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DENR PRIME MOVERS TAKE ON 10 PRIORITY PROGRAMS

TRANSFORMING INTO STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO REINFORCE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Secretary Roy A. Cimatu may have seen the big picture when he vowed to the public that he will prioritize environmental protection through the full enforcement of environmental laws. As a former military General, a tactician and strategist, he knows how to connect the dots and control the situation. Just the same, he has ways to make sure that any assumptions he makes is true and right. He demonstrated this when he visited different provinces to probe and analyze the problems confronting the implementation of DENR programs. What he found are incidents and issues, even bits and pieces, in the context of the same whole – weak law enforcement. [▶ TO PAGE 2](#)

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Sec. Roy A. Cimatu, with DENR officials (From left to right): Usec. Jonas R. Leones, Usec. Maria Paz G. Luna, Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Rodolfo C. Garcia, Usec. Analiza R. Teh, Usec. Juan Miguel T. Cuna, Usec. Ernesto D. Adobo Jr., NAMRIA Administrator and Usec. Peter N. Tiangco, and Head Executive Assistant Mario F. Chan.

► DENR PRIME MOVERS...FROM PAGE 1

Environmental law enforcement, though backed up by the government law enforcement agencies, is a tough row to hoe. In recent months, the Secretary has devised a strategy, streamlining efficiencies in law enforcement by honing in the function and logistics of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Offices (PENROs) and Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENROs). However to intensify and sustain such initial efforts, priority programs must be carried out in outmost capacity. For this, he placed the management of DENR's 10 Priority Programs under the agency's top-level management – to the Undersecretaries.

These top officials would transform the 10 Priority Programs into policy reforms and strategic actions that will reinforce and strengthen environmental law enforcement in the country.

Improved Land Administration and Management

Atty. Ernesto D. Adobo Jr., Undersecretary (Usec) for Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Information Systems, Legal, Legislative Affairs and Anti-Corruption, was assigned by the Secretary to handle the Improved Land Administration and Management Program. Aside from the usual issuance of residential and agricultural free patents, he will make sure that the comprehensive land tenure reform of the Improved Land Administration and Management Program will be carried out effectively. The land tenure reform is a comprehensive package of reforms that will fast track the processing and issuance of titles over alienable and disposable lands to remove bottlenecks and ensure security of tenure for landowners. This includes the full automation of land records and use of one control map.

Intensified Forest Protection

Usec Adobo, also assigned to enforce the Intensified Forest Protection program and illegal logging laws, will push to reduce illegal logging hotspots by 50% by 2022.

In partnership with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police and other government law enforcers, and the use of advanced LAWIN Technology, the program is bent to protect the 8.2 million hectares of forests against fire, poaching, pest, and diseases.

Expanded National Greening Program (eNGP)

Atty. Jonas R. Leones, Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs, will oversee the Expanded National Greening Program (eNGP) or the second phase of the recently completed NGP. The eNGP involves the reforestation and rehabilitation of another 1.2 million hectares of denuded forest lands. Among others, Usec Leones is expected to develop and implement the following: 1) social enterprise and value-adding on tree plantation products in established NGP sites; 2) policies on harvesting and benefit-sharing mechanism on timber production forests; 3) encouragement of private sector to engage in forest rehabilitation and restoration activities as part of the Carbon Offsetting Program/Industrial Tree Plantations; and 4) updating of Commodity Roadmap 2017-2022.

Ecosystems Research and Development

Usec Leones, also in-charge of the Ecosystems Research and Development Program, is responsible for undertaking research,

development, and extension (RDE) projects in support of the other nine priority programs (Improved Land Administration and Management, Intensified Forest Protection, eNGP, Climate Change, Responsible Mining, Clean Air, Biodiversity Management, Solid Waste Management, and Clean Water).

Climate Change

Atty. Analiza R. Teh is the Undersecretary for Climate Change Service and Mining concerns and in charge of the Climate Change Program. She will mainstream climate change concerns in DENR's overall plans, programs, and activities to achieve sustainable and resilient ecosystems, and adaptive communities. Likewise, she will promote the integration of climate change concerns in the investment programs of national government agencies. Two of her priorities for 2018 are the establishment and maintenance of a Climate Information Management System and Network as provisioned in Republic Act 9729 (Climate Change Act of 2009) Section 15c, and conduct of greenhouse gas inventory at entity level and industry sectors, as provisioned in Executive Order 174 (Institutionalizing Philippine Greenhouse Gas Inventory Management and Reporting System).

Responsible Mining

Also in-charge of the Responsible Mining Program, Usec Teh will push for environmental, social, and economic reforms in the mining sector. Among others, she proposes to include other areas to be closed for mining; strengthen law enforcement and regulations; review the coverage of Social Development and Management Program (SDMP); re-orient SDMP projects to those with highest impact/benefit to communities and sustainable beyond the mining project; and require third party audit on ore shipment.

Clean Air

Atty. Juan Miguel T. Cuna, Undersecretary for Field Operations and assigned to manage the Clean Air Program, will continue to implement clean air priority programs such as regulation of energy emission from stationary and mobile sources, and monitoring of ambient air quality to improve air quality in Metro Manila and other regions. For 2018, he will prioritize the following activities: continue/update the Air Quality Index Report Network; fully implement airsheds and their Governing Boards; monitor the compliance of 15,688 firms with Permit to Operate air pollution control devices; continue the accreditation of third party source emission testing firms; intensify enforcement on mobile sources; conduct vehicular emission inventory per local government unit (LGU) with capacity training for concerned LGUs; implement vehicle emission limits for Euro 4/IV and in-use vehicle emission standards; continue to promote the use of alternative fuel; and conduct training on Ambient Monitoring and Data Management.

Biodiversity Management

Usec Cuna, also assigned to handle the Biodiversity Management Program, will focus on enhancing strategies for biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, and establishment of critical habitats and protected areas. He will continue to implement the Biodiversity Management Bureau's three major programs: Protected Areas and Ecosystems Management and Protection, Wildlife Protection and Conservation, and Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation.

**"WE CANNOT FAIL IN OUR PROGRAMS,
BECAUSE IN DOING SO,
WE FAIL THE PEOPLE AND THEIR FUTURE."
- SECRETARY ROY CIMATU**

The truth is no country in the world is without its own environmental problems; the only difference is how each is dealing with and resolving these problems. Most governments assume that they are addressing monumental problems, but all indications will tell some have not, which explains why some environmental problems seem to be moving in vicious cycle. It takes a year, years, or even decades for agencies to be back in the same old place again, talking about the same problem, and suffering from similar problem.

