



Kalikasan

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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

"Let us make 2018 the best and brightest year yet."

My warmest greetings and best holiday season wishes to the men and women of DENR and everyone in the environment sector.

Our first seven months have been incredibly busy, yet gratifying and fulfilling. Leading the agency was quite hard for me at the start, but because of your warm welcome, compelling support, and dedicated hard work, I was able to lead this agency to the best of my ability.

Year 2017 was a great year. We were able to position ourselves well and move forward even in the face of hard challenges. We braced significant measures and policies, and set our directions for the next six years. We gave much attention to the most obvious and visible, yet very important environmental problems (problems relating to air, water, and land) and made them our priorities. Our initiatives to strengthen field operations and law enforcement in the regions have been set out; we are now ready to move forward at full blast with greater capacities to fulfill our mandate of sustainable ENR development and management.

2018 could be a tough year, but we are ready and prepared to face any difficulty. We have set our plans, identified and initiated priority programs and projects, and strengthened our capacity to enforce effectively environmental laws. It is now expected of us to give our best as public servants, to provide our countrymen with excellent service. Thus, I urge everyone to function as real public servants who really care for the country and the people.

Again, I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and happy new year. I look forward to working with you to make 2018 DENR's best and brightest year yet.

Mabuhay!


ROY A. CIMATU
Secretary



MOVING FORWARD

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Secretary Roy Cimatu, with the members of the Commission of Appointments after the confirmation hearing.

► MOVING FORWARD...FROM PAGE 1

"Secretary Cimatu has strength of mind and is cool under pressure. I have seen him take the good breaks without gloating and the bad breaks in stride."

- Senator Vicente Sotto III

A great fit for the job! This is the impression made by members of the Commission on Appointments (CA) when they voted Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, 24-0, as the official chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Critics may not agree, but it is evident that members of the CA saw something in him that makes him the best choice to lead the Department.

"Secretary Cimatu has strength of mind and is cool under pressure. I have seen him take the good breaks without gloating and the bad breaks in stride."- Senator Vicente Sotto III

"The environment is in crisis and therefore we need the might of a General like Secretary Cimatu to work off the problems facing our clean air, our clean water, and ecological solid waste."

- Senator Loren Legarda

Never in his wildest dream did former General Cimatu ever imagined that one day his Commander-in-chief, the President, will summon him to a mission far from his expertise. When called to duty, he of course expected something that is military in nature.

Nonetheless, he knew very well that his mission with DENR would not be easy. Unlike in the military for which he was fully trained and had vast army to command, the DENR, aside from being controversial, is far more challenging as it has broader and complex scope and responsibilities.

"For me DENR is harder because we regulate so many laws: clean air, clean water, solid waste, national greening program, mining, etc. Lahat yan tinututukan natin. Hindi katulad sa Armed Forces of the Philippines, our main focus is to eliminate the rebels," admits Secretary Cimatu.

But coming from an officer and a gentleman, he cannot decline the offer; service to the country is utmost important. No matter how difficult the mission is, he is willing to sacrifice anything for the good of the country. What makes him strive to do his best is his love for the country and the people; likewise, he longs to prove to the CA and the President that he can win the battles for which he was commissioned.

Tactical preparations

Secretary Cimatu has been observed to be soft spoken, camera-shy, and a person who does not seek attention of the public. His

humbleness and great appreciation go before him every time he treats his employees and deals with people in the environment sector. However, though seemingly low profile in conduct, he demonstrated his military character of being always prepared and tough that while his confirmation was still hanging in CA, he made his tactical preparations through in-depth assessment and planning, bearing in mind the mandate of the Department.

In his first few months in office, the environment chief invested much time, studying different aspects of the environmental sector. He called for series of meetings with different bureaus and attached agencies, and assessed the current state of ENR and the ongoing programs and projects implemented to address its problems. He visited the regional offices and provinces to personally see and investigate the issues and problems confronting the areas; after which, he started plotting and strategizing his plans with the help of his officials and technical personnel in the Department.

The Secretary saw lapses in environmental protection. Among others, he was bothered by the increasing uncollected garbage and worsening air and water pollution in urban areas. In the regions, he witnessed how a province was stripped with thousands of trees just to start a mining operation. But what melts his heart is to see land claimants and those with land disputes from far flung provinces flocking to the Regional Offices and even to the Central Office in Quezon City just to follow-up their cases.

Secretary Cimatu set his priorities: improving air quality, ensuring sustainable water resources, and proper solid waste management. To strengthen field operations and ENR law enforcement in the country, he saw it fit to strengthen DENR's Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENROs) in all regions. And now that his confirmation as DENR Secretary has been made official, Secretary Cimatu can now move forward to implement his priorities and execute his plans. (Martina A. Reyes and Alvin D. Gatbonton)

The Philippines has rich and diverse natural resources. It belongs to the "17 mega diverse countries in the world" that harbour 70% of earth's species. The country has 20,000 species of flora and fauna thriving in different parts of the archipelago, and 80% of them live in vast greenery of life - the forests. However in recent decades, the country was drawn to a world reputation of having the highest number of threatened species per unit area in the world, making it a global biodiversity hotspot.

To address biodiversity loss and protect the remaining forests in the country, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the B+WISER Program, developed and implemented the LAWIN Forest and Biodiversity Protection System.

LAWIN, launched by the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) and Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of DENR in March 2016, was named after the local name of Philippine hawk-eagle (*Nisaetus philippensis*), lawin. LAWIN combines science-based planning, user-friendly technology, and indigenous knowledge in protecting and conserving natural forests and biodiversity. It is being utilized today to patrol the 6.5 million hectares of nation's forest conservation areas.

LAWIN adopts five key innovations in forest protection:

1. LAWIN adopts science-based, purpose driven process

LAWIN undergoes science-based planning. It conducts pre-assessment of forests and biodiversity, defines conservation areas, and identifies measurable conservation targets. An example of this is the five-year Conservation Area Plan of CENROs/ PENROs and Patrol Plans for field operations.

