

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 08 DEC 2016

DAY : **Thursday**

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IN THE NEWS



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Acacia, other trees can rehabilitate mined-out areas

By RUDY FERNANDEZ

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna – Several tree species have been found to be effective in the rehabilitation of mined-out areas in the country.

This was revealed in a study done by the Los Baños-based Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), both agencies of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Titled "An integrated science-based approach in the rehabilitation of mined-out and waste drop areas of Bagacay, Hinabangan, Samar," the research covered a 2,672-hectare former copper and pyrite mining area.

The area used to be operated by Marinduque Mines Industrial Corp. (MIDC) from

1958 to 1985 and by the Philippine Pyrite Corp. from 1986 to 1992. It was then ranked first in the general risk ranking among the seven inactive mines in the Philippines.

In their scientific study, MGB and ERDB established three 60 x 20-meter experimental blocks to determine the potential of selected indigenous tree species in regreening and absorbing toxic elements in the abandoned mined-out areas.

Of the species used, four – narra, agoho, Acacia mangium and Acacia auriculiform – were observed to have high

concentrations of heavy metals absorbed, ERDB said in a report furnished The STAR.

"These species were most efficient in distributing heavy metals from roots to leaves," the bureau stated.

Forester Gregorio Santos Jr., leader of the research project, reported an observable increase in the height of mangium and agoho in the area.

Biomass (dried leaves and branches) produced by narra was noted to provide nutrients to the soil, promoting the growth of grasses and other shrub species.

The study also noted that the combination of one square meter forest soil, one liter of agricultural lime, and three liters of organic fertilizer (chicken manure) was the best treatment for the four tree species.

Today, ERDB said, the aesthetic condition of the waste dump area has improved. Forty-two hectares of the mined-out areas have been successfully regreened. The project has also provided employment to the people in surrounding communities.

ERDB director Henry Adornado expressed hope that the research project would inspire other mining companies to use similar rehabilitation protocols to restore degraded areas in the country.

The bureau is likewise now adopting other ERDB-developed technologies.

Adornado reminded mining companies that the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines requires them to restore mined-out areas to their former state.

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'Loakan airport not part of permit'

BAGUIO CITY—The Cordillera office of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau said Wednesday the Loakan airport is not covered by the exploration permit it had granted to The Golden Era company for its mining activities within the city and parts of the nearby town of Itogon.

Engineer Felizardo Gacad, chief of the MGB-CAR mine safety, environment and social development division, said Golden Era was given six months to secure the free and prior informed consent and the necessary permits from the affected communities. The permit emphasized that no ground works would be undertaken until the company had complied with the stipulations of the exploration permit.

"Our map shows that the Loakan airport is not within the coverage of the areas to be explored by the company. We made it clear to them that they are given six months to comply with the conditions," Gacad said.

MGB-CAR may, at any time, cancel the permit for violation of the provisions of the Mining Act and its implementing rules and regulations, or the terms and conditions of the permit, Gacad said.

Golden Era was also required to submit to MGB-CAR the proof of consultation with project presentation to the Baguio City Council in the form of a



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AMIN NG KATOTOHANAN

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PRODUKSIYON NG METAL BUMABA

INIHAYAG ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) na bumaba ng 11 porsiyento ang produksiyon ng metal sa ikatlong bahagi ng taon.

Sa tala ng MGB, bumagsak sa P75.93-bilyon ang halaga ng produksiyon ng metal sa ikatlong bahagi ng taon mula sa P85.47-bilyon noong ikatlong bahagi ng 2015.

Pangunahing dahilan ng pagbagsak ng produksiyon ng metal ang mababang presyo ng nickel at copper at ang suspensiyon ng anim

na minahan ng nickel sa Palawan at Zambales.

"In terms of percentage contribution to the total production value, gold continued to outpace the others, accounting for 44% or PhP33.57 billion, followed by direct shipping nickel ore and mixed nickel-cobalt sulfide with 37% or PhP28.21 billion. Copper, on the other hand, shared 18%, or PhP13.32 billion, while the remaining 1%, or PhP0.84 billion, came from the collective values of silver, chromite and iron ore,"

nakasaad sa website ng MGB.

Ang presyo ng nickel ay nasa \$3.95 per pound mula sa \$5.70 per pound habang ang copper ay \$2.04 per pound mula sa dating \$2.57 per pound.

Tumaas naman ang presyo ng gold sa \$1,256.7 kada onsa mula sa dating \$1,180.13 habang ang silver na dating \$16.03 kada onsa ay \$17.05 kada onsa na ngayon.

Samantala, ang anim na nickel mining companies na suspended ang operasyon ay

ang Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation (Sta. Cruz-Candelaria Mining Project), Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines Inc. (Sta. Cruz Nickel Mining Project), Eramen Minerals, Inc. (Sta. Cruz Mining Project), LNL Archipelago Minerals, Inc. (Sta. Cruz Mining Project), Berong Nickel Corporation (Berong Nickel Project) at Citinickel Mines and Development Corporation (Toronto and Pulot Nickel Projects).

MONCHET LARAÑO



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Marine debris harming 800 species – UN report

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

Marine debris, mostly hazardous pollutant plastic, is harming more than 800 animal species, costing millions in losses to many countries' economies, according to a new report of the United Nations.

The report – "Marine Debris: Understanding, Preventing and Mitigating the Significant Adverse Impacts on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity" – found that the number of species affected by marine debris has increased from 663 to 817 since 2012.

It also warned that this type of waste, mostly made of plastic, is an increasing threat to human health and wellbeing, and is costing countries billions of dollars each year.

"I hope that this report will provide governments and other stakeholders with the information needed to take urgent actions to address marine debris, one of the most prominent threats to marine ecosystems, and support healthy and resilient oceans as a critical aspect of achieving sustainable development," said Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, executive director of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The report was launched in Cancun, Mexico, on Monday on the sidelines of the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties Convention or COP13, where governments and private sector delegations have gathered since Dec. 2 to discuss how to integrate biodiversity into policies relevant to agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism. The meeting wraps up on Dec. 17.

Marine debris is usually defined as any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of, or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment. Three-quarters of all marine debris is plastic, a persistent and potentially hazardous pollutant, which fragments into microplastics that can be taken up by a wide range of marine organisms.

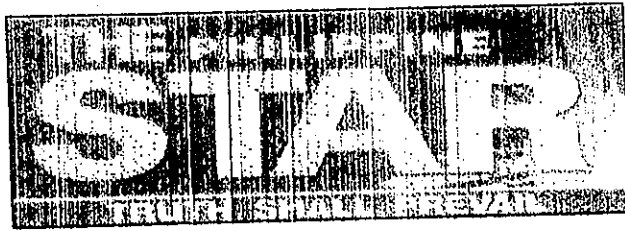
The most common types of marine debris are food wrappers, bottle caps, straws, grocery bags, beverage bottles and cigarette butts. Five of these items are made of plastic.

Marine and coastal species – fish, seabirds, marine mammals and reptiles – are affected by marine debris mostly through ingestion or entanglement.

According to the report, 40 percent of cetaceans and 44 percent of seabird species are affected by marine debris ingestion. The effect is not always understood as many ingest microplastics – little pieces or fragments less than five millimeters in diameter.