The Philippines is not an exemption to this, and in fact, has its own tales to tell. For instance, it will take a year for another mines tailing leak to occupy the news headlines. It has also taken ten years to realize that Manila Bay has not improved and even become more distressed as before.

Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, aware of these perennial issues on the environment, puts two of his 10 Priority Programs – the Responsible Mining Program and Clean Water Program, with special focus on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay – on top of his list for 2018. The long-standing issues on mining for decades, which took toll in 2016, have not yet been resolved to date, while the continuing deterioration of the country's water bodies, particularly Manila Bay, has been quite disturbing.

"We get important resources from mining and water, thus, it is deemed necessary that we ensure their sustainability not just for the present but for the future generations," Secretary Cimatu said.

Responsible Mining Program

Secretary Cimatu devised a plan as early as January 2018 on how to put into action whatever decisions the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) have to make in relation to the review of 23 mining operations that were recommended for closure and/or suspended due to alleged violations on environmental laws. He vowed to implement strategic actions and policy reforms through



Solid Waste Management

Usec Cuna will continue to be busy enforcing Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Act of 2000. The following are the measures his office will undertake in five years: monitor and support the ESWM Commission's review and approval of all LGUs' 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan; close and rehabilitate all open and controlled dumpsites (including areas covered by Sustainable Integrated Area Development program); establish materials recovery facilities nationwide; expand the implementation of Solid Waste Enforcer and Education Program (SWEEP); strengthen the National Ecology Center and Regional Ecology Center; adopt the waste-to-energy (WTE) technology to complement the sanitary landfill as a means for waste disposal; and provide LGUs with technical assistance.

Clean Water

Atty. Maria Paz G. Luna, OIC-Undersecretary for Manila Bay Concerns and Related Water Concerns is developing the Manila Bay Rehabilitation and Conservation Enterprise (MBRACE) strategy to supplement the implementation of Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy 2017-2022. MBRACE's main component is social enterprise, which creates livelihood opportunities, at the same time, promotes people's participation in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. The DENR is drafting an Executive Order creating the Manila Bay Management and Rehabilitation Commission, which will be composed of mandamus agencies, concerned LGUs, other government agencies, and civil society organizations to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay.

With regard to water concerns, aside from her priority of monitoring the regulation of effluent emission load of municipal wastewater and further designation of water quality management areas, Usec Luna is bent to carry out Secretary Cimatu's instruction to identify and classify existing water bodies in the country to determine management scheme that can be adopted for each water body.

A fail-proof strategy

As Secretary Cimatu always say, "We cannot fail in our programs, because in doing so, we fail the people and their future." The 10 Priority Programs carried out by top officials of DENR to effectively enforce environmental laws in the country is taken as a fail-proof strategy. The Secretary is confident that with the high knowledge and experiences of the top officials, the great resources and support that their offices can provide, and the compelling responsibility and accountability resting on their shoulders, the 10 Priority Programs of DENR will succeed. They just need "to make the systems work better, more efficient, and with greater effectiveness." (Alvin D. Gatbonton)

RESPONSIBLE MINING AND MANILA BAY TOP SEC. CIMATU'S PRIORITIES

by: Martina A. Reyes



Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, with CAR Regional Director, Engr. Ralph C. Pablo, inspects the mining (small-scale) site in Barangay Kias, Baguio. Sec. Cimatu examines one of the mining tunnels in the area.

the Responsible Mining program to address the issues.

To strengthen the Program's firm grip on mining regulations and law enforcement as well as maximize its access to needed resources, he placed the Program under the agency's top-level management. The Secretary designated Undersecretary (USec) Atty. Analiza R. Teh to lead the implementation of the Program. As USec for Climate Change Service and Mining concerns, Atty. Teh has a long experience and expertise in biodiversity protection and conservation and climate change management – two environment sectors that must have utmost consideration by the mining sector.

Pro-people, pro-development, and pro-environment mining

The policy reform presented by USec Teh under the Responsible Mining Program aims to make the mining sector people-oriented; major contributor to the national economy; and a world class industry among other countries. It also aims to institutionalize strong monitoring and enforcement of mining laws to ensure uncompromised environmental protection.

USec Teh will review the Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) especially on: a) extending the coverage fund to host municipalities and provinces instead of affected barangays alone, b) increasing the SDMP fund from 1.5% to 3% of the total operating cost, and c) reorienting mining projects that will give high benefit and impact to communities. She will push for the close monitoring of direct and indirect employment in the mining industry to ensure fair compensation and distribution of benefits of employees. Another measure is to establish private sector mining and environment fund to address compensation claim for damages and injuries over and above the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program Fund and Final Mine Rehabilitation and Decommissioning Fund.

The policy reform, being pro-environment, seeks to implement mandatory progressive rehabilitation and temporary restoration of mining areas. The DENR will also declare critical watersheds, forest reserves, small islands, and some coastal areas to be a no-go-zone for mining activities. To ensure check and balance, a third party mining audit will be conducted every two to three years while Multipartite Monitoring Team is required specifically on environmentally critical projects.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) satellite office will be established in Dinagat Islands where 12 active mining operations are located to ensure that these corporations are operating in accordance with regulations and standards for responsible mining.

"There were mistakes happened in the past that we want to correct now. We want to ensure that the rehabilitation of mines will be initiated and will be progressive," said USec Teh.

"WE GET IMPORTANT RESOURCES FROM MINING AND WATER, THUS, IT IS DEEMED NECESSARY THAT WE ENSURE THEIR SUSTAINABILITY NOT JUST FOR THE PRESENT BUT FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS"

- SECRETARY ROY CIMATU

To become a major driver of the national economy, the DENR is developing a national program and roadmap for the development of value-adding activities and downstream industries for strategic metallic ores. The MGB, in fact, is starting to work with the Department of Trade and Industry on the buildup of mineral processing plants. The DENR will invest and adopt new technologies to maximize ore utilization and environmental protection.

"Our produce is globally competitive and at par with international standards, therefore, our mining operations should also lead to that standard," USec Teh said.

The DENR is also strictly monitoring the correct and timely payment of taxes to ensure that companies are giving back their fair share to national income for further industrialization and development. Likewise, all existing mining operations will be declared as mineral reservations to increase revenue share of the government.