2. LAWIN uses modern technology

LAWIN utilizes user-friendly monitoring technology. It

THROUGH THE EYES OF PHILIPPINE FOREST AND PROTECTION SYSTEM

LAWIN Forest and Biodiversity Protection System aims to address biodiversity loss and protect the remaining forests in the country using internet and high-tech wireless communication gadgets.

outdates the previous manual recording and encoding of patrol data. Through a mobile application, forest patrollers can use their tablets or smart phones and directly record geo-referenced observations on habitats, wildlife, trees, environmental threats and illegal forest activities. After a patrol is completed, observations are uploaded to a computer using the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) software for data analysis and mapping.

Eugene V. Estrada, Chief of Knowledge and Information Systems Section of FMB said that DENR forest patrollers can be provided now with gadgets for conducting forest patrols. Forest patrollers are required to gather accurate information and outputs, and they can only obtain the outputs using the technology and gadgets.

3. LAWIN enables speedy coordination with environmental law enforcement

The fast monitoring and processing of data enable fast coordination with environmental law enforcement agencies for a timely response.

The top five forest threats reported by LAWIN are illegal logging, perennial and seasonal plants farming, forest conversion into residential area, destructive natural calamities, and slash and burn farming (kaingin). These threats are directly reported from CENROs and PENROs to DENR Central Office's servers, wherein actions are

DENR STRENGTHENS FIELD OPERATIONS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT NATIONWIDE

by: Alvin D. Gatabonton



Secretary Roy A. Cimatu leads the oath taking of 50 members of Task Force DENR Enforcers in Metro Manila (DEMMA), who come from DENR Central Office - Legal Service, FMB, BMB, LMB, EMB, and MGB.

"Hindi naman palaging suot yan. In fact they cannot bring the firearms anywhere; gagamitin lang yan in cases when our forest rangers would be conducting inspections, monitoring, and patrols...

If they use the firearms outside their function or mission, they will be held liable and will be sanctioned for it."

- Undersecretary Jonas Leones

Secretary Roy Cimatu, in his visits to the provinces and DENR Regional Offices to get first hand information and full picture of the current environmental situations in the country, found formidable lapses in environmental protection in the country. The thousand tons of garbage in the country's world famous Boracay and the thousands of trees cut in Brooke's Point Palawan are only among those lapses that are unacceptable and must be stopped," said Secretary Cimatu.

According to the environment chief, the absence of Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) in some areas and the weak functioning of

CENROs in the provinces are hampering effective field operations and environmental law enforcement in the country. They must be strengthened because they are the front liners of the agency in providing environmental services.

Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs, Atty. Jonas Leones explained that during the implementation of DENR Rationalization Plan, the budget for some CENROs were cut by the Department of Budget and Management, due to its impression that there are areas that exhibit little environmental concerns and there are group of areas that can be handled by one CENRO. This explains why there are 5 to 7 municipalities that are handled by only one CENRO.

Strengthening CENROs in the regions

Boracay, despite being the country's tourism pride and holding a world reputation of being the most beautiful island beach in the world, has no CENRO to address environmental concerns. The CENRO was removed as a result of the DENR Rationalization Plan. Boracay was believed to have land and beaches only to take care of - no forests, mine sites, and not much biodiversity to conserve. However, because of the mound of garbage accumulating in some areas, and the threat of high level coliform on the island beaches, Secretary Cimatu found it vital to restore the CENRO in the island and prevent Boracay from further environmental deterioration.

In Tuguegarao, the environment chief called on field officials of Region 2 to strengthen their CENROs. He particularly instructed the CENRO Officers to intensify its protection on Cagayan River, the longest river and largest river basin in the Philippines, for it serve as the main source of irrigation of the valley.

"Kayo ang panlaban kaya kailangang palakasin ang mga CENRO, as you are in the frontline not only in the implementation of DENR programs, but also in the enforcement of environmental laws, such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Ecological Solid Waste Management Act," Secretary Cimatu stressed.

Hiring lawyers for CENROs

With the proposed new set up of CENRO, aside from its usual responsibilities of addressing forestry, biodiversity, and land titling concerns, CENROs will also be addressing environmental protection and mining problems at the community level. They will be tasked to monitor and coordinate with LGUs, EMB, and MGB problems like air and water pollution, improper solid waste management, and on mining.

To facilitate existing responsibilities and added tasks, Secretary Cimatu hired full-time lawyers and assigned at least one per CENRO to improve the DENR's capability to deliver "immediate and meaningful services at the community level." Cases will be resolved at the community level and need not to reach regional or national levels for resolution, according to the Secretary.

"Just imagine the undue burden this condition has placed on the public where we find people from the provinces making long journeys to the Regional Offices or, worse, to the DENR Central Office in Quezon City just to follow up on their cases or claims," Cimatu said.

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LAWIN: A TOOL FOR MONITORING AND BIODIVERSITY

immediately taken. "Ang pinaka-importanteng tulong ng LAWIN ay nakakapag-respond agad tayo (DENR) doon sa mga threats na nakikita sa mga patrols," Estrada, stressed.

4. LAWIN monitors and evaluates forest patrol efforts

Aside from generating spatial-based information by automatically tagging locations of observations to analyze forest conditions and wildlife threats, the system also auto-generate electronic record regarding the forest patrols' efforts, such as manpower exerted, distance covered, and number of hours spent patrolling. This feature allows the decision-makers to monitor the local forest patrollers if they are effective in their job of producing relevant and important data, and enforcing forest laws. The gadgets or technology used by LAWIN reveals the quantity and quality of the forest patrols output.

5. LAWIN makes clear visualization of forest conditions- a tool for improving forest conservation strategies

Through the SMART software, real-time observations

are processed for data analysis and mapping. This allows immediate visualization of observed records, patrol efforts, and trends, revealing the effectiveness of the interventions applied to address the observed threats. Because of this innovative feature data analysis and interpretations can be shared to community leaders, resource managers, and environmental law enforcers to help them in their evaluation and continuous improvement of their forest conservation efforts.

With LAWIN being institutionalized in the DENR system, the country's forests face a brighter future. Estrada pointed out that LAWIN is "highly significant" in achieving DENR's national and local forest protection and conservation goals. Its systematic process and procedures, and use of modern technology enable fast, efficient and effective forest and biodiversity protection. Its capacity to share information, data, and analyses demonstrates accountability and transparency in governance and management. (Jomar M. San Antonio)



THE HUNT OF LAWIN: STORY OF FORESTER JOSELITO EYALA

by: Alvin D. Gatbonton



Sec. Cimatu awards the "Medalya ng Bayani ng Kalikasan" to Joselito A. Eyala, a Forester in CENRO Puerto Princesa, for his bravery, leadership and remarkable dedication to public service when he was shot by a suspected illegal logger in Palawan.