Current global estimates for plastic waste indicate that 192 coastal countries generated 275 million tons of waste in 2010, of which between 4.8 million and 12.7 million tons (1.8 - 4.6 percent) entered the marine environment.

Marine debris has an adverse effect on commercial fishing, shipping and tourism industries. The report also notes that previous research places the cost of pollution caused by marine debris at \$13 billion.



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Recovering the biodiverse Philippines

By KITTY AMANTE

Meeting targets

A recent study by Stanford University states that we are living in the "early stages of the Earth's sixth mass extinction." This means that since the 1500s, over 300 terrestrial or land species have been extinct. The population of the remaining species shows 25 percent average decline in abundance" including the continuous loss of habitats and ecosystem services upon which we depend on a daily basis.

In the Philippines, the patterns are equally dire as reported by the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Priorities (PBCP). We are home to a variety of ecosystems, vast landscapes, habitats and endemic species, making our country a biodiversity hotspot at risk of steady decline. Over the past years, the Philippines has experienced rapid environmental degradation. Data from PBCP show that a staggering 93 percent of our original forest cover from the 1900s are already lost due to commercial exploitation, introduction of invasive alien species and population growth. "We have very few forests left. And with the devastating impacts of climate change, we will continue to lose our forests and our ecosystems will be fiercely affected," Maria Belinda de la Paz, chief operating officer of Haribon Foundation, said. Against this backdrop, the world's governments in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have made commitments in 2010 to adopt the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the "most comprehensive" international agreement on biodiversity conservation. It is a 10-year action framework composed of 20 targets, known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The Strategic Plan offers a template for nations to come up with measurable targets towards halting the loss of biodiversity so that in 2020, ecosystems are resilient, benefiting human wellbeing and poverty reduction initiatives. It works by ensuring that biodiversity issues and importance are mainstreamed, pressures and threats are reduced, resources are used sustainably, capacities are enhanced and relevant policies are in place.

Anchored in the country's national development plan, an updated Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PB-SAP) (2015-2028) now features specific targets, indicators and monitoring schemes according to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The goals of the PBSAP encompass the CBD objectives stressing the importance of biodiversity conservation, its sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of resources.

The updating of this roadmap resulted in the structural reforms and threefold increase in the 2014 budget of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In the same year, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board integrated the mainstreaming of biodiversity in its revised Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Actions taken by the Philippines towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets include the increase in target forest cover from 23.9 percent (2003) to 52.6 percent (2006) of the total land area (Millennium Development Goals report for 2007).

Despite this, much of the data concerning forest increase in the Philippines includes single-species tree plantations, and does not discern the stark differences between plantation forest and forest ecosystems. The latter fuels agriculture and growing communities with water via watersheds, provides shelter for our unique wildlife, and livelihood and sustenance for indigenous peoples. Forests also protect communities from devastating calamity, such as landslides or floods.

Haribon continues to work in incorporating these important attributes of forest in Philippine laws.

As an advocate on environmental conservation, Haribon actively carries out campaigns and supports programs and interventions geared towards the protection and restoration of the Philippine ecosystem. The recent Marine Key Biodiversity Areas or MKBA project supported by Haribon for instance has helped improve the management of 16 marine protected areas in Lanuza Bay, Surigao del Sur.

Through its Biodiversity on Wheels (BOW) program, Haribon also brings biodiversity education to more than 40,000 school children to date in 13 communities all over the country. Awareness-raising on the values of biodiversity and conservation is among the important targets of the first Aichi strategy goal.

The author is information and communications officer of Haribon

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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BACK TO SEA - A sea turtle, locally known as pawikan, moves toward the open sea after being released at the All Hands Beach Resort in Subic Bay, Freeport Monday. (Photo by Jonas Reyes)



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G20 urged to increase contributions to climate fund

Former senator Heherson Alvarez is calling on G20 countries to increase their contributions to the Green Climate Fund to enable climate-vulnerable countries to significantly benefit from it.

Alvarez, who is also former secretary of the Philippine Climate Commission, issued the call during the Climate Change Conference of Parties 22 summit in Marrakech, Morocco last month.

Speaking before the Tricontinental Dialogue, Decarbonization to Defy Disasters with Climate Solutions, an official side event of COP22, Alvarez said that contributions of the G20 countries are measly compared to their national wealth created through industrialization using fossil fuels.

The GCF, formally established at the 2010 UN Climate Change conference in Cancun, set a goal of raising \$100 billion a year by 2020. It is meant to help climate vulnerable countries cope with disasters

caused by climate change.

A total of \$10.3 billion has so far been pledged by 47 countries. The US pledged \$3 billion to the fund in 2014.

Alvarez, chair of the advisory board of the Washington-based Climate Institute, explained that on average, the gross domestic product of G20 countries is \$4,000 billion, rendering minuscule the \$100 billion contribution toward climate finance.

The European Union, with average GDP of \$18,398 billion, will only have to contribute 0.54 percent of this amount, while the United States with average GDP of \$17,416 billion will only contribute 0.57 percent.

"If you look at the destructive impact of climate change, noting in particular Super Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in my country, \$300 million worth of onslaught happened," Alvarez said.

The Philippines averages 20 typhoons a year, with damage costing the country four percent of its annual GDP, he stressed.

6 Luzon LGUs awarded for climate change adaptation programs

By **FREDDIE C. LUZA**

LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte – Ten local government units (LGUs) received a maiden Climate-Adaptive and Disaster-Resilient (CLAD) Awards for cities and municipalities for their exemplary programs to mitigate the impact of climate change.

The CLAD Awards is a project of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) as conceptualized with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and Senator Loren Legarda, UNISDR Global Champion for Resilience.

The winning LGUs, which were awarded during the Climate Change Consciousness Week concluding program on November 25, were Canaman, Camarines Sur; Carmona, Cavite; Dumangas, Iloilo; Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur; Legazpi City, Albay; Malolos, Bulacan; New Lucena, Iloilo; Palompon, Leyte; Sorsogon City, Sorsogon; and Tublay, Benguet.

Each awardee was given a plaque and cash prize of ₱500,000.

Legarda lauded the 10 winners of the inaugural CLAD awards as she urged

other LGUs to adopt and replicate their best practices in order to strengthen community resilience to disasters and climate change.

She cited Canaman's Crop Insurance Program, which helps restore the livelihood of farmers affected by disasters by providing crop insurance; and the Farmers Field School, which provides farmers with knowledge on climate change impacts and adaptation such as storm surge and drought, as well as practical hands-on training on seed selection, water management, among others.

The town of Tublay, Benguet was awarded for its Carbon Stock and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Sequestration Enhancement, as well as its coffee-based agroforestation program, which empowers the community to participate in environmental conservation, climate change adaptation and disaster mitigation initiatives while gaining economic benefits from it.

Legazpi City, Albay also made it to the top 10 for its efforts in establishing organic gardens and planting of mangrove and fruit-bearing trees.

The mangroves serve as buffers or coastal defense from the effects of storm surge and tsunami while providing a rich habitat for marine life and sequestering carbon effectively.

Malolos, Bulacan was awarded for its outstanding psychological program which involves the conduct of traumatic and/or psychological debriefing for evacuees and victims of disasters.

Sorsogon, Sorsogon has been recognized for its Climate-Resiliency Field School where farmers and fisherfolks undergo actual practice on new farming technologies adaptable to climate change.