Meanwhile, Secretary Cimatu urged mining companies to get their acts together, and counter the negative impressions the public has towards mining activities by promoting responsible mining and ensuring that their operations have no impact on the environment and local communities.

"It is now time to reverse the negative publicity and disabuse the public's mind about the many misinformation and disinformation they have heard about mining," Secretary Cimatu said.

Clean Water Program - Cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay

Another priority program of the DENR for this year is clean water with focus on the cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay. Secretary Cimatu, aware of the continuing mandamus set by the Supreme Court to rehabilitate Manila Bay, expressed dismay over the Bay's continuing deterioration. Ten years have passed, and despite the efforts of the mandamus agencies, the Manila Bay's water quality remains far from being classified as Class SB level, Recreational Class 1. The Bay's water still cannot be used for swimming, skin diving, and other contact recreational sports.

"Waiting 10 years to act will mean an 80% spike in what we would have spent if we built in the solutions today," the Secretary said.

To fast track the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay area, Secretary Cimatu, like his other priority programs, is placing the Clean Water Program under the agency's top-level management. He assigned Undersecretary Maria Paz Luna to spearhead the Clean Water Program of the DENR. USec Luna has been an environmental advocate and lawyer for most part of her career. Her close relationships with civil society groups has encouraged her to devise a strategy, which she calls the Manila Bay Rehabilitation and Conservation Enterprise (MBRACE) – an economic driver program that supplements the five-year Operational Plan for Manila Bay Coastal Strategy. (OPMBCS).

MBRACE

MBRACE's main component is social enterprise, which commodifies wastes into useful products; thus, creating livelihood opportunities and encouraging people's participation in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. As initiatives, MBRACE is currently mobilizing civil society partners and securing commitment from various sectors. A communication plan has also been developed to link everyone's interests with the opportunities presented. Likewise, the DENR is working with the Department of Labor and Employment and Department of Social Welfare and Development as regard to creating green jobs.

"Our goal is that by 2022, enterprise solutions must be thriving in all sectors to complement government efforts to rehabilitate the Manila Bay," said USec Luna.

MBRACE will address major problems, as follows:

- **Liquid Wastes.** With regard to wastewater regulation, DENR's goal is to treat at least 80% of waste water discharging into the Bay. Currently, water concessionaires within the Manila Bay region are taking responsibility on only 50% of wastewater treatment thus, the government is taking on the other 50% by investing on septage and sewage systems. The Department is also proposing to remove the value added tax for the first 10 cubic meters of water consumption to cushion the tariff increase should investments in sewage and septage systems build up.

The DENR is also working with other agencies in conducting random industrial and commercial inspection to ensure compliance of establishments. It is also considering increasing every two years by 10% the penalty for violations based on the Clean Water Act of 2004.

- **Solid Wastes.** In addressing solid waste problem, aside from the regular Bay clean ups, the Department is undertaking intensive final waste disposal measure and providing assistance on the establishment of Materials Recovery Facilities in every city and municipality within the Manila Bay area.

The DENR will also refrain from issuing Environmental Compliance Certificate for any landfill or incinerator in any area that has not reached the critical mass of reuse, composting, recycling and upcycling.

- **Run-off.** To address agricultural run-off, the DENR will map out the remaining public lands in the Manila Bay Region and enroll it to the National Greening Program to keep those areas vegetated. MBRACE will also be involved in the rehabilitation of the Laguna Lake shoreline which will be planted with bamboos and other vegetation to prevent run-off through the Bay.

- **Riverbanks and Shoreline Congestion.** The DENR, together with the Department of Labor and Employment and Department of Social Welfare and Development, is planning on aggressive public and private efforts for green jobs and opportunity creation away from the easement areas and danger zones.

According to USec Luna, there will be a continuous resettlement of informal settlers living near the Bay. The DENR will provide assistance to LGUs in developing programs and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that resettlement efforts will succeed.

Plans for onsite development of Lupang Arenda and Baseco will also be executed. Aside from this, there is a plan for redevelopment of shoreline into economic hubs that also treat wastewater.

An Executive Order creating a Commission

To realize the success of MBRACE, an executive order creating the Manila Bay Management and Rehabilitation Commission has been drafted which is due for submission to the Office of the President.

The Commission will be composed of the mandamus agencies, concerned LGUs, other government agencies, and civil society organizations. It will be responsible in determining needed infrastructure and financial requirements to achieve full sewerage and septage coverage, operationalize the OPMBCS, create and enforce continuing policy direction for the clean-up, rehabilitation and restoration.

"If we will begin to see waste as wealth, to look at problems as jobs and apathy as fertile ground for public campaigns to help, we would see a rehabilitated Manila Bay in no time," USec Luna said.

Regaining paradise: Saving and Protecting

by: Alvin D. Gatbonton and Martina A. Reyes

Boracay



(From top to bottom): [1] Sec. Cimatú briefs DENR Officials of the future action plans for Boracay; [2] A Material Recovery Facility in Barangay Manoc-Manoc; [3] Regional Director Jim Sampulna oversees the road widening activity in Boracay; [4] a 25+5 easement marker; [5] Demolished nipa structures in Puka beach

What is supposed to be a notable victory for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), beating the challenge of clearing the 2,000 tons of garbage in Boracay in just 20 days, turned out merely as a prelude to an even greater challenge of solving worse and unimaginable kind of environmental destruction.

Five of the nine wetlands were erased from the map as structures of hotels, resorts and informal settlers have illegally occupied the water expanse. Eight hundred forty-two (842) establishments were not complying with environmental regulations, warranting the continued deterioration of the beach island. Huge permanent resort structures have deliberately encroached the 30-meter easement from the shores, waning the buffer zone protecting Boracay waters. And, hundreds of establishments, not connected to a sewerage system, are directly discharging effluent with high fecal coliform to open sewers and polluting the island.

What else could be worse than these, considering Boracay brings in P50 billion pesos annual revenue to the national economy and puts the country in the world tourism map?

After weeks of heated criticisms and arguments pitted on media over whose fault and responsibility the pollution problem in Boracay belongs to, it has become clearer now that the terrible snafus are caused not by one official's neglect of duty, but by the failure of both local government and businesses' moral authority to enforce and observe, respectively, environmental laws and regulations.

Secretary Roy A. Cimatú immediately acted on President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's order to clean Boracay and restore the island's world class beach stature. He readily deployed six teams composed of nine technical staff per team from different DENR regions and bureaus. Dubbed as, Task Force "Regain Paradise", the teams conducted inspections to the six designated areas to ensure compliance with environmental laws.