He felt something has bitten his back. Slowly, as he moves he noticed blood spurting from his nose and mouth.

It was 6:00 pm of August 23, 2017; soon it would be dark and cold. Task Force Operation LAWIN team leader, Forester Joselito "Lito" Eyala, feeling cramped and exhausted by the turn of events, was not comfortable with the idea of leading his men straight back down the foot of the mountain for another five hours. He thought that after trekking the slope for five-hour foot patrol from Sitio Casicaan, Brgy Bacungan, his team can finally rest and barrow a night sleep for the next day patrol going to Sitio Busngol, Barangay Sta. Lourdes, Puerto Princesa in Palawan.

That didn't happen. While resting outside the house where they suppose to stay for the night, they heard a sound of a chainsaw brattling from a distance. They went to where the sound was coming from and caught in the act a man illegally cutting a timber using an unregistered chainsaw. To their surprise, the man was the owner of the house where they suppose to stay for the night. They apprehended him, who voluntarily surrendered his chainsaw. However, they didn't press to bring him along because he was whimpering mad, and his two sons had their bolos, compared to what they have: only pens and notebooks. They just requested the son to carry the confiscated chainsaw at a certain point down the trail.

While Forester Lito, his three forest ranger team members, and the son of apprehended chainsaw owner, were trailing down the mountain of Barangay Bacungan, a loud blast suddenly rang.

Bssshht-t-tt chk chk - the sound echoed and the air shattered forcefully upon Forester Lito's right cheek, knocking him down the slope. Silence fell upon him in its wake, until a sound of ringing inside his right ear started to resonate loudly, gradually waking his half-conscious mind. He felt something has bitten his back. Slowly, as he moves, he noticed blood spurting from his nose and mouth. As he tried to stand up, he saw at a distance a familiar face carrying a shotgun. Only at this point when he realized he was shot and needed to escape the man.

Dragged and tossed

At an elevation of 450 meters above sea level, Forester Lito can feel the roughness of the mountain as gravity tossed his weakened body into the bush, tree branches, and stony ground of the steep. Not thinking of his gunshot wounds in his back and nape, he crawled, rolled, and tried to walk as he could until he reached a narrow stream nearby. He knew that the water would lead him down the Casicaan River. Weak and exhausted, he allowed the water to drag him down the brook. He can only succumb where the current leads him. Many times, he had to avoid sharp thorns of bamboo and rattan roots. On portions where water was shallow, he had to crawl around huge rocks and boulders. On waterfalls, his powerless body can't fight the current; he was thrown down by water.

Vale of tears

Five hours seemed forever. Thirty-three (33) years old Forester Lito has accepted that it could be his end. He had spent almost every hour praying to God and calling all the saints he knew. Life episodes flashed in his mind; tears flowed as pages of good memories with his loved ones, especially his beloved wife, begun to unfold. He can't understand why he had to suffer such unfortunate fate. He knew his great sacrifices, dedication and service as a Forester.

Difficult and dangerous job

He remembered how his team successfully apprehended illegal loggers on four occasions - during raids, when they were with Philippine National Police law enforcers and during random patrols when perpetrators flee upon arrest, even leaving their chainsaw still attached to the trees. He smiled as he was proud to be called Forest Protection Officer. However, his countenance changed as he realized how dangerous and difficult his job could be.

As a Task Force Operation LAWIN Team Leader, Forester Lito has to lead two groups of forest rangers and complete a 19-kilometer forest patrol a month. Forest patrol is a total trek on foot up in the forest - each time crossing end to end the width of Southern Palawan. His groups could accomplish this task in two weeks, after which they would man, 24/7, a DENR checkpoint. Referrals, complaints, and inspection notices are downloaded at the checkpoint, of which they have to prioritize. Recognizing the great danger and difficulty of his tasks, he realized the implication of just carrying pens and notebooks.

Faith and Justice

There were moments when he felt God was leading his way. On places with total darkness, he lighted his penlight and fireflies came to brighten the place. This happened not only once, but many times in different locations.

Forester Lito almost lost hope, but didn't give up. Thinking that his team members were all shot and dead, he felt the need to survive to give justice to the death of his men.



A Philippine Air Force Personnel carefully assists Joselito during the transport for airlift bound to Manila.

"Ligtas ka na"

Around 12:00 midnight, he finally saw a house near the river. He knocked at the door and asked help from the residents. He can't speak a word; his mouth was numb and dumb, so he wrote on a paper asking the residents to bring him to a hospital. Since he cannot walk anymore, the residents placed him on a carabao sled and led him up the highway. At 2:00 am, they finally reached the highway, and the residents told him "Ligtas ka na." They proceeded to the house of a certain Kagawad, who called an ambulance and brought him to a Seventh Day Adventist Hospital. There, he was treated with first aid and underwent X-Ray and CT scan. Later, he was airlifted to Manila at the Philippine General Hospital through a C-130 airplane.

Forester Joselito A. Eyala survived the misadventure and received the highest commendation from DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, who personally visited him in the hospital on August 28, 2017, the same day the country observed the National Heroes Day. He was awarded with "Medalya ng Bayani ng Kalikasan" for leadership, bravery, and

remarkable dedication to public service, and "Purple Heart," a medal usually given to soldiers wounded in the line of duty. Forester Lito also earned a promotion to the next salary rank of Forester II.

Secretary Cimatu vowed to extend all possible assistance to Forester Lito and support to all DENR employees who exhibit dedication in protecting the environment. He also proposed to arm forest patrollers with gun and train them how to defend themselves.

"Patutulung tayo sa mga sundalo at pulis na sanayin ang mga foresters natin sa security protocol at sa paghawak ng baril. Pinag-aaralan din ngayon ng ahensya kung pwede natin silang pahawakin kapag nagpapatrol o may huhulihin para maipagtanggol nila ang sarili, kung kailangan," Secretary Cimatu said.

Meanwhile, the suspect is now charged with multiple cases of environmental law violations, ranging from illegal cutting of trees, illegal gathering of timber, kaingin, illegal use of chainsaw, not to mention, frustrated murder.