Another noteworthy project of this municipality is their reforestation (mangrove and upland) project which aims to minimize soil erosion and prevent storm surge in mangrove areas.

Carmona, Cavite was awarded for its Solid Waste Management and 3Rs Program (reduce, reuse, recycle) and installation of LED lights in the municipality, an initiative that not only saves electricity but also lessens greenhouse gas emissions.

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Megacities key to reaching global climate objectives

PARIS (AFP) – The world's big cities must collectively cut their carbon footprint by nearly half within a decade if global climate goals are to be met, according to an analysis unveiled Thursday.

Without aggressive measures by cities, the 196-nation Paris Agreement to curtail global warming "cannot be realistically delivered," according to Mark Watts, executive director of C40, a global network of large cities.

"The next four years will determine whether or not the world's megacities can deliver their part," he said.

The report was released as mayors from 84 megacities gathered in Mexico City for a C40 urban summit, to mull long-term commitments for slashing carbon pollution.

The agreement, inked in the French capital last December, calls for keeping average global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, and at 1.5 C if possible.

To underpin the pact, countries have made carbon-cutting pledges which, scientists calculate, place the world on track for 3 C of warming – a sure-fire recipe for climate catastrophe.

With only 1 C of warming so far, the world has already seen an upsurge in extreme weather, including droughts, superstorms, heat waves and coastal flooding boosted by rising seas.

Sharp, immediate cuts

"If we are going to avoid the worst impacts of global warming, cities are going to have to play an even bigger role in the months and years ahead," former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a UN special envoy for climate change and C40 board president, told a telephone briefing ahead of the report's release.

ter of the global economy and are home to more than 650 million people – almost 10 percent of the world's population.

The 100-page report compiled for the Mexico meeting, outlines four roadmaps to a low-carbon future, tailored to different levels of wealth and CO2 emissions.

Cities with high per capita levels of both – such as Toronto, New York and Melbourne – should immediately and sharply cut carbon pollution.

Poorer cities with high CO2 output – such as Cape Town in South Africa – would be given more leeway, with emissions allowed to briefly increase before dropping.

Rich cities such as Stockholm or Seoul that have already lowered emissions, should manage a steady decline.

Finally, poor cities with low carbon pollution – Quito or Caracas, for example – should have a longer grace period before per capita CO2 output must drop.

70% of greenhouse gases

To meet the 2 degrees Celsius target, city emissions would have to decline from an average of five tons of CO2 per person per year to under three tons within a decade, said the report.

By 2050, that number would need to be one ton, a hugely ambitious goal.

All the scenarios assume that scientists will have figured out by mid-century how to suck massive amounts of carbon out of the air.

Some 70 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions come from cities, which house just over half the world's population.

The world as a whole emits some 48 GtCO2e per year – a number climate scientists say must be slashed by 40-70 percent by 2050 and to near zero by 2100 for a chance to stay under the 2 degrees Celsius ceiling.

Six major signatory regions – Scotland (UK), Catalonia (Spain), Lombardy (Italy), Carinthia (Austria), Connecticut (US) and Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur (France) – have already met or exceeded their 2020 targets, said the Compact report.

Beyond 2020, however, much tougher action will have to be taken.

"Only around half of the governments included in the analysis have a 2050 (emissions-reduction) target," it said.

"The lack of long-term targets translates into emissions reduction levels that are not sufficient to stay below the 2 degrees celsius scenario post 2030."



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BASE sa-ulat ng Hydrological Information ng Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC), ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam noong Disyembre 5 ay nasa 210.45 meters, kulang ng 1.55 meters base sa 212 normal high water level (NHWL).

Ayon kay Executive Director Sevillo D. David Jr. ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) "Kailangan ipagpatuloy natin ang pagtitipid sa tubig, upang masiguro natin ang sapat at patuloy na suplay ng tubig para sa pangangailangan ng bawat tahanan.

Kung titignan natin ang lebel ng tubig mula Hulyo

kaya tumaas muli ang lebel ng tubig.

Ngunit, Kailangan pa rin nating magtipid sa paggamit ng tubig ngayong Kapaskuhan upang hindi lamang makatipid sa pambayad sa tubig kundi higit sa lahat ay maprotektahan ang ating pinagkukunan ng tubig pagpasok ng bagong taon taong 2017 lalo na sa panahon ng tag-init.

- July 29 - 177.13
- August 17 - 187.56
- September 30 - 194.71
- October 28 - 200.62
- November 11 - 205.97
- December 5 - 210.45

Noong nakaraang linggo, ang inyong lingkod ay nagtungo sa Xiamen, China,



hanggang Disyembre 2016, mapalad tayo ngayong taon dahil hindi tayo kinakapos sa tubig.

Para sa aking opinyon, mukhang mas maganda ang datos ngayong taon, dahil sa madalas at malalakas ang pag-ulan duot ng habagat

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

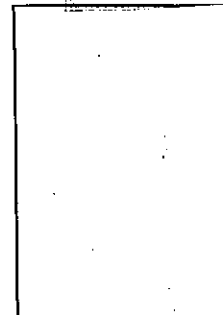
SALUBUNGIN ANG BAGONG TAON NA MAY KASAGANAHAN SA TUBIG

ang unang napansin ko, hindi sila nagbibigay ng service water. Kapag kakain ka sa airport, restaurant o sa hotel, kailangan mong bayaran ang tubig. Dito sa Pilipinas, libre ang service water.

Mayaman ang Pilipinas, kung ang tubig ang pag-uusapan pero kailangan nating alamin ang konsumo sa tubig sa araw-araw na mga gawain, tulad ng paliligo, pagsesepilyo at paghuhugas ng kamay.

Hindi maliwasan na mas maraming gagamit ng tubig sa pagpapaligo; pagpapalit ng bagong kasuotan, higit sa lahat, asahang maraming tubig magagamit kapaskuhan ang dahil sa daming hugasan.

Makisa sa pagsulong ng NWRB sa pagtitipid sa tubig, upang maayos na mapangasiwaan ang interes ng publiko sa maaaring dansin ng bawa't isa, kapag nagkaroon ng kakulangan sa tubig, dahil sa kawalan ng di-siplina.



Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

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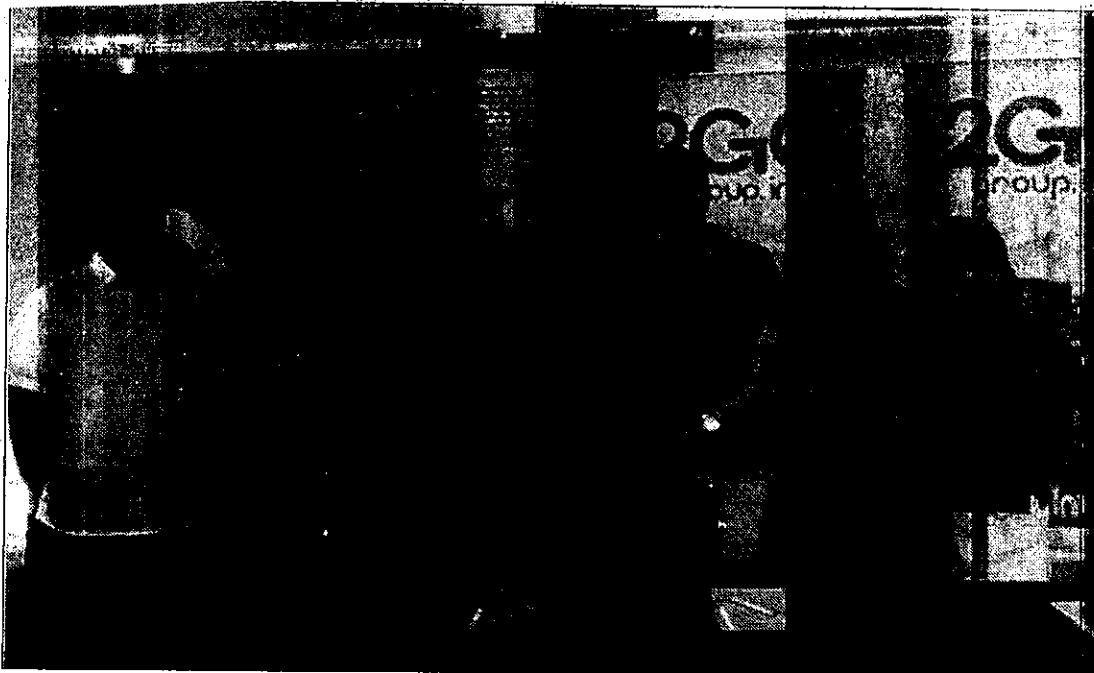
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2GO Group Inc, the leading provider of shipping, logistics and sea transportation services in the Philippines, has partnered with Tuason Development Foundation (TDFI) for a series of seagrass planting activities in the Davao Gulf, in an effort to improve the marine biodiversity profile of the region. Leading the partnership agreement are 2GO Travel senior vice president Stephen Tagud (3rd from R) and TDFI president Rosanna Tuason Fores (center). They were joined by Dickie Soriano, TDFI program director, Entrepreneurship; Atty. Chris Tripoli, TDFI board of trustees; Harry Morris, TDFI program director, Environment Protection; Grace Golez, vice president, 2GO Travel; Bi-Anne Tupas, assistant vice president, Marketing and Corporate Communications

2GO ties up with TDFI for seagrass planting

Adhering to its advocacy of environmental conservation and sustainable development, 2GO Group Inc., the leading shipping, logistics and sea transportation provider in the Philippines, has recently partnered with non-profit company Tuason Development Foundation Inc. (TDFI) for a series of seagrass planting efforts in Mindanao aimed at improving the marine biodiversity of the region.

"Part of 2GO's CSR is to negate our carbon footprint being the number one shipping, logistics and sea transportation provider in the Philippines, thus, the preservation and improvement of marine life by planting more seagrass is a first step in this long-term project to protect the marine ecosystem," said Stephen Tagud, senior vice president, 2GO Travel.

Tagud said 2GO has chosen seagrass planting as part of the company's advocacy because of its huge impact and long-lasting

Recent studies have shown the importance of seagrass in preserving marine-biodiversity especially in tropical areas where seagrass beds typically serve as a natural bridge between the mangrove forest along the shores and the coral reef in deeper waters off-shore.

This is especially true for a country like the Philippines, which boasts of one of the world's longest coastlines at over 36,000 kilometers.

A seagrass has likewise been described as the "lungs of the sea" because a mere square meter of seagrass can already generate 10 liters of oxygen, and a healthy seagrass meadow of around 4,000 square meters can easily support 40,000 fish and 50 million small invertebrates.

In addition, the seagrass occupy less than 0.2 percent of the seafloor where it captures over 10 percent of the organic carbon in the

meanwhile explains that "seagrasses are sensitive to both biological and physical fluctuations, making them useful indicators of changes not easily observable in either coral reef or mangrove forest. As an ecosystem, its unique ecological functions provide numerous benefits to coastal dwellers."

Fortes said this fact is unknown to the coastal communities when in fact marine life relies on seagrass such as shrimps, sea urchins, various fishes and sea turtles.

Seagrass beds also trap and hold sediment, thus controlling coastal erosion, while at the same time absorbing nutrients and releasing it via respiration and photosynthesis.

By absorbing these nutrients, seagrass also filter and purify the waters around it.

"We can't stress enough the importance of seagrass in preserving marine life health. Our challenge now is to preserve and grow more seagrass. We hope that this project will

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Lumad families flocking to cities

By F. Pearl A. Gajunera

DAVAO CITY—The City Social Services and Development Office has started to serve the first wave of *lumad* or indigenous people that have arrived in the city for Christmas.

As of Monday, the city has hosted 2,874 *lumad* families or around 5,000 individuals in seven different shelters. They will be provided with food, medicine, and other services until December 10, CSSDO chief Malou Bermudo said.

Among the first arrivals are 1,255 children and 47 pregnant women, five persons with disabilities, and 72 senior citizens, but these *lumad* "are far lesser in number compared to last year," Bermudo said.

"Around this time last year, we were already hosting around 5,000 families of *lumad*. The number went down this year because we are bringing Christmas to their communities," she added.

Every December, thousands of *lumad* would travel to the city from the hinterlands of Davao's Paquibato, Marilog, and Calinan districts and the provinces of Davao del Norte, North Cotabato, Bukidnon, Agusan, and even Surigao.

The local government's shelters are located at Riverside in Calinan, Bunawan, Buhangin, Agdao, Shanghai in Toril, Tugbok, and Bankerohan. The *lumad* usually leave the shelters early in the morning to roam the city and ask for "*pinaskuhan*" or gifts in exchange for songs and dances.

In Buhangin, CSSDO District Head Norman Baloro said almost a thousand *lumad* are being taken care of 24/7, with personnel from the City Health Office on standby.

"Most of them leave the shelter area at around 8 in the morning. Depending on a pre-arranged schedule of activities, such as gift-giving events by private groups, they come back early. But usually, they start returning late in the afternoon," Baloro said.

The Bankerohan shelter also hosts around 687 *lumad* families.

Bermudo said the *lumads* from Davao City areas will be asked to return to their communities starting December 7 for them to enjoy the activities prepared for them by the city government. Those who came from elsewhere will continue to receive services.

Mayor Sara Duterte has ordered CSSDO to conduct Pasko Fiesta activities in tribal communities from December 7 to December 21.

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Climate change battle heats up for Australian winemakers

By Glenda Kwek

ORANGE, Australia—When an unprecedented heatwave hit South Australia state, home to the world-renowned Barossa Valley winemaking region, viticulturists fretted about the impact on their grapes.

The crops survived, but the extreme weather last year was a reminder of how climate change can hurt a resurgent Aus\$2 billion (US\$1.5 billion) export industry boosted by Chinese thirst for Australian premium red wine.

"I've been here for 20 years... and we're seeing more severity in the weather," winemaker James Sweetapple told AFP at his vineyard in Orange, a picturesque town 250 kilometers (155 miles) northwest of Sydney.

"The wet years are much, much wetter, the dry years are much drier and much hotter."

With record-breaking hot weather tipped to become the new "normal" in the world's fourth-largest wine exporter by value, the government and grape-growers are trialling ways to mitigate against the challenges, including pruning later and switching varieties.

Lower quality

Australia is known as a land of drought and floods, and vignerons are accustomed to dealing with a variety of conditions.

But climate change appears to be causing a permanent shift, warming the continent by approximately 1.0 degree

ment data, intensifying the risk of bushfires and droughts, while altering rainfall patterns.