The Environmental Management Bureau took the lead and looked into the sewerage system and waste management of the island. The Forest Management Bureau and Land Management Bureau investigated and filed cases against establishments that built illegal structures, encroaching on timberlands, wetlands, and easements. Notices of Violations (NOVs) and Show Cause Orders (SCOs) were outright issued to establishments found not complying with environmental regulations.

The Biodiversity Management Bureau, on the other hand, investigated and assessed the damages inflicted on rock formations by an irresponsible establishment. It is also finding ways to restore the habitats of Puka shells abundant in Puka Beach, and the Flying fox bats in Barangay Yapak.

The Secretary, with his technical staff, spent on and off time for more than a month now in Boracay to personally oversee and manage the crisis, and ensure that immediate actions are being undertaken to enforce environmental laws. Recently, he had a dialogue with the Heads of the Department of Tourism and Department of Interior and Local Government to find possible measures to address the problems.

Based on initial assessments and in consideration of public health, public interest and general welfare, the environment chief recommended to the President the closure of Boracay Island as tourist destination for a maximum of one year to give ample time for the undisrupted implementation of measures to restore and eventually sustain Boracay as a prime tourism destination. However, President Duterte has given the Secretary only six months, starting April 26, 2018, to close and rehabilitate Boracay.

With the six-month deadline given, Secretary Cimatú vowed to make Boracay waters to consistently pass international water quality standards. The task force is fast-tracking the improvement and completion of the drainage and sewerage systems. Residual and bio-wastes will be disposed of through eco-friendly technologies. The wetlands will be rehabilitated; illegal structures, piled-up debris, sediments and invasive alien species will be removed. Forests will be reforested, and Boracay nesting grounds for turtles in Barangay Yapak and puka shells in Puka Beach will be established. To be systematic and make the most of the short time available to rehabilitate Boracay, a timeline will be followed in carrying out all measures.

In addition to these measures, the DENR will design, develop, and conduct information, awareness, and behavioral change campaign to sustain whatever accomplishments that will be achieved. It will conduct further investigations to determine the legal liabilities and accountabilities of public officials involved in the case. The 2008 Boracay Master Plan will be reviewed and updated, while necessary amendments will be made to Forest Land Use Agreement for Tourism Purposes issued to Boracay Island.

At the moment, the inter-agency task force is finalizing the comprehensive action plan to properly administer the closure. To balance the environmental and socio-economic requirements of the rehabilitation, there is a proposal to expand the task force to include DSWD, TESDA, DOE, DOTR, DPWH and DOH.

As of March 22, 2018, the DENR has completed inspecting 690 establishments. Three hundred ninety four (394) NOVs and 502 SCOs have been served to non-compliant establishments. The DENR has also started its inspection in El Nido, Palawan; Panglao, Bohol; and other tourist destinations in the country that have similar environmental issues as that of Boracay.

The restoration and rehabilitation of Boracay has just started. The tremendous tasks to be undertaken entail much dedication, deep commitment and great sacrifices on the part of all government agencies and stakeholders involved.

According to Secretary Cimatú, six months is a short period to address such huge and formidable problem. However, with the collaborative effort and support of each and everyone, particularly the people and the local government of Boracay and Aklan, he is optimistic that at the end of the deadline period for undisrupted rehabilitation of Boracay, it would undoubtedly be a "mission accomplished."

#SaveBoracay
#ProtectBoracay



by: Adona P. San Diego



I first met Usec Jonas, as a budding Assistant Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB), when Ms. Elenida Basug requested him to do the voice over of one of EMB's audio visual presentations. He was then very obliging, who submitted to our request, repeat the dub and even treated us with pizza.

He became the Director of EMB, then DENR's Head Executive Assistant, and currently, appointed as DENR Undersecretary (Usec). Truly, he has gone a long way since our first encounter, but he is still the same guy I met long ago. It seems that the high positions have not gotten into his head.

Undersecretary—he is assigned with the most difficult and complex tasks. Nonetheless, he manages to perform most of them with ease and confidence because he makes time to learn all facets of each responsibility given to him. He oversees the Planning and Policy and International Affairs, manages the Expanded National Greening Program and Ecosystems Research and Development Program, supervises the Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service (SCIS), and act as President of DENR Association of Career Executives (ACE)

Planning and policy

As Usec for Planning and Policy, he oversees the preparation and handling of planning, policy formulation, and allocations of budget for different programs and projects as well as operations of the Department.

Planning, according to Usec Leones, is one of the most challenging and difficult portfolios. It involves undergoing the painstaking process of monitoring the accomplishments of the central office, field offices, staff bureaus and attached agencies for submission to the oversight agencies and the Office of the President,

On policy formulation, they make sure that all policies and Department Memorandum Orders are thoroughly reviewed before the Secretary signs and approves them. Policy development is a delicate and critical process. It undergoes consultation with different bureaus, sectors, and stakeholders to ensure that policies are grounded and without defect before they are implemented or enforced.

He recalled that when he first came to manage the Planning and Policy Office, he felt the seeming apprehension of the people over his capacity to run the office. He understood their doubts and worked hard to prove his worth. Hard work and his passion to learn new things paid off; eventually, he earned the respect and admiration of the people in the Planning Office.

"I make sure that everybody is involved and would work as a team. We look at problems together; we plan for solutions together; and we discuss strategies and make sure we are always on the same page. If people are involved and everybody knows his/her functions, everything can be achieved, explained Usec Leones.

Balancing Act in Policy Formulations

Balancing environmental protection and development is not just difficult. It is quite complicated as it involves two opposing forces. Protecting the environment equates enforcing regulations,

which implies limiting development. Usec Leones admitted that it was a hard challenge for him to be involved in policy formulation, considering the DENR's unique structure and huge mandate. He explains that one cannot just look at one sector. All sectors, all interests, all environment, all conditions, all implications – everything must be considered in formulating policies.

For example, "in the issuance of Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC), the DENR can never be too strict to one sector to the extent that it would confine the development of other sectors," Usec Leones pointed out. Policies should be made to complement and sustain other policies. "We are not biased, we do not advocate certain principles, but as a regulator, we should always be looking at things in a very balanced and un-partial manner," he said.

Policy innovations to spur development and protection of the environment

One of the innovations in the issuance of ECC is the online application and approval of ECCs, which reduces red tape and allows the business sector to save on unnecessary expenses.

