased from \$52 billion annually to over \$523 billion between 1970 and 2015," it added.

Future losses from disasters are also measured in the report by the average annual loss (AAL) metric, which represents the amount countries should set aside each year to cope with future hazards.

Estimates of the AAL show that 18 countries in the Asia-Pacific region have a ratio of above 10 percent relative to social spending, and range all the way to 76 percent.

One of these countries is the Philippines, placing third as the ratio of annual average losses relative to social expenditures stood at 69.12 percent or \$7.893 billion.

The report said the impact of hazards to the region are compounded by rising exposure of people and their assets, and still significant socio-economic vulnerability despite decades of growth.

"Vulnerability is aggravated by low incomes and low adaptive capacity. The primary driver of increased exposure in developing countries has been rapid, unplanned development in hazard-prone areas caused by rapid urbanization," the report said.

"This is a major issue in the Asia-Pacific region where the urbanization rate is expected to reach 50 percent in the next decade, up from the current 40 to 45 percent," it added.

- The Philippines ranks third in terms of losses compared with social expenditures: a whopping 69 percent or \$7.89 billion.
- Displacements associated to disasters reached 2.2 million last year, fourth next to India (3.7 million), China (3.6 million) and Nepal (2.6 million).

02 DEC 2016

Malaya Business Insight

DATE

UPPER HALF

A3

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PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CLIMATE

PAGE 2/2



Disasters like typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) could wipe out gains in poverty reduction. The typhoon displaced millions of people in Leyte and Cebu.

“The Paris Agreement has converted the global climate aspirations into a universally agreed agenda with defined goals. Yet despite this progress, the anticipated costs of reducing emissions, along with the complexity and risks of enacting long term policies to incentivize shifts towards low-carbon development, remain daunting for many countries,” it added.

The report said this is underscored by the emissions gap between the current climate pledges and those needed to achieve the Paris target.

“It is estimated that Asia-Pacific countries will need to double their current levels of abatement ambition up to 2030 to close this gap,” it said.

The report said investment in adaptation and resilience is critical given that a level of

The report said another impact has been the large population displacements in the region.

Out of the 19.2 million new displacements in 2015 associated with disasters, 84 percent occurred in the Asia-Pacific region.

The report noted 15 countries in the region recorded displacements of more than 20,000 people in 2015.

In the Philippines alone, data showed that new displacements in 2015 associated with disasters is estimated at 2.2 million, fourth next to India (3.7 million), China (3.6 million) and Nepal (2.6 million).

“More frequent extreme weather events associated with climate change are expected to increase the number of displaced people to an estimated 150 million to 200 million by 2050,” the study said.

“The issue of climate-induced displacements promises to rank as one of the foremost human crises of our times,” it added.

According to the report, the region’s impressive economic growth to date has lifted millions out of poverty and transformed the region.

However, it pointed out that it has been carbon intensive, and has not accounted for future costs from climate change.

“Adopting the same carbon-intensive approach to drive the region’s future growth brings an unacceptable risk of dangerous and irreversible climate change,” the study said.

climate change is already locked in.

“Government investment in long term adaptation efforts form a key public good such as supporting agricultural resilience for the rural poor, ensuring the resilience of cities to climate change and disaster risk reduction,” it said.

The study also said implementing carbon pricing of various forms at a national level can deliver an economically efficient way of reducing emissions as well as promoting long term structural shifts in the economy to reduce emissions intensity.

“Expanding the size of carbon markets across the region through linking will offer greater potential for cost-effective mitigation,” the report said.

“Fossil fuel subsidies in many countries of the region are highly regressive and undermine efforts to increase the use of clean alternatives and energy efficiency,” it added.

Linked to this, the study said the further use of renewables and application of energy efficiency in economies of the Asia-Pacific are increasingly cost-effective or cost-negative options and will play a major role in decarbonisation, with effective support policies.

Lastly, the report said climate finance needs to be scaled up to meet the growing mitigation and adaptation efforts of developing countries in the region.

Climate-oriented dev't to save millions from poverty

MORE than 100 million people from Asia Pacific countries including the Philippines may fall into extreme poverty by 2030 without climate-oriented development in the region, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Unescap) warned.

According to a working paper titled "The Economics of Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific Region", this scenario will wipe out the gains in poverty reduction achieved over the last decades.

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PH in 3rd spot

In third spot is the Philippines as its ratio of annual average losses relative to social expenditures stood at 69.12 percent or \$7.893 billion.

The report said the impact of hazards to the region are compounded by rising exposure of people and their assets.

"Vulnerability is aggravated by low incomes and low adaptive capacity. The primary driver of increased exposure in developing countries has been rapid, unplanned development in hazard-prone areas caused by rapid urbanization," the report said.