The rising heat is compressing harvesting seasons, causing grapes to ripen earlier—sometimes during the hotter December-February summer months rather than autumn.

This changes grapes' sugar and acid levels, leading to lower-quality wines with higher alcohol content.

"The last six weeks of ripening are critical for flavor and color development and sugar-acid bal-

ance, so we don't want to have too much heat at the end of the season before harvest," winemaker and former viticulture lecturer Peter Hedberg told AFP.

"Most vineyards in Australia are actually in very hot climates... and unfortunately a lot of regions are ripening grapes at over 35-degree Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) into 40-degree heat which is not good for flavor."

Australia's independent Climate Council warned last year that up to 70 percent of wine-growing areas in the country

with Mediterranean climates—including the Barossa and Western Australia's Margaret River region—would be "less suitable for grape growing by 2050" due to global warming.

While little or nothing can be done to save vines from flooding or smoke from bushfires tainting grapes, low-tech approaches to delay harvesting times and increase soil moisture are already being used.

Change or get out

layering mulches and compost on top to make them more moist, while Sweetapple keeps a "hairy" vineyard by allowing grass to grow freely underneath vines, providing shade in dry spells and sucking up excess moisture when wet.

Pruning later is another tried-and-tested approach for delaying harvesting times, while winemakers are being encouraged to look at different varieties that thrive in warmer climes—such as from Italy and Spain—when replacing old vineyards.

Wine Australia, the official grape and wine body, commissioned a project that analyzed 500 alternative varieties to map out the lengths of their seasons, when their grapes ripen and how much is produced, so growers have a guide if they want to make a switch.

"Most wines are made from 12 different varieties but there's thousands of them, which really means there's lots of opportunity within the genetics of grape vines to basically live in just about any environment that you attempt to grow them in," Wine Australia's research and development head Liz Waters said.

With 2016 "very likely" to be the world's hottest on record, according to the United Nations, the race to stay one step ahead of the shifting climate is heating up.

"Good farmers think about what's coming," said Jarrett, who has started growing prosecco, a white Italian variety he believes could suit

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climate change

monds, hazelnuts and pecans that thrive in the heat, Hedberg suggested.

"I think people realize they've got to change or get out," he said.

"The world doesn't need more cheap wine. We need premium wines that have good flavor; they've got a good story with them that we can sell to China or all around the world."

AFP

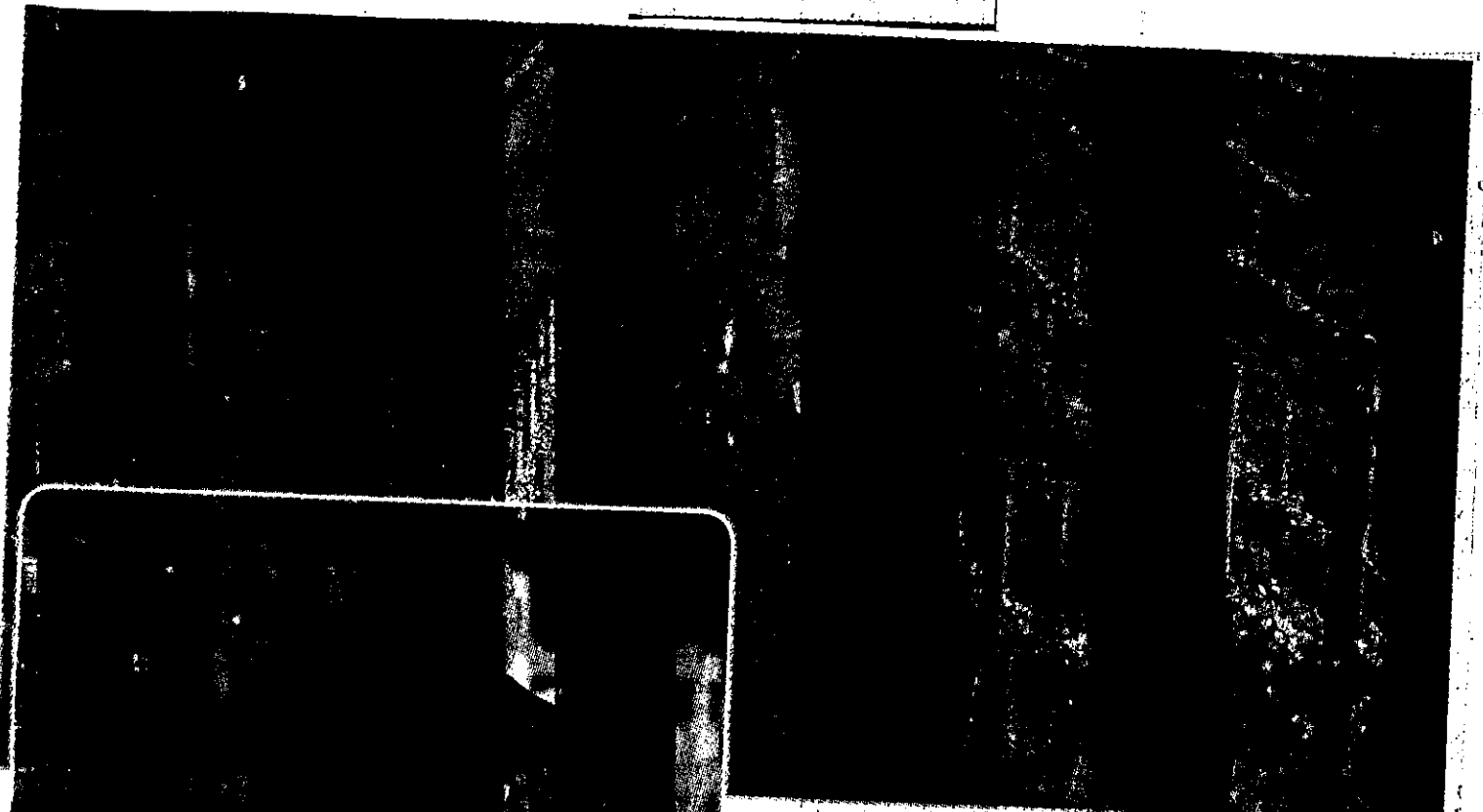


Photo taken on October 29, 2016 shows kangaroos between the vines at a vineyard in Orange. With record-breaking hot weather tipped to become the new "normal" in Australia, the world's fourth-largest wine exporter by value, the government and grape-growers are trialling ways to mitigate against the challenges, including pruning later and switching varieties. Winemaker James Sweetapple (inset) talking to AFP at his vineyard in Orange. AFP

Official backs IPs 'kaingin' system

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya: Indigenous peoples or IPs in the province have found an ally in a provincial board member who defended them in their practice of *kaingin* or slash-and-burn farming.

Kaingin means clearing by the cutting down and burning of trees and plant growth in an area for cultivation purposes.

Also known as swidden farming in other countries, it is a traditional but considered a destructive agricultural system practiced in many parts of the world.

In Nueva Vizcaya, slash-and-burn farming is still being practiced in some areas, particularly in the towns of Santa Fe, Kasibu, Kayapa, Dupax del Sur, Ambaguio and Diadi.

Board Member Flodemonte Gerdan of the South District, during the recently held Environmental Awareness Month Celebration-Driven Climate Change Symposium here said, *kaingin* among the tribes is totally destructive.