The Certificate of Non-Coverage, for example, can now be secured even in a day compared to seven to 30 days in the past, while Environmental Critical Area can be secured in one week compared to one month, and for Environmental Critical Project for 30 days, instead of 60 days.

The innovations were made in order for the industries to comply with the government requirements and to ensure favorable investment climate in the country. Usec Leones clarified though, that the shortened period, online application, and approval of ECCs do not mean that the Department is sacrificing the Environmental Impact Assessment system.

As a safety measure, the industries would be monitored closely to ensure that the conditions laid down in their ECCs are strictly followed. In case of violations, the Department can easily issue Notices of Violation, but in worst case scenario, it can issue an order to stop the operations of the erring company. Usec Leones is confident that the online innovation is both advantageous to the government and the investors.

According to Usec Leones, "Mining is an example of how you balance policies." While the government allows mining companies to extract the minerals, compliance to the requirements must be fully enforced, like clean water, clean energy emissions, and compliant with air quality standards, including all conditions set forth in the ECC. In this way, the policy is treated in a manner that it will not impair other sectors.

Policies are not permanent and it should be reviewed regularly, Usec Leones stressed. It should be dynamic and should adapt to the existing condition of the time. A good example of this is the pollution control law or Presidential Decree 984, which was amended by three laws, Clean Air Act (Republic Act 8749), Clean Water Act (Republic Act 9275) and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act 9003).

The Department is now looking at amending Republic Act 9003 because of the provision that bans incineration. **▶ TO PAGE 7**





Sec. Roy Cimatu, with Assistant Secretaries Corazon C. Davis, Bresilda M. Gervacio, and Nonita S. Caguiao happily throws the ribbon as the start of the nationwide celebration of Women's Month in March during the opening of a Women's Market in DENR Central Office.

EMPOWERED WOMEN

by: Alvin D. Gatbonton

If you speak openly and often, you don't need to speak loudly." This is how Angie Chang, a known women's rights advocate, thinks women should do if they really want to send their message through and make an impact at work or in society. For her, women must not be afraid to speak their minds out in asserting themselves.

Three women leaders of DENR are marked by such quality. They do not need to overemphasize things to show who they are, and purposefully influence and create a strong personal brand in their workplace. Not their voice alone, but their knowledge, skills, and strong personalities speak out with how they look and think on things and people.

Be equipped with necessary skills and knowledge, then work with men as team

Current Assistant Secretary (Asec.) for Policy and Planning, Corazon C. Davis, is one great example of a woman who does not need to speak loudly to be heard. Though an eloquent speaker, she is a big influence to workers not only because of what she says but also because of what she does.

Asked how she handles the tedious but critical responsibility in Planning and Policy, she revealed her 4Ps: passion, patience, persistence, and prayer. Surely many employees in DENR would agree and vouch for these traits of Asec. Cora, as colleagues call her. As long time Asec. for Administrative and Finance Service, Asec Cora has shown her much dedication and diligence in ensuring the proper management of administrative and financial operations of the agency. Her 4Ps are evident as DENR employees never fail to receive their CNA and PBB bonuses every yearend for the holidays. Asec Davis' patience, perseverance, and prayer seem to have a distinct and effective way of convincing employees to comply with DBM requirements.

As Vice-Chairperson of the DENR-National Gender and Development (GAD) Focal Point System (FPS), Asec. Cora Davis is thankful that DENR has a "very good climate and culture for nurturing women empowerment." She believes that the shift of focus of DENR from regulatory to development has given great emphasis on people empowerment and has opened more opportunities for women in management. "Women are nurturing, more enduring, emphatic, and flexible – traits that are fitting for development undertakings," she stressed.

Asec. Davis advises women to constantly equip themselves

with the necessary skills and knowledge in any endeavor they take. It is also important for them to learn how to work with men as a team, especially in this male dominated world. If a woman is married she must learn how to convince or solicit support from her husband. In DENR, when a woman gets promoted to a management post, she must be ready for relocation or re-assignment to other places. Many have shied away from such big opportunities because they were not allowed or supported by their husbands, lamented Asec. Davis.

Respect people as a person, be considerate - empower the weak

For Asec. Bresilda M. Gervacio, OIC Assistant Secretary for Financial Management and Information Systems, being considerate is not a sign of weakness. She believes that all people in certain aspects have their own flaws, and true leaders, according to her, do not condemn but help and support the person to overcome his/her flaws.

Asec. Bressie, as she is commonly called in DENR, describes herself as open, accessible, and considerate person. Respect for her is utmost important. "If you can't respect people, how would you expect people to respect you," she said. Respect to her means treating people well and with concern, whether they are old or young, rich or poor, educated or uneducated. "I don't look at people based on their stature, I respect everyone. I even show respect to those who doesn't deserve respect," she stressed.

"At work, even if I am the boss, I give respect to my employees. I don't look down on the small contributions of my employees, because I believe no matter how big or small their contributions may be, they form significant part of whatever we have or will achieve," said Asec. Bressie

She feels that way because she had a pleasant experience of being respected and supported by former superiors. After graduation, she was involved in a project where she worked with fellow new graduates who were also inspired, highly invigorated, and hard working. Her bosses respected them for that; so they treated their bosses with high respect in return. Then, she had the chance to be the project manager of a foreign assisted project, which taught her leadership and gave her the opportunity to enhance her skills and widen her experience. After that, she worked with the United Nations, where her work was purely technical. When Secretary Ramon Paje became the DENR Secretary, she was hired as Head Executive Assistant, and later promoted as OIC Assistant Secretary.

"So as you see, as I have experienced being respected, being supported, and being given with much opportunity to grow, I also want to make that happen to other people," said Asec. Bressie. "Everyone should have that chance to improve and be empowered – not just women but all people." Her advice to all women out there: "learn as much as you can, be strong, huwag kayong magpapa-bully, maging lalaki o babae man. Learn to respect and be concern with people who are in need. Also, be transparent, upholding integrity in all you do. And last, learn to balance family and work."

Don't complain; fit in and adjust

Nonita S. Caguioa, Assistant Secretary for Mining Concerns, was chugging along in her career as Engineer II when she got her first promotion. What her boss likes so much about her, she said, is her readiness to do whatever task assigned to her. She never bogged down, complained, or refused any work. She just obeyed; tried to fit in and adjust.