IN FOCUS

SCANNING A DIFFERENT BATTLEGROUND

by: Adona P. San Diego

WITH USEC. GARCIA

After thirty-four long years on the battlefield, General Rodolfo Cadiz Garcia is ready to face challenges anew and go into battle amidst different battleground, to fight an endless war, the war on environmental degradation.

General Garcia is the second general to be appointed at the DENR after former AFP Chief of Staff Roy A. Cimatu was named successor to the aggressive and feisty Gina Lopez.

Throughout his career, General Garcia spent most of his life on the battlefield fighting the Muslim cessationists and other armed groups who are out to destroy the state. Today, the former AFP Vice-Chief of Staff, now DENR Undersecretary (Usec.) and Chief of Staff, is ready to wage another war, this time on a different front, on an unfamiliar terrain.

Asked what made him accept the job, Garcia says, "he could not say no to a former classmate and colleague who asked him to help out in running one of the largest and most difficult and problematic agencies in the country."

Usec. Garcia likens his appointment to being sent to an unfamiliar terrain without any training. Compared to his military days, he says, he was trained before deployment, while at the DENR he was deployed without training, which makes work more difficult and challenging. "To me, this is very challenging, the risks are different. In the environment, if you don't solve the problem, it would eventually redound to waste of life and not only you but also your fellow Filipinos."



Pondering about his new job, Garcia says, "Work at DENR will never be easy, even as you stay longer in it. Difficulties will still be there because there will always be challenges. It is one that never stops. The challenge to protect the environment and preserve the natural resources is unending task that goes on and on."

The new Undersecretary says work at the Department is the same as the military, albeit more challenging. "The DENR is on constant war, waging war against illegal loggers, poachers, environmental laws violators and many more; although on different fronts, the principles and strategies will be the same."

He stressed that "vigilance has to be there always, maintained at the highest level; never to put your guard down just like on the battlefield where you cannot afford to be complacent. Di pwede ang tutulog-tulog; you have to maintain your vigilance and alertness and find ways to solve the problems - not just to get around it, but go through it and solve them."

He describes the problems confronting the environment as great, enormous, and very challenging, which need political will to be able to enforce the laws and discipline people.

For example, the proliferation of informal settlers in Lupang Arenda in Taytay, Rizal, is a problem that has been going on for years. Around 50,000 families are endangering themselves due to unstable ground. This case, according to Undersecretary Garcia, is very difficult to handle because people, although they knew that their houses stand on very unstable ground, do not want to leave their properties; this is aside from issues of professional squatters.

To address this issue, the DENR has to work within the system to get people out of danger which means that cooperation of various agencies of the government is necessary in order to harness the full powers of the government not only of DENR. "Government approaches cannot be segmented and localized, there are certain aspects that need to be acted upon by other government agencies," says Garcia.

Asked how it feels being finally named Chief of Staff, Garcia jokes, "it is good to be the Chief of Staff of DENR; its personnel strength of 22,000 is still a sizable number, very formidable."

Usec Garcia's three decades military experience will come in handy in the discharge of his duty as DENR's Chief of Staff. His job is to ensure that all documents (from simple to complex documents e.g. ECC documents, etc) that pass through his office are thoroughly reviewed before these are finally handed to the Secretary for final decision.

The new Chief of Staff assures the rank and file that their welfare is on top of Secretary's priorities. According to him, the Secretary has lofty plans for DENR and its employees. The Secretary wants the DENR's mandate and responsibilities fulfilled, at the same time its employees' welfare secured. "In the military, there are two things that a leader must consider: first is the accomplishment of his mission; and second, the welfare of his men. These two go hand-in-hand. If he doesn't take care of his men, it will definitely affect the accomplishment of his mission," he added.

In parting, he promised to do everything in his power and expertise - to help and provide whatever he could to accomplish the mandates of DENR. He also promised that he will not stop studying, as far as DENR is concerned. "Marami pang kanin na kakainin; it is a very technical Department, and I am very impressed with the quality of people serving the DENR- from the officials to the employees. They are so well qualified. I was really surprised to learn that DENR's people are very knowledgeable."

He believes that with the help of good and talented people of DENR, the Department will be able to accomplish its mandates

Born in Bulacan and grew up in Makati and later on Mandaluyong, Garcia studied Engineering at the University of the Philippines then, later on, went to Philippine Military Academy in Baguio where he was trained and educated as a soldier. He belongs to PMA class 1970 (Magiting) same as Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

General Garcia is a decorated military officer having received numerous awards and medals including the Philippine Legion of Honor, eight Distinguished Service Stars, one Gold Cross Medal for Gallantry in Combat, three Bronze Cross Medals for Conspicuous Courage, two Military Merit Medals with Bronze Spearhead Devices, eight Military Merit Medals, four Military Commendation Medals, and other awards and decorations. He earned his first star in 1998 after four years of serving as brigade commander in Magindanao. He retired as Lieutenant General, Vice Chief of Staff, and spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

MALANDOG RIVER: ANTIQUÉ'S CULTURAL HERITAGE —UP FOR REHABILITATION

by: Adona P. San Diego

Home to Antique's historical and cultural traditions is up for rehabilitation to restore its glory and grandeur as the cradle of civilization way back in the middle of the 13th century when Datu Sumakwel first establish Malayan settlements.

Datu Sumakwel together with other nine Datus and their people first landed in the area in search of a new land to settle in away from the oppression and tyranny of Sultan Makatunao.

Rich and significant at it was in the olden time, the river plays a vital role in the rehabilitation of all water bodies in the country is one of the test cases in replicating Iloilo River's successful river revival.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ordered the rehabilitation of Malandog River in line with DENR's priority thrusts, clean air, clean water and solid waste management.

The order was made during the DENR chief's visit to Region 6 to inspect the famous and cleanest river in the country and learned from the city's experience. The DENR chief plans to make Iloilo River a model for cleaning and rehabilitating rivers

in the country.

The DENR chief is bent on meeting head on issues concerning clean air, water, and solid waste management which according to him are the most pressing problems facing Philippine population today.

Last April 28, the DENR through EMB Region 6 inked a Memorandum of Agreement with the Local Government of San Jose, Antique, the Advance Central College under the DENR's adopt-a-estero program.