Reacting to the issue of perennial siltation of rivers in the province blamed on slash-and-burn farming, Gerdan added that most upland farmers continue to follow environmentally sound methods.

"Our *kaingin* farmers in the province observe an eco-friendly practice in such a way that trees are not totally burned but only branches are cut," he noted.

Gerdan explained that most of the IPs put importance to prevention of erosion and landslides by the use of the traditional method of farming.

He blamed heavy siltation of Nueva Vizcaya rivers on indiscriminate dumping of soil during road and bridge projects of both the national and local governments.

Gerdan also cited the construction of the Nueva Vizcaya-Benguet Road and the ongoing implementation of the Imugan, Santa Fe (Nueva Vizcaya)-San Nicolas (Pangasinan) road project as contributors to the heavy siltation.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO

Solar panels repay their energy 'debt' - study

PARIS: The climate-friendly electricity generated by solar panels in the past 40 years has all but cancelled out the polluting energy used to produce them, a study said Tuesday.

Indeed, by some calculations, the so-called "break-even point" between dirty energy input and clean output may already have arrived, researchers in the Netherlands reported.

"We show strong downward trends of environmental impact of solar panel production, the team wrote in the journal *Nature Communications*.

The study sought to address concerns that solar technology may be using fossil fuel energy in the panels' manufacture, and emitting greenhouse gases, faster than it was able to offset.

The authors found that for every doubling in solar capacity installed, energy used to produce solar panels decreased by 12-13 percent, and greenhouse gas emissions

dropped by 17-24 percent, depending on the material used.

Solar panels, which convert sunlight into electricity, are a key player in the fast-growing renewable energy sector, which also includes water- and wind-generated electricity.

Unlike energy from fossil fuels such as oil, coal and gas, the generation of electricity by so-called photovoltaic (PV) panels does not release planet-harming carbon dioxide.

Solar panel capacity grew sharply, on average, by 45 percent per year from 1975 to reach 230 billion watts (gigawatt or GW) in 2015.

In 1975, there were fewer than 10,000 solar panels around the world, compared to about a billion today, study co-author Wilfried Van Sark of Utrecht University in the Netherlands told AFP.

By the end of 2016, "we would have some 300 GW installed" — about 1-1.5 percent of global electricity demand.

AFP

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Saving nature is saving our future

Haribon highlights efforts against overfishing and biodiversity loss

IN the next 15 to 25 years, our children may only learn about the once staple Philippine fish *talakitok* and *maya-maya* in science books, or perhaps in museums.

These fish species, along with at least 10 others in the Philippines, are on the brink of extinction in just over a decade's time due to overharvesting and illegal fishing.

Filipinos depend on fish as one of their primary protein sources.

With the decline of biodiversity in marine life and other ecosystems, the growing demand for fish over time will undoubtedly affect nature's ability to support itself and our communities.

Overfishing is just one of the many pressures causing biodiversity loss, along with habitat degradation, pollution, invasive alien species, climate change, and other forms of overexploitation and unsustainable use.

Historically, the value of nature and the life it provides us have been largely ignored until their alarming decline highlights their importance.

Deforestation, for example, has belatedly revealed the crucial role of forests in protecting millions of Filipinos against floods, landslides, droughts and storm surges.

Today, we are down to less than 25 percent of our forest cover (DENR, 2010) out of the 54 percent of the total land

considers forest ecosystems as multi-species rather than single-species tree plantations.

This picture of current Philippine biodiversity mirrors what is also happening in ecosystems around the globe.

Concerted action

Amidst the challenges to the environment, the Philippine government has taken up the challenge to uphold the integrity of its natural ecosystems in policy and in practice through the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PB-SAP).

This national plan of action envisions that "by 2025, biodiversity is restored and rehabilitated, valued, effectively managed, secured, maintaining ecosystem services to sustain healthy, resilient Filipino communities and delivering benefits to all."

Besides the identified natural and human-induced drivers of biodiversity loss, the latest Philippine report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) unveils institutional factors affecting biodiversity decline such as weak law enforcement, inconsistent and overlapping policies, and lack of political will.

Against these odds, global talks are regularly set out to tackle issues on biodiversity following a strategic framework composing of what is called as the *Aichi targets*.

Environmental champions

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), with Haribon, has recently deputized at least 26 Wildlife Enforcement Officers or more commonly known as the *Bantay Gubat* in the biodiversity-rich Mt. Mingan of the Sierra Madre mountain regions.

Sam Manalastas, community organizer for Haribon, reveals that the wildlife of the Mingan forests including the endemic *Haring Ibon* (Philippine Eagle) are imperiled by human activities such as slash-and-burn farming, timber poaching and other forms of deforestation.

As "guardians of the forest," the Bantay Gubat helps ensure that threats to the forest ecosystem are reduced and sustainable use is promoted in accordance with forest protection laws.

In the marine ecosystem, on the other hand, marine species threatened with extinction were identified and recommendations were made through the Darwin Initiative, a project by Haribon and Newcastle University.

The Philippine report stressed that more work still needs to be done to make sure that critical areas are sustainably developed and managed.

As we observe the global Decade on Biodiversity (2011-2020), we are, more than ever, called on to take concrete actions, as individuals and as communities, to save our hurting environment so that when we look to our past, our chil-

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Saving nature is saving our future



DWINDLING FISH STOCK Haribon researchers interviewed more than 2,500 fishermen to help determine the scope of declining fish populations. While younger fishers may tend to believe fish stocks are normal, older fishers with more experience noted smaller sizes of fish and their overall catch over time. PHOTO BY HARIBON FOUNDATION