Asec. Nitz as her friends and colleagues call her, recalled how she would be called out for duty in the field by her superiors even on weekends and holidays, and she does not consider this as a weakness. For her, being dependable is a great strength - capable of doing work, anytime and anywhere. She merely describes herself as a hardworking, responsible, dependable, and generous type of person. She loves and enjoys sharing whatever knowledge, skill, time, and little resources she has in any way.

Asec. Caguioa shared five important things for being an empowered woman: 1) earn respect through hard work; 2) be strong and tough by showing others that you cannot be just limited by simple things; 3) be dependable, exhibiting versatility; 4) show benevolence through generosity of things you know and have; 5) and grow by learning much of things, especially those you do not know yet.

DENR'S 70% CES OCCUPANCY AMONG THE HIGHEST IN THE COUNTRY

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is among the seven national government agencies with the highest Career Executive Service (CES) occupancy rate recognized by the Career Executive Service Board in 2017. The DENR placed sixth with 70% of CES positions filled, following the Department of Health at 74%.

The high CES occupancy rate that accounts for more than a hundred positions poses as an advantage for DENR. According to Undersecretary (Usec) Jonas Leones, President of the DENR Association of Career Executives, Inc. (DENR ACE) and Chair of the Legal Committee of the National Union of Career Executive Service Officers, Inc. (NUCESO), "CES members are important part of DENR because they capture and help preserve the institutional memory of the agency. It has become their role to brace the competence and integrity of the Department."

Some who hold the CES positions are Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries who are vital executive "think tanks" of the agency. Their competence and development-oriented administration translates to the efficient performance and high productivity of offices within the Department.

Usec Leones also emphasized that CES position holders are the lifeline of the agency and holds the critical responsibility of crafting and ensuring that all programs are in accordance with the DENR's mandate. That is why his priority, as DENR ACE President, is to ensure that all CESOs are placed in their positions consistent with their rank.

Currently, the DENR ACE is the sole organization within the Department that convenes CES members to sustain, renew, expand and foster camaraderie among its members for the achievement of DENR mission and vision in the spirit of team excellence.

Other agencies that were recognized by the CES board are the Department of Public Works and Highway (87%), Department of Trade and Industry (78%), Department of Interior and Local Government (77%), Department of Education (76%), and Office of President (68%). (Fatima Leya)



Director Ric G. Enriquez accepts the Outstanding CESB Award led by Executive Director Atty. Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones, CESO I (left), Board Member Rolando L. Metin, CESO II (right).

USEC. JONAS LEONES...FROM PAGE 5

Almost all countries are now using high-tech and pollution-free incinerator, explains USec Leones. The availability of clean technologies can really help the country in addressing problems on garbage, especially in Metro Manila, which generates 40,000 tons daily.

Spokesperson

As the Spokesperson of Secretary Roy Cimatu, USec Jonas finds the job very challenging due to the nature of its responsibilities. Any information he gives to the media and to the public will impact not only on the Secretary but also to the whole Department.

"There is no take two as a spokesperson. I have to be always prepared making sure that before facing the camera I am adequately informed and updated. Everything I say must be supported by facts and data because as a Spokesperson, whatever I say could be interpreted as the word of the Secretary. Statements should be based on actual findings and well researched to protect not just me but most especially, the Secretary. It is my top priority to protect the Department and the Secretary," USec Leones emphasized.

In supervising the SCIS, he makes sure that all articles, all write-ups are truthful and based on facts. News stories must be released on time to ensure that media get the right information. Any delay in the release of information may result in media getting their information elsewhere and could put the DENR in a disadvantageous position.

The SCIS, as the communication arm of the Department, should be on top of everything, whether on events, environmental problems, or incidents. It should be the Office to have the first-hand information for DENR and the general public. The SCIS is also expected to promote the programs and projects implemented by the Department, as well as feature ENR for environmental awareness and education.

National Greening Program Coordinator

When it comes to the Expanded National Greening Program, USec Jonas ensures that the budget would be allocated for enhancing the greening program and that it will really be implemented on the ground. His office also makes sure that necessary assistance would be provided to the peoples organization in the form of livelihood projects to improve their lives.

DENR ACE

As the President of DENR ACE, he makes sure officials who are Career Executive Service Officer (CESO) holders are designated to the positions consistent to their rank. "I hope the bureaucracy will use them to implement vital programs and projects that are within the mandate of the department," he said.

Although there are issues facing the organization because of the involvement of some CESO holders in graft and corrupt practices, the management of the DENR ACE is not shirking from their responsibilities and addressing the issue head on. "We are trying to get rid of that bad impression against the organization, at the same time, we are trying to convince the DENR management to utilize experts from the CESO holders in the area of policy review and implementation of programs and projects," Usec Leones said.

The DENR ACE is hopeful that the current DENR management will give CESOs preferential attention in the selection of field officials. "CES members are important part of DENR because they capture and help preserve the institutional memory of the agency. It has become their role to brace the competence and integrity of the Department," said USec Leones.

The DENR ACE is a professional organization with strong membership. Currently, there are more than 100 CESOs at the DENR including the Assistant Secretaries and USECs and 40 Career Executive Service Eligible.

International Affairs

International Affairs Office was established by former Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje, and according to the Undersecretary, he was fortunate to be assigned and handle the office. Among its responsibilities is to monitor the compliance of the country as regard to its environmental commitments to international bodies. It is also responsible for drawing up multilateral and/or bilateral environmental agreements with other countries.

He says that international commitments make the Philippines part of the international community. "We cannot survive the global competition if we are not active in these international affairs. It is therefore critical for us to comply with our commitments and agreements," USec Leones stressed.

The Department benefits from international commitments through the generation of foreign assisted projects. The country has been accessing foreign assisted funds of projects from different development institutions like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, and from countries like Japan, Australia, Sweden, and Canada. Through international relationships and agreements, the country's ENR development is benefited and helped to be sustained.

Tayo ang Kalikasan

USec Leones is the coordinator of "Tayo ang Kalikasan," the DENR partner in strengthening and mobilizing organizations towards environmental protection. The partnership program will be launched in La Union, and will mobilize 2,000 people. The Undersecretary said that the Department continuous to draw assistance from different environmental groups to ensure that the objectives and mandates of the Department would be achieved.

Managing different offices

Having the enormous tasks at hand, the good USec manages to handle all his responsibilities through proper time management and through the help of good and dependable teams he has formed to assist him.