The Adopt-a-Estero program is a collaborative undertaking between and among the communities near the river; the donor partners which will provide the workforce for clean-up activities. Under the agreement, a comprehensive program on pollution reduction will be implemented including the conduct of dredging and desilting, as the river has deteriorated due to siltation and pollution.

Part of the planned rehabilitation of Malandog is the

adoption of combined eco-friendly and engineering interventions like phyto-remediation, construction of wetlands, planting of bamboos and other plant species along the river banks, rip-rapping or coco-matting and construction and greening of linear parks.

Malandog River is currently the site for Malandog's cultural tradition and refuge to fishermen and fishing vessels in times of typhoon as well as a source of water for agriculture and fishery.

The Malandog River headwaters originate in the vicinity of Barangay Nazareth, Insarayan, and Tigbalogo in the Municipality of Sibalom at an elevation of approximately 159 meters above sea level.

It drains generally southwest towards the Cuyo East Pass. Its delta is located between Barangay Malandog in Hamtic and Maybato Sur in San Jose. Malandog River encompasses barangays Bariri and Maybato Sur, San Jose, Antique down to barangay Inabasan in Sibalom.

The rehabilitation of Malandog River is in line with the DENR's priority thrusts, clean air, clean water and solid waste management

BORACAY CHALLENGE: ACCOMPLISHED IN 20 DAYS

by: Martina A. Reyes

Political will is key to solving environmental problems. Such statement was proven true by DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu when he responded to the Boracay Challenge and cleared almost 2,000 tons of garbage in a span of just 20 days.

Boracay Island, a Philippine tourism pride, is known all over the world for its powdery white sand beaches. Every year more than 1.5 million tourists, both foreign and local, visit and experience this exquisite island paradise. However, in recent years, Boracay has often hit the headlines in bad light because of pollution.

Weak enforcement of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act is its most recent issue. Concerned citizens reported cases of residents getting ill near the 7,000 square meter-Centralized Materials Recovery Facility (CMRF) in Barangay Manoc-Manoc. Classes at Manoc-Manoc Elementary School were also disrupted because students cannot stand the foul odor.

Boracay Challenge accepted

On June 21, 2017, Cito Beltran, in his column, Public display of distrust and disrespect, challenged Secretary Cimatu to save the "most beautiful island/beach in the world" from further environmental disaster. Beltran claims that Boracay, taken over by the different bars, hotels and restaurants, has "tons of environmental violations."

The environment chief, on that same day, responded and accepted the challenge. He said that Boracay is close to his heart as he once had a mission to liberate the place from New Peoples Armies (NPAs). In 1989, a town Mayor was gunned down by the NPAs. Secretary Roy Cimatu, then a Commanding Officer of the 47th Infantry Battalion, led his men and went to Boracay to neutralize the leftist group. The island was later freed from NPAs and roads to developments were opened.

Problem assessed

On June 22, 2017, second day of the Boracay challenge, Secretary Cimatu, together with DENR Undersecretaries, and Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) officials, flew to Malay, Aklan to personally see and assess the situation. He immediately called a stakeholder consultation meeting, which was attended by DENR Region 6 officials, local officials of Malay, Aklan, and representatives of civil society organizations.

Secretary Cimatu asked the local government of Malay, Aklan its full cooperation in removing all solid wastes in the island. He



The before(A) and after(B) of the CMRF in Barangay Manoc-Manoc, in Malay, Aklan

ordered all his Undersecretaries with him to submit an assessment and recommendation plan for improving the Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) in the whole of Boracay Island. He also gave instructions to look into the water quality in Bolabog beach, and the drainage system in the island.

Task Force created

On June 24, Malay Mayor Ceciron Cawaling signed a commitment to haul and clear, within 23 days (starting June 24 to July 17, 2017), the stockpile of garbage in CMRF of Barangay Manoc-Manoc. The Mayor likewise pledged to prepare an Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) action plan through its ESWM Division.

To ensure that the commitment to haul the garbage would be carried out on time, Secretary Cimatu formed the Task Force Boracay Challenge. It was composed of DENR Region 6 officials, EMB technical staff, Aklan local government officials, and other stakeholders. The team wasted no time and conducted day and night hauling of garbage from the CMRF. The Task Force also looked into the waste problems in other MRFs such as in Yapak and Balabag.

The environment chief accepted the challenge to save the "most beautiful island/beach in the world" from further environmental disaster

Parallel IEC campaign conducted

While the task force was busy clearing the CMRF of garbage, Regional Dalaw-Turo Team, headed by Regional Director Jim Sampulna and Information Officers of DENR Region 6, and Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Offices of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras and Iloilo, conducted house-to-house and resort-to-resort information education and communication (IEC) campaign on ESWM from Station 1 to Station 3 of Boracay beach resorts. The slogan of the campaign was "Save Boracay."

Challenge accomplished

In a span of 20 days, the Task Force hauled a total of 1,906.7 tons or 5,399.173 cubic meters of residual wastes from CMRF in Boracay to Malay, Aklan. After the clearing of garbage, slope stabilization and soil covering were made to rehabilitate the area.

Secretary Cimatu lauded the efforts of Task Force Boracay Challenge and Aklan Mayor Ceciron Cawaling for their speedy actions in clearing the mound of garbage in CMRF, Barangay Manoc-Manoc. The environment chief knows that there is so much to be done to address pollution problems in Boracay and vows to take every step to fully carry out all of them.

SECURING LAND TENURE FOR SUSTAINABLE PAS

by: Fatima R. Leya

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) provided a comprehensive framework for the sustainable protection and management of Protected Areas (PAs). Not only did it draw significant delineations to protect and preserve the ecological balance in PAs, it also placed effective mechanisms to ensure PA settlers would follow a prescribed system of sustainable land management within the areas.

However, as years and decades go by, the number of occupants in PAs continues to grow. Because they depend and benefit much from the protected area's ecological bounty, the security of land tenure to legitimize their stay and activities has become a matter of great need. For those who haven't got land titles, their shelter and livelihood, even if they have occupied an area for decades, are always at risk.

As one provision of NIPAS Act, land tenure within protected areas is recognized. Land titles issued inside PAs are respected provided that the occupant's land use is attuned with the protected area's management plan. Through the Protected Area Community Resource-Based Management Agreement (PACBRMA), tenurial instrument with the term of 25 years and renewable for another 25 years is issued to qualified occupant. However, as PACBRMA holder he/she has the responsibility to submit a Community Resource Management Plan (CRMP), which will serve as his/her guide in implementing activities within the PAs.