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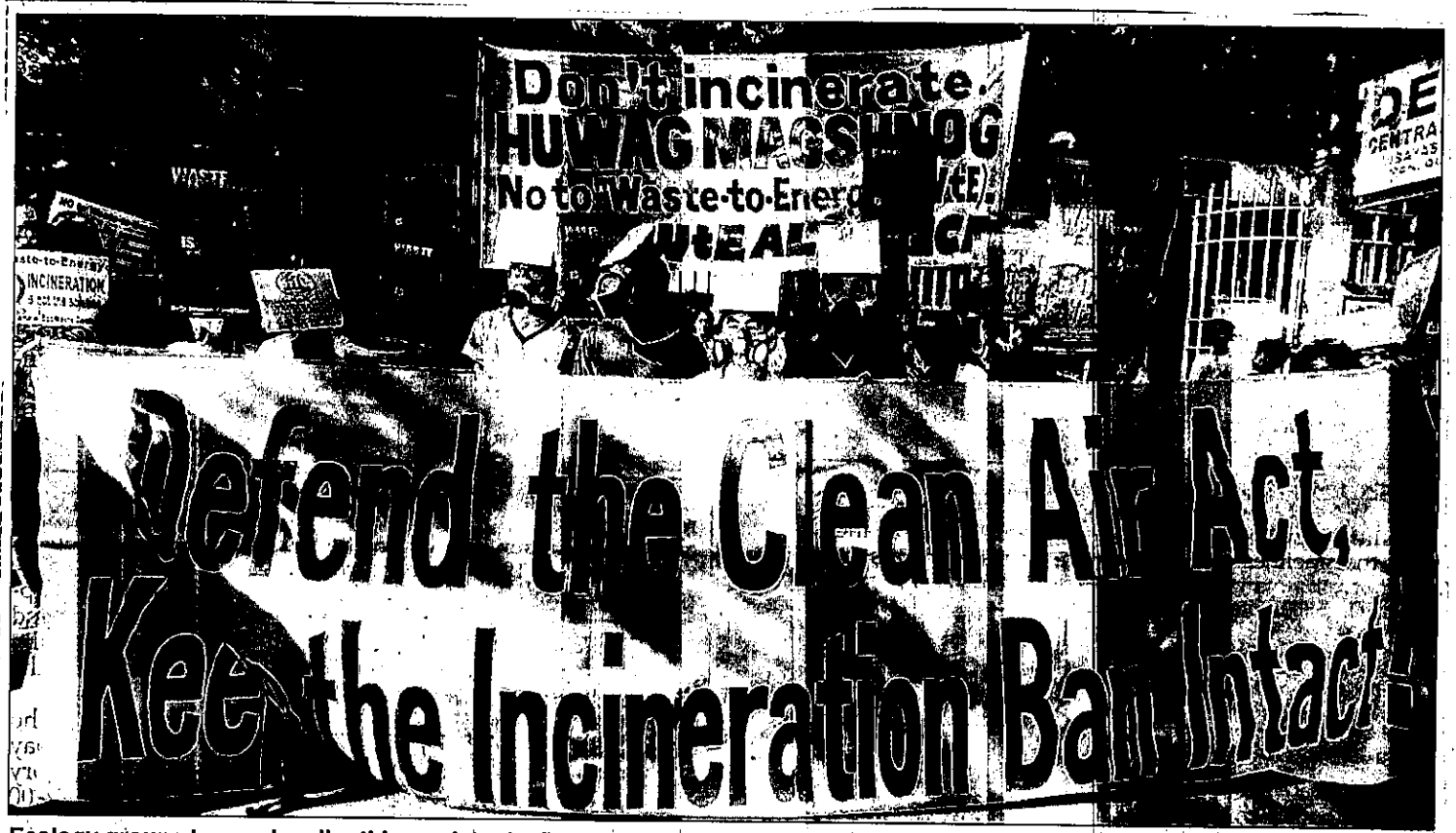
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Ecology groups trooped earlier this week to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Quezon City to protest the use of waste-to-energy technology in the country. Instead of incineration, they asked Environment Secretary Gina Lopez to lead a genuinely sustainable management of trash to prevent toxic pollution..

MICHAEL VARCAS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Stage set for fresh environmental audit

THE ENVIRONMENT department is preparing for its planned expanded audit of projects, posting a draft administrative order on the Web site of its Environmental Management Bureau for guidance.

The planned order "Establishing the System and Parameters for the Environmental Impact Assessment Audit" said the review will cover "all current ECCs (Environmental Compliance Certificates) issued for... ECPs (Environmentally Critical Projects) and ECAs (Environmentally Critical Areas)."

The draft said the new audit aims to "ensure the adequacy and efficiency of the mitigating measures as committed in the environmental impact assessment report" and projects' "full compliance with the ECC conditions as well as other existing environmental laws, rules and regulations and recommend sanctions for violations under existing environmental laws, rules and regulations."

It also aims to identify gaps in projects' environmental management plans and "determine regularity of ECC issuance and any gaps, errors or lapses in the process and technical review."

Maria Paz G. Luna, undersecretary for Legal Affairs who will head the committee that will "review all ECCs," said the planned new audit will be on top of regular reviews and hence will include even

Audit, SI/10

Audit,
from SI/10

the metal mines that had already been subjected to a similar process in July.

"The scope of the mining review is the regular review and this time we're looking at unforeseen environmental impacts that might not have been looked at during the regular monitoring review... There are things that may have been missed," Ms. Luna said in a telephone interview yesterday, adding that "a lot of mining and coal" projects will be among the first 50 up for review.

Prioritized for review are those with high Project Environmental Monitoring & Audit Prioritization Scheme (PEMAPS) scores; those with pending cases, complaints or violations on record; as well as those with "risk of irreparable adverse environmental impacts, or impact of such magnitude to render rehabilitation or restitution unlikely or untenable."

While Ms. Luna declined to identify the first 50, the department had said early last month that it aimed to review in January ECCs of all coal-fired power projects. Coal-fired plants, according to the Department of Energy on its Web site, account for 31.5% of the country's installed capacity and 34.2% of total dependable capacity as of end-2015, making them the biggest source of power by resource class.

The country's 41 metal mines have been reeling from adverse

various deficiencies and violations. Before that, the industry had already been reeling from a moratorium on new permits that has been in place since 2011 and extended indefinitely through Executive Order No. 79 signed on July 6, 2012.

Sought for comment, Ronald V. Recidoro, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines' (CoMP) vice-president for Legal and Policy matters, said in a phone interview: "Ano ba ito? katatapos lang ng audit namin (What is this? Our audit has just been completed) and we assumed our ECC has been looked into and here comes another audit."

He also noted that the audit committee for the new exercise again includes "representatives from civil society, as designated by the Secretary." CoMP had earlier complained that these civil society representatives had at times dictated the conduct of the July audit. "The ECC is a very technical document, you have to be well-versed in the sciences and environmental protection," Mr. Recidoro explained.

The draft guidelines will be presented in a consultation with stakeholders and communities on Dec. 14, Ms. Luna said, adding that the department hopes to start the audit "immediately."

ECCs of projects found non-compliant with terms of these permits will be suspended...

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



LOPEZ GROUP POWER FIRMS HELP CENTRAL LUZON STATE UNIVERSITY ESTABLISH CONSERVATION AREA – Energy Development Corporation (EDC) and subsidiary First Gen Hydro Power Corporation (FG Hydro) have partnered with the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) to establish a conservation park featuring threatened Philippine native tree species within the government-owned school campus in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija. Officials of EDC, FG Hydro and CLSU formalized their partnership recently by signing an agreement to open and maintain the CLSU-EDC-First Gen Hydro BINHI Conservation Park. Signing the agreement are (from left, seated) Maria Christine Mapanao, FG Hydro community relations coordinator; Tereso Abella, CLSU president; Ricky Carandang, EDC vice president; and Dr. Annie Paz-Alberto, director of CLSU's Institute for Climate Change and Environmental Management (ICCEM). EDC and FG Hydro are implementing the project with CLSU as part of BINHI, nationwide reforestation and biodiversity conservation program of the Lopez Group being spearheaded by EDC.

Lopez Group power companies help CLSU establish conservation area

Energy Development Corporation (EDC) and subsidiary First Gen Hydro Power Corporation (FG Hydro) have partnered with the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) to establish a conservation park within the government-owned school campus in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

Officials of EDC, FG Hydro and CLSU formalized their cooperation recently by signing an agreement, titled 'Partnership Commitment', for the project. The agreement mainly calls for cooperation in establishing and maintaining a tree-planting site within the university's conservation area, to be called the CLSU-EDC-First Gen Hydro BINHI Conservation Park.

CLSU's existing Conservation Park, which is part of the university's 658-hectare campus, now houses mainly ornamental plants and herbs. Under the agreement, an area within the park will

be set aside for planting, conserving and propagating threatened Philippine native tree species.