"This is a major issue in the Asia-Pacific region where the urbanization rate is expected to reach 50 percent in the next decade, up from the current 40 to 45 percent," it said.

The report said another impact has been the large population displacements in the region.

Out of the 19.2 million displaced by disasters in 2015, 84 percent occurred in the Asia-Pacific region. Fifteen countries in the region recorded displacements of more than 20,000 people in 2015.

In the Philippines, new displacements in 2015 associated with disasters were estimated at 2.2 million, next to India (3.7 million),

China (3.6 million), and Nepal (2.6 million).

"More frequent extreme weather events associated with climate change are expected to increase the number of displaced people to an estimated 150 million to 200 million by 2050," the study said.

"The issue of climate-induced displacements promises to rank as one of the foremost human crises of our times," it added.

The report said the region's impressive economic growth has lifted millions out of poverty. However, that growth has been carbon-intensive, and has not accounted for future costs from climate change.

"Adopting the same carbon-intensive approach to drive the region's future growth brings an unacceptable risk of dangerous and irreversible climate change," the study said.

"The Paris Agreement has converted the global climate aspirations into a universally agreed agenda with defined goals. Yet despite this progress, the anticipated costs of reducing emissions, along with the complexity and risks of enacting long-term policies to incentivize shifts towards low-carbon development, remain daunting for many countries," it added.

The report said that this is underscored by the emissions gap be-

tween the current climate pledges and those needed to achieve the Paris target.

"It is estimated that Asia-Pacific countries will need to double their current levels of abatement ambition up to 2030 to close this gap," it said.

Investment in adaptation and resilience is critical given that a level of climate change is already locked in.

The study also said that implementing carbon pricing of various forms at a national level can deliver an economically efficient way of reducing emissions as well as promoting long-term structural shifts in the economy to reduce emissions intensity.

"Expanding the size of carbon markets across the region through linking will offer greater potential for cost-effective mitigation," the report said.

"Fossil fuel subsidies in many countries of the region are highly regressive and undermine efforts to increase the use of clean alternatives and energy efficiency," it added.

The report said that climate finance needs to be scaled up to meet the growing mitigation and adaptation efforts of developing countries in the region.

MAYVELIN U. CARABALLO

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Implementing rules of PWD law signed

By Marc Jayson Cayabyab
 @MJcayabyabINQ

Social Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo on Thursday signed the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 10754 or An Act Expanding the Benefits and Privileges of Persons with Disability (PWDs).

In her speech during the ceremonial signing of the IRR at the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) headquarters, Taguiwalo also urged Congress to allocate a bigger budget for the department's advocacy for PWDs.

"This is an early Christmas gift we can give to our persons with disability," Taguiwalo said.

Taguiwalo said the law is "reflective of the rights of PWDs to be recognized and upheld as a means to promote equality."

"It is not a question of charity," Taguiwalo said.

Former Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez, who lost his senatorial bid in the May elections, graced the event as the primary author of the law.

"The fight has just begun. Our task now is to ensure and guarantee that all beneficiaries will fully enjoy the assistance that the law has been offering," Romualdez said.

The Philippine Statistics



Social Welfare Secretary Judy M. Taguiwalo (center), Carmen Reyes-Zubiaga of the National Council on Disability Affairs and Health Undersecretary Gerardo Bayugo sign the implementing rules and regulations as the principal authors of the law, former Rep. Martin Romualdez and Sen. Sonny Angara, along with Rep. Yedda Romualdez and Rep. Emi Calixto, look on. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

Authority has estimated the PWD population in the country at 1.5 million.

Romualdez's bill that became a law amended Republic

Act No. 7277, or the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability, thus exempting PWDs from the value added tax (VAT).

"From the bottom of

my heart, I thank Secretary Taguiwalo, other government officials and stakeholders for finishing the IRR of this very important law. This is a

compassionate measure aimed at helping the plight of the PWD sector," Romualdez said.

Under the law, PWDs are exempted from the 12-percent VAT on land transportation, domestic air and sea travels; on fees and charges for medical and dental services including diagnostic and laboratory fees, and professional fees of at-

on fees and charges in hotels, restaurants and recreation centers; and, on admission fees in theatres, cinema houses, concert halls, and other similar places of culture, leisure and amusement.

The VAT exemption is on top of the 20-percent discount on certain goods and services that PWDs are already entitled to under the current Magna

The new law also grants a P25,000 annual income tax deduction to relatives, within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity, who are taking care of PWDs.

Republic Act No. 10754 was signed into law on March 24 this year by then President Aquino. INQ

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AMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

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MAY 500 environmental volunteers mula sa partner government agencies ang lumahok sa paglilinis sa Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area bilang paggunita sa 2016 International Volunteer Day.
Kuha ni AVITO DALAN/PNA