NIPAS also acknowledges the rights of indigenous communities over their ancestral domains as defined under the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA). Being native inhabitants of PAs, they are tapped and involved in the conduct of protected area resource profile and in the preparation of the Initial Protected Area Plan (IPAP). Their participation in the planning and implementation of programs and activities in protected areas is part of their commitment as PAs' main caretakers.

Heightened regulation of activities in protected areas

In 2011, a grave concern over the continuing negative impact of human activities to the country's biodiversity was translated into the issuance of a Memorandum Order No. 2011-04. The memorandum, a move to "ease environmental pressure caused by human settlements in the protected areas" suspended survey and processing of all public land applications (PLAs) for titling, to wit:

- Halt in the processing of applications for lease, license, permit of any project and activity.

► DENR STRENGTHENS...FROM PAGE 3

Assigning one Undersecretary for each major island group of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao

To further bring attention and focus on field operations and law enforcement in each major island group of the country, Secretary Cimatú assigned one Undersecretary for Field Operations for each Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Atty. Juan Miguel Cuna, Undersecretary for Field Operations Luzon, took the lead in piloting the creation of "Task Force DENR Enforcers Metro Manila" to ensure swift action to complaints all over National Capital Region. The Task Force, whose 48 members come from different bureaus (EMB, FMB, BMB, LMB, and MGB), would render "quick response" to complaints or any issue that arises regarding ENR. They will file the necessary cases and make sure legal procedures would be observed in pursuing possible administrative, civil or criminal case against offenders. This Task Force in NCR would later be replicated in the provinces of Visayas and Mindanao, said the environment chief.

Equipping and training forest enforcers

The DENR is in the process of procuring firearms to arm forest enforcers for effective law enforcement. The foresters, including the hundreds of forest patrols hired in recent years are also undergoing training with the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

This policy came into being as a result of two separate incidents of gun firing in Palawan that left a forest patrol leader injured and a Barangay Captain dead. Forest patrol leader Joselito Eyala, carrying only his notebook and pen, apprehended an illegal user of chainsaw and was shot at the

- Halt in new applications except for projects that are compatible with the objectives of the NIPAS.

However the suspension in all public land applications had greatly affected pending claimants who have vested rights on the land within protected areas.

Securing tenurial status of occupants with vested rights

To ensure security of land tenure, encourage investments, and promote social equity by providing landless farmers the necessary land resource to ensure their economic viability and productivity, the Duterte administration made his 10-point socio-economic agenda as one of his priorities.

Following the President's pronouncement to protect the poor, ensure security of land tenure, and promote rural and value chain development through agriculture, rural enterprise, and rural tourism, Secretary Roy Cimatú relaxed the suspension order issued in 2011 by issuing Memorandum Order No. 2017-02. Such memo lifts the suspension specific to lands classified as alienable and disposable within proclaimed protected areas; thus, resumes the survey, processing, and approval of all public land applications in PAs.

The lifting of suspension of survey and processing of all public land applications (PLAs) for titling may be a topic of debate for some sectors. The issue whether it is right to give or not to give occupants land title in a protected area depends on whose perspective are you looking from. But for the occupants in PAs, they see themselves as useful rather than harmful. First, they have been there for decades and their indigenous ways of caring nature have contributed in the sustainable management of PAs. Second, the history of their occupancy, whether they have been true and good to NIPAS laws, can tell whether they deserve a land title.

The DENR, on the other hand, despite the challenges facing the protected area land management, assures the public that it would continue to engage on communities that have tremendous negative impact on environment and natural resources. The agency would maintain a community-driven approach to sustainable resource management, making communities as co-managers and partners in the protection and conservation of natural resources.

The DENR will continue to implement its different programs and projects to preserve the integrity and enhance the socio-cultural and economic value of PAs. It will continue to provide technical support through capability building and capacity enhancement trainings so that communities in PAs could further strengthen their ability to contribute in the sustainable development of these God-given natural bounties.

back and nape by the assailant. Three weeks after, Barangay Captain Ruben Arzaga, an active member of the El Nido-Taytay Managed Resource Protected Area Management Board, was shot dead by suspected illegal loggers whom he and a team of local environmental law enforcers were about to apprehend in Sitio Batbat, Villa Libertad, Palawan.

Undersecretary Jonas Leones explained that the use of firearms by forest enforcers can serve as deterrent- to discourage or prevent offenders from fighting back, knowing that the enforcers are armed with guns. The use of firearms can also be used for self-defense when offenders retaliate or fight back. Nevertheless, remedial measures will be strictly followed to avoid the abuse use of firearms.

"Hindi naman palaging suot yan. In fact they cannot bring the firearms anywhere; gagamitin lang yan in cases when our forest rangers would be conducting inspections, monitoring, and patrols. In case of arrests they will be accompanied by either PNP or AFP soldiers. Wala naman kasi silang dala to defend themselves, samantalang yung illegal loggers they have their own firearms. That is why they are undergoing trainings with the AFP. There would be a corresponding responsibility on their part, so responsibility and accountability - very clear yan. If they use the firearms outside their function or mission, they will be held liable and will be sanctioned for it," clarified by Undersecretary Leones.

It has been seven months since Secretary Cimatú took over the DENR and his initiatives to attain sustainable development of ENR has been warmly accepted. This move to strengthen environmental law enforcement in the country is just his first step to bring more positive changes in the environment. There are more to expect especially in his implementation of Enhanced NGP and PRRD program.



MS. KAREN CAPINO

Public Relations Strategist, Tayo ang Kalikasan

PARTNER'S COLUMN

TAYO ANG KALIKASAN MOVEMENT: THE GENERAL AND 'GREEN ARMY'

Can bureaucrats really save mother earth by merely sitting in leather chairs with towering documents? Perhaps they have learned that protection of our environment, which has become vital for the future of our progeny, should not take place in air-conditioned conference rooms. Instead, they need to be in the streets, homes, school corridors, coastal shacks, and even in the upland communities.

Then they will realize that their 'green army' is a group of ordinary citizens who are trying to make a difference in our society. The battle is towards a sustainable future anchored on good and effective governance, special justice and inclusive growth.