EDC and FG Hydro, both Lopez Group companies, are implementing the agreement as part of the Tree-for-the-Future module of BINHI, the nationwide reforestation and biodiversity conservation program of the Lopez Group being spearheaded by EDC.

The Tree for the Future, one of four BINHI modules, focuses on biodiversity conservation at the species level. The Tree-for-the-Future module aims to rescue and secure threatened premium Philippine native tree species by planting their seedlings in school grounds, public parks, and other areas that provide a safe haven.

For CLSU, the agreement supports the program of its Institute for Climate Change and Environmental Management (ICCEM) to play an active role in

the promotion of a healthy environment, biodiversity conservation, and environmental researches.

Commitments of EDC and FG Hydro for the project include providing the seedlings of threatened prime Philippine native tree species for planting in the Conservation Park, as well as technical assistance for the protection and maintenance of the planted trees.

Commitments of CLSU included providing a permanent tree-planting area within the Conservation Park appropriate and sufficient for threatened premium native trees, and undertaking the long-term protection, care and maintenance of the planted trees. CLSU through ICCEM has also agreed to turn over to EDC at least 50 percent of the seeds that will be harvested from the mother trees every fruiting season for EDC's seed bank or nursery.

EDC is the country's largest geo-



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Unilever shifts to renewable power

Unilever Philippines has entered into a power purchase agreement with First Gen, part of the Lopez conglomerate, for supply of electricity to Unilever's Cavite factory from geothermal sources. Cavite will be the first and only facility of Unilever at the moment to use electricity generated from geothermal energy.

Unilever's procurement team has been engaging with key renewable energy companies in the Philippines, exploring options in solar, hydro and geothermal and zeroed down on First Gen as having the most

competitive terms.

This is a big step forward for Unilever Philippines in its quest to cut down its CO2 footprint as it moves away from using electricity generated from coal to renewable origins.

There is a forecasted volume decrease of 3000 metric tons of CO2 emission into the environment and increased reduction as Unilever scales up in Cavite.

"This allows Unilever Philippines to source close to 20 percent of its electricity consumption from renewable sources"

says Marika Lindstrom, VP supply chain of Unilever Philippines.

The highlights of the agreement include significant cost advantages, immediate sustainable certification, backup and supply security, zero capex and liability, and favorable terms and conditions.

"Unilever is committed to sustainability and will switch to electricity from renewable origins like geothermal, solar and wind power, with competitive and USLP advantages," says Christian Byron, VP Procurement Asia.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Green groups express concern over waste-to-energy projects

DAVAO CITY - Environmental groups here have expressed concern over the growing interest for the waste-to-energy projects in the Philippines, as they bring adverse effects to the environment.

In a statement, Ateneo De Davao University (ADDU) Ecoteneo director Mylai Santos, who is also a member of the Sustainable Davao Movement, said waste-to-energy technology may come with a lot of concerns and risks that have to be ironed out before putting up one in the country.

She said that they are worried by the initiatives at the national level to amend the Clean Air Act to relax regulations and allow more WTE facilities in the country.

The Sustainable Davao Movement (SDM), a network of environmental civil society and peoples groups, held a public forum on December

5 to educate the Davaoños on the implications and risks of adopting this technology with the Ateneo University Council for Community Engagement and Advocacy Council (Ateneo-UCEAC) and the Ecowaste Coalition.

Santos said they are particularly worried by the pronouncement of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that the Philippines and Japan "have been strengthening their waste-to-energy (WtE) cooperation with Davao and Quezon cities as potential sites."

"There are no shortcuts towards ecological waste management. It would be prudent to exercise caution in adopting technology and/or processes which are not appropriate in our local context and not consistent with our national environmental laws," she added. (Antonio L. Colina IV)

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Parents, godparents reminded not to buy hazardous toys

AS consumers go on pre-Christmas toy shopping spree, a non-profit watch group for consumer and environmental health urged parents to pick up toys that will not expose young children to hazardous lurking in some play things.

Regardless where you shop for toys, please be on the lookout for dangerous toys that can injure innocent children. As adults who control the purchases, we can use our purchasing power to ensure that our kids are provided with toys that promote good fun, entertainment and education, and are protected against physical and chemical harm. Our children deserve no less than non-hazardous toys," said Thony Dixon, Coordinator of the EcoWaste Coalition's Project Project.

Dangerous toys are those that pose burn, chemical, choking, ingestion, laceration, strangulation and other hazards, including those that can injure the eyes and damage the ears.

To demonstrate the need for consumer vigilance against hazardous toys, the EcoWaste Coalition released the results of its latest test buy of 100 assorted toys obtained from formal and informal retailers in Calocan, Marikina, Marikina, Pasay and Quezon Cities. The toys cost from P10 to P220 each.

The group found 93 toys bought pose choking hazard for containing small parts that young children can ingest and cause difficulty in breathing. Twenty were found to contain toxic lead from 108 to 15,300 parts per million (ppm), way above the 90 ppm regulatory limit, which is mainly due to the use of lead-containing decorative paint.

Another 20 toys have sharp edges, mostly toy knives and swords that may cause abrasions and laceration hazards. Eighteen were found to pose a serious risk of eye injuries, including potential permanent damage to the eye sight.

Among the other hazardous toys are:
A kiddie folding chair coated with yellow lead paint that has 15,000 ppm total lead.

A "Wonderful Music Xylophone" that has a highly leaded organ rebar with 11,100 ppm total lead.

A "Stinky" Pokemon Character toy, with 1,925 ppm total lead.

A plastic toy knife that may cut or pierce into the skin.

Play swords with sharp edges that pose laceration hazard.

Rubber guns that may cause serious eye injuries.

A "Wild Fire Water Balloons" with 38-inch strap that may lead to strangulation hazard.

A "Blitz" guitar with 25-inch strap that may cause strangulation hazard.

A "Pokemon" plush with Pokemon design that poses choking hazard.

Plastic Zombies figures that present choking risk.

The consumers were advised to follow these tips:

* Read the product label very carefully, pay attention to the warning, age recommendation and safety instructions; look for the product manufacturing details and the lot number to operate (LTO) number, which is issued by the toy manufacturer or importer or distributor.

* Select toys that are appropriate for a child's age, aptitude, skill and temperament, and follow the age recommendation.

* Buy toys from reliable traders and obtain a valid proof of purchase to facilitate replacement and refund, complete the warranty claim.

* Wash and use toxic toys or play with toys with health-damaging chemicals such as lead, mercury, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, and phthalates.

* Avoid toys with paint coating, which is defined as lead-free to prevent kids from being poisoned when they bite, chew, lick or swallow toys with lead coating.

* Avoid PVC toys that contain many hidden toxic additives such as heavy metals and phthalates.

* Avoid toys that shoot small, pointed objects into the air that may cause eye or body injuries.

* Avoid musical toys, rattles, and squeaky objects making too loud noises or shrills that can damage a child's sensitive hearing.

* Avoid stuffed toys with small parts such as buttons or eyes that may be pulled loose and swallowed by a child; avoid those with pull-out stuffing that may get into a child's hand and mouth when the toy breaks open; watch out for broken parts, seams and edges, and opt for washable stuffed toys.

* Avoid battery-operated toys that are not firmly secured in cases, and their chemical ingredients may cause internal bleeding, chemical burns and choking if they are exposed.