In parting, he encourages everyone in DENR to work diligently, in full integrity, and honesty, always praying for guidance. With prayers, he says, one can never go wrong with the things he is doing. To him prayers and honesty in work are the main reasons he survives in his current tasks.



MR. ERIBERTO B. SAÑOS, CESE
Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer,
Coron, Palawan | Author, Pasyong Mahal ng Inang Kalikasan

PARTNER'S COLUMN

Pasyong Mahal ng Inang Kalikasan

Masaganang buhay po!

It is indeed a great honor and pride to offer and share with co-workers in the DENR and to all Filipinos my book entitled "Pasyong Mahal ng Inang Kalikasan" bearing the hope of realization that upon chanting/reading it – will touch the goodness/kindness of human's heart and conscience, as a premise written in the preceding pages of the Pasyon... "Sukat ipag-alab ng puso at gumising sa damdaming maka-bathala, maka-kalikasan, maka-bayan at maka-tao ng sinomang babasa".

A Metrical Romance

The book was written under the category of Metrical Romance (Korido). With its distinctive style and rhythm, it is also hoped that this will give a unique excitement in reminiscing, enhancing and enriching our own Philippine History, Literature and Arts, as well as to revive the vanishing Filipino Cultures and Traditions. This is like singing of the "Pasyong Mahal" of Jesus Christ being practiced by our Catholic brothers and sisters during Lenten season which is now disappearing especially among our youths.

The Book of Faith of RIZALISTAS

This poetry manifests spiritual dimensions containing the faiths, teachings and doctrines of federation of Rizal churches/Rizalist groups or the so-called "Rizalistas" spread throughout the Philippines with strong belief to the divinity and mystical image/figure of "Amang Dr. Gat Jose P. Rizal" and "Inang Kalikasan" (Mother Nature). This Pasyon is now being used by CELYO Rizal Inc. founded by Apo Babaylan Reyna Yolanda Liban Manalo based in Tuguegarao City. The CELYO Rizal Inc. is a federation of Rizalist groups in the country who undertakes various environmental projects and advocacies. They are also an active partner of the DENR in the National Greening Program (NGP) in Cagayan and Isabela provinces where most members are our Indigenous brothers and sisters. The Pasyon is being chanted/read/sang during their various spiritual occasions as a way of praying and praising/hailing Inang Kalikasan.

The Filipino Language as the Universal Language

As written in Filipino, the book truly exemplifies the diversity of the Filipino Language which long been uttered by Ferdinand Blumentritt who was a close friend and contemporary of Dr. Gat Jose P. Rizal that "The Filipino Language has the fullness of Spanish and elegance of Latin." The Filipino Language is being ascribed by Rizalistas as the Mother Language/Universal Language/Language of all Languages in the world or the Inang Wika/Wika ng mga Wika. Proofs, evidences and examples were explained very well in the Pasyon. A separate article regarding the Filipino Language as the Universal Language/ Inang Wika was prepared and submitted by the author to the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino in August (Buwan ng Wika) CY 2016 and 2017.

Role of Indigenous Brothers and Sisters in returning back to Mother Nature

The Pasyon highlighted the important role of our Indigenous brothers and sisters in returning back/re-connecting ourselves to Inang Kalikasan. As written in the Pasyon, they are the one who has the key to achieve the so called "Back to Nature". This is through adopting the Way of Life of our Indigenous brothers and sisters which is indeed connected to the Mother Nature. Their ancestral beliefs, traditions, cultures, practices, arts and rituals are truly connected to the Four Alive Elements (Fire, Air, Water and Land). These Four Alive Elements together with their super diverse and dynamic interactions as well as the natural resources are the sum total of Inang Kalikasan. Review of our History and related Literatures has accounted the sustainable management of the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) in some parts of the country by Indigenous Cultural Communities.

Many lessons from our Indigenous brothers and sisters must be studied and taught to us. We have to learn from our "Ninunong Katutubo."

Looking Back the Mother Nature

"He who does not know how to look back at where he came from will never get to his destination." This is one of the popular sayings of Dr. Gat Jose P. Rizal in which, what he is referring to as the origin (where one came from) is nothing but the Mother Nature. We all came from the Mother Nature, the sum total of the Four Alive Elements which have been embodied/incorporated to all human beings. No single living thing can be created in this Universe without the Four Alive Elements. Hence, human being is Nature and Nature is human being, (Ang Tao ay Kalikasan at ang Kalikasan ay Tao.)

Basic Environmental/Ecological Principles and IEC material

Though with spiritual contents, this book presented recent environmental issues and concerns which can be a useful material in the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign being undertaken by DENR and other environmental groups and advocates.

First and foremost, the main environmental topic in the book focused on Environmental Principles/Laws of Ecology which as I always suggesting during Environmental seminars/fora shall be the first subject matter to introduce /re-visit as they are the basic laws of the Mother Nature. These were oftenly being overlooked by many of us. For each Ecological principle or as I referred in the Pasyon as "Mga Batas ng Inang Kalikasan" there is a discussion of important environmental topic such as Biodiversity Conservation, Solid Waste Management and Pollution. Illustrated clearly in the book is our advocacy on biodiversity "kung wala niyan, wala nito". Importance of various Natural Processes for Life such as Hydrology, Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen and Nutrient Cycles have been elaborated with examples in lay man's language. Environmental topics given thorough emphasis are about Global Warming and Climate Change as well as Ozone Depletion, including causes and consequences. Detailed presentation of the alarming impacts/effects of Global Warming/Climate Change to humans, different ecosystems, various sectors of the society and to the biodiversity were presented clearly in the "Pasyon".

It is my fervent hope that the end-result of chanting/reading this poetry is the gaining of new enthusiasm and momentum for the continuous transformation and translation into concrete actions of our willingness to save the environment, to do and share the responsibility incumbent upon us towards a collaborative effort concerning the conservation and protection of the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) or in the totality --- our Mother Nature (Inang Kalikasan).

Simultaneous with the implementation of our programs/projects to save the Environment, let us sing/chant the Pasyon to praise, hail and glorify Inang Kalikasan to reconnect ourselves to Her and to request pity not to pour anymore natural calamities and disasters to the Philippines but to give us time and a last chance to heal, repair and sustainably conserve our Environment and Natural Resources at the longest possible time for the succeeding generations of Filipinos.

I am very sure that we share one vision and commitment for our Mother Nature. Maraming salamat po at Mabuhay!

TRAIN LAW: GOOD FOR INCOME EARNERS, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, AND THE ECONOMY

The comprehensive tax reform program of the government, tagged as Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Act or more popularly known as TRAIN, was enforced on January 1, 2018. The tax reform's ultimate goal, according to Department of Finance Undersecretary Karl Kendrick Chua, is to provide the government with the revenues to fund its inclusive growth agenda, which envisions an upper-middle income status for the country by 2022 and eventually a high income by 2040.

The TRAIN basically shifts the tax burden away from income and passes it to consumption. It recalibrates the brackets of exemption and reduction of personal income tax (PIT), increasing the disposable income of income earners, while it increases the tax of some commodities such as sweetened beverages, vehicles, and fuels.

Good for taxpayers and the economy

The rationale to this: the income earners who benefit from the tax exemption or reduction would have more disposable income to spend for more commodities. The increase on expenditures drives economic growth and eventually results in the generation of more revenues for the government.

TRAIN lowers the PIT of almost 99% of tax payers. For those earning at least Php20,000/month and below, the TRAIN provides tax exemption. This includes minimum-wage earners and those with annual taxable income of Php250,000 and below. Thus, employees such as clerks earning Php15,000 a month, who were previously taxed Php7,000, and call center agents with a monthly salary of Php21,000, who used to cough up Php22,000 a year in taxes would pay zero tax. In effect, those with taxable annual income of Php250,000 would take home additional income equivalent to one-month's pay per year.

Good for the environment and health

The increments of tax on vehicles, sweetened beverages, and fuels

would boost the government's revenue to partially fund government's project "Build, Build, Build," infrastructure and service development.

The increase of taxes on vehicles would have positive environmental benefits, as prices of vehicles would increase, consequently decreasing their acquisition and accompanying gas consumption and energy emissions. It is also assumed that the increase of taxes on vehicles will only affect the upper classes, and not the poor.

The increase of tax on sweetened beverages will have positive effect on health, as those people that will be discouraged from buying such products because of their resulting price increase, would be spared from diseases such as diabetes and cancer.

Benefits of the subsidy component, UCT

Because it is expected that the increase of fuel tax would slightly raise prices of some commodities, the TRAIN law would balance it through its subsidy component, called unconditional cash transfer (UCT) program. Thirty percent (30%) of the incremental revenues of the tax reform law will be earmarked for social protection programs, such as the UCT for affected sectors including indigent senior citizens and 10 million of the country's poorest households, as well as a Pantawid Pasada program for jeepney drivers and operators to help them cope with the temporary impact of TRAIN.

Below are the new tax tables under the TRAIN while a tax calculator is available at www.taxcalculator.dof.gov.ph, to know your take home pay depending on your salary and exemptions:



PIT SCHEDULE 1 (2018-2022)

ANNUAL TAXABLE INCOME	TAX RATE	% OF TAX PAYERS
0 - 250,000	0%	83%
↑ 250,000 - 400,000	20% OF THE EXCESS OVER 250,000	8%
↑ 400,000 - 800,000	30,000 + 25% OF THE EXCESS OVER 400,000	6%
↑ 800,000 - 2,000,000	130,000 + 30% OF THE EXCESS OVER 800,000	2%
↑ 2,000,000 - 8,000,000	490,000 + 32% OF THE EXCESS OVER 2,000,000	1%
8,000,000	2,410,000 + 35% OF THE EXCESS OVER 8,000,000	0.10%

PIT SCHEDULE 2 (2023-onwards)

ANNUAL TAXABLE INCOME	TAX RATE	% OF TAX PAYERS
0 - 250,000	0%	83%
↑ 250,000 - 400,000	15% OF THE EXCESS OVER 250,000	8%
↑ 400,000 - 800,000	22,500 + 20% OF THE EXCESS OVER 400,000	6%
↑ 800,000 - 2,000,000	102,500 + 25% OF THE EXCESS OVER 800,000	2%
↑ 2,000,000 - 8,000,000	402,000 + 30% OF THE EXCESS OVER 2,000,000	1%
8,000,000	2,202,500 + 35% OF THE EXCESS OVER 8,000,000	0.10%

DENR'S TOP-LEVEL MANAGEMENT TO SWEEP GARBAGE WOES

by: Adona P. San Diego

Wastes and garbage all over the cities have become part of the urban landscape in the country. Heaps of municipal solid wastes proliferate everywhere. It contaminates air, water, and land, and threatens not only the health and safety of the people, but also the economy of the nation.

Metro Manila alone, which has a population of 12.88 million (2015 Census), produces around 10,000 tons of garbage per day, which is 25% of the total 42,000 tons generated in the Philippines daily. As of 2016, biodegradable wastes accounted for 52% of the total waste composition in Metro Manila, 41% for recyclable wastes, and 7% for residual wastes.

Early last year, Secretary Roy A. Cimatu vowed to prioritize three programs that have the most impact to the general populace; these are solid waste management, clean water, and clean air programs. Of these three programs, the solid waste management made good of its accomplishments and was touted to be the top performer of DENR last year, having attained more than 100% of its targets in different areas.

Solid Waste Management Team, 2017 best performer of DENR

The number of LGUs that submitted the 10-Year Solid Waste Management Plan for 2017 reached to 1,526, reducing the number of uncompliant LGUs to only 108. Of the target 233 LGUs, the DENR was able to assist 333 LGUs or 143% percent of the target on the proper closure and rehabilitation of open and controlled dumpsites within water quality management areas and the Manila Bay Region. There was a significant decrease in illegal dumpsites, from 511 in 2016 to 385 in 2017.

The Solid Waste Management Team also overcame major challenges in solid waste management, having hauled a total of 1,906.7 tons or 5,399.173 cubic meters of garbage in Boracay in just 23 days and having permanently closed the Payatas dumpsite in Quezon City.

Expanding SWEET to operate in the cities and barangays

In line with the directive of Secretary Cimatu to strengthen the agency's field offices, the Solid Waste Enforcers and Educators Program (SWEET) of NSWMC Secretariat is expanding its Solid Waste Enforcers and Educators Team (SWEET) to include CENROs and Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Offices (PENROs). The SWEET expansion is also part of the proposed Project 651 of the SWM Program of DENR, which aims to extend SWEET operations to the Barangays of highly urbanized cities and 1st class and 2nd class municipalities nationwide.

The SWEET enforcers and educators of DENR will be deployed to all CENROs and