These were echoed by no less than Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatú as he led civil society organization closed ranks and declared to work in building a movement on May 17, shortly after he was nominated by the President for the Cabinet portfolio.

"Tayo Ang Kalikasan," was Cimatú's battle cry. The one-time Armed Forces chief of staff, delivered this reminder, but rallying the country towards environment protection must start in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

His battle cry turned into a marching order, the Tayo Ang Kalikasan movement. It was a tapestry of transformative DENR campaigns and programs that coalesced into a movement for the protection of our environment.

It was based on the Program for Environment and Natural Resource for Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Development (PRRD).

Secretary Cimatú's priority programs include: (1) the restoration of forest and protected areas; (2) good and effective governance in environmental protection; (3) adaptation to climate change and sustainable use of natural resources; (4) social justice in land titling; and (5) conservation of coastal and marine resources.

In turn, all projects and programs need to abide by the DENR standards of sustainability, research-based, adaptive, and collaborative.

Tayo Ang Kalikasan, with its focus on PRRD, is envisioned to have two major components—an information branding campaign of advocacies of DENR and the social mobilization of various groups including non-government organizations and peoples organizations. Its advocacy and social mobilization strategies cuts across regions down to the grassroots level to highlight PRRD's priority programs.

After all caring for the environment through work and as a way of life should be inculcated in the hearts of every Filipino, instead of just merely making them aware of the need to protect and service our environment.

Environment management and protection need not be the agenda of the few, but inclusive of the greater majority of the people privilege in attaining their human goals while ensuring a sustainable natural system.

DENR is at the helm mobilizing the citizenry in harnessing our natural resources for sustainable growth through effective and good governance.

These partnerships form the core of the movement anchored on the message that "ang kalikasan ay isapuso ng lahat tungo sa kaunlaran at para sa ating kinabukasan."

The movement is expected to help project participatory governance and work towards the success of the five-point priority in the next five years. These interventions will eventually form a responsible stewardship partnership, which are essentially the goal of the DENR-led movement and the Duterte's administration thrust of participatory governance.

The movement we create today will ripple far beyond the future with the immediate objective multiplying into various results. It is vital to remember that Tayo Ang Kalikasan, we are one with nature.

The consequence of environmental pollution, deforestation and climate change can affect the way we build shelters, get nourishment and our chances of survival.

For Secretary Cimatú, "The only way we can move forward is by being one with nature though optimism for a future that is unpredictable. We author what will become of our lives in spite of the challenge of rising temperatures, angry super storms and dwindling natural resources. We walk to the future with an open mind that looks into the victories and failures of the past specifically to the management of our environment."

Cimatú's slogan is, Tayo Ang Kalikasan, because he believes that "WE" matter and every single action we project to the world affects nature. It is an empowering stance and what many say is a crippling circumstance.

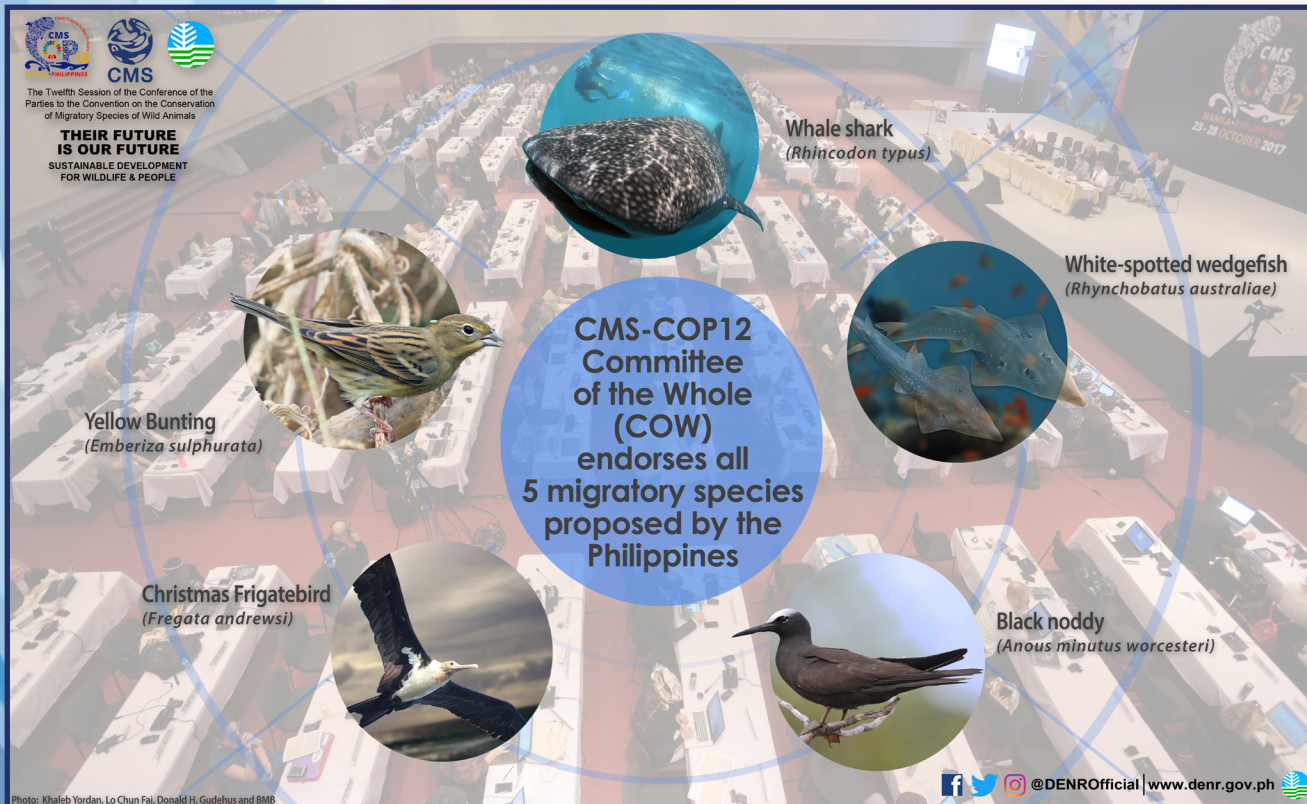
Secretary Cimatú once asked, amidst issues of worsening garbage woes, dirty water and air, "Sino ang kikilos para mapangalagaan ito?" Tayo ang kalikasan, tayo ang kumilos.



Tayo ang Kalikasan movement was based on the Program for Environment and Natural Resources for Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Development (PRRD), which envisioned to have two major components—an information branding campaign and social mobilization

CMS TOPS COP 12 OFF WITH MANILA DECLARATION

by: Fatima R. Leya



The 12th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 12), held in the Philippines on October 23-28, 2017, is dubbed as the “biggest and best COP in the CMS’s history.” According to Bradnee Chambers, Executive Secretary of UNEP Convention on Migratory Species, the COP 12’s record-breaking 1000 participants from 94 countries, comprehensively tackled pertinent issues on migratory species and ended with a high note of ensuring both wildlife’s and people’s future.

With the slogan, “Their future is our future: Sustainable development for wildlife and people,” the COP 12 featured CMS as a holistic endeavor, highlighting wildlife conservation as a viable support to many national and global sustainable development goals, such as protecting life on land and seas, ending hunger and poverty, and pursuing climate action. This move by the CMS puts the Convention in a greater capacity to contribute in the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The COP 12’s 54 resolutions and 34 proposals set Parties in a much anticipated actions of coping with global SD agenda, plans, and frameworks in its efforts to promote and improve migratory species conservation. These include efforts on the prevention of illegal killing, taking and trade of migratory birds; sustainable boat-based marine wildlife watching; energy and migratory species; community participation and livelihoods; aquatic wild meat; and concerted actions for, among others, the whale shark, mobulid rays, the European eel, and the adoption of the African Elephant Action Plan.

Topping COP 12 off is the adoption of the “Manila Declaration on Sustainable Development and Migratory Species.” The Manila Declaration is a milestone in international efforts to protect migratory species and habitats critical to their survival for it elevates migratory wildlife conservation to a much higher level of sustainable development. Overall, it presents the view that migratory wildlife conservation has significant contributions to sustainable development, such that efforts on conservation must be integrated in the Parties economic and social policies at the national and regional levels.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATORY SPECIES (UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.27) RESOLUTION

MANILA DECLARATION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATORY SPECIES

Recalling the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation);

Recalling also the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, and the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals;

Noting that in September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the aim of achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions, economic, social, and environmental by 2030;

Noting the “Our Oceans, Our Future: Call for Action” declaration adopted at the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 71/312;

Noting also that the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity has been recognized by Resolution 65/161 of the UN General Assembly in 2010 as setting the global framework for priority actions on biodiversity and that the targets of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023 have been developed in line with the Aichi Targets;

Acknowledging that the post-2020 process to develop the follow up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets provides an important opportunity for a collaborative planning process towards a post-2020 strategy that supports both the objectives of the CMS and the Sustainable Development Goals;

Recognizing that wildlife supports or is affected by many national and global economic activities, including but not limited to those related to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, tourism, transport, mining and trade;

Noting that the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems is reflected in many of the SDGs and targets and thus the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems and the achievement of the SDGs are inextricably linked and interdependent;

Noting also that the United Nations General Assembly declared 2017 to be the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development and that the theme chosen for the International Day for Biological Diversity 2017 was “Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism”;

Welcoming the theme of the Twelfth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (COP12) Their Future is Our Future - Sustainable Development for Wildlife and People that highlights the fact that humans and wildlife are inseparably dependent on each other and reflects the indispensable contributions of wild animals to sustainable development and the many socio-economic benefits people derive from them in the form of food, pollination, pest control, medicinal and genetic resources and ecotourism;

Acknowledging the outcomes of the CMS High Level Panel Discussion on the interlinkages between sustainable development and the conservation of wildlife that took place immediately before COP12, with a special focus on migratory species and the Sustainable Development Goals;

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals:

- Invites Parties and the Secretariat to engage in processes related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a view to contributing inputs and raising awareness of the important contribution that the conservation of migratory wildlife makes to sustainable development. Such engagement should also include contributing to the UN Biodiversity Summit in 2020;
- Encourages Parties to implement the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species fully and to monitor and report on progress in the achievement of its targets using designated indicators, thus contributing to the achievement and assessment of the objectives of the CMS Family, the 2020 Aichi Targets and the SDGs;
- Urges Parties to promote high-level political awareness and acceptance of the importance of migratory species conservation as part of the environmental underpinning of social and economic goals;
- Encourages Parties to develop national legal frameworks to implementing the obligations of the Convention in support of the SDGs;
- Calls upon Parties to incorporate the necessary measures for conserving migratory species in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and in any National Planning Strategies;
- Urges Parties and relevant stakeholders to promote and improve coordination for the implementation of the Convention at national level, including through coordination among National Focal Points of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements, coordination between different sectors of government and collaboration with the private sector, and to integrate wildlife considerations of their economic and social policies;
- Calls upon the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to improve the capacity of Parties and stakeholders to integrate wildlife considerations in their economic and social policies at national and regional levels;
- Invites the private sector to engage in relevant dialogues with a view to finding common solutions and aligning policies and practices with the objectives of the Convention;
- Recognizes the role of indigenous and local communities in the sustainable management of natural resources;
- Emphasises the importance of the opportunities for livelihood support, national economies and community well-being that can be created through sustainable wildlife watching, ecotourism, land rehabilitation and related initiatives as demonstrated in the positive examples presented during the High Level Panel discussion;
- Decides to transmit this Resolution to the United Nations General Assembly, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Third Meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

DECISIONS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATORY SPECIES Directed to the Secretariat

12.AA The Secretariat shall, subject to the availability of resources:

- In line with Resolution 11.2 on the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2016-2023, strengthen efforts to integrate the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan into work programmes under the Convention as a way to facilitate understanding of the importance of migratory species for the Sustainable Development Goals, and to take action to raise awareness of the Plan;
- Compile information and data on the interlinkages between migratory species and sustainable development;
- Compile a report on the contributions of the CMS Family to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, using information from national reports and other sources;
- Take into account the need to assess the contribution made to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through the implementation of CMS when developing proposals towards the revision of the National Report Format;
- Engage in the preparations for the post-2020 follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and ensure migratory species concerns are properly reflected during the Biodiversity Summit in 2020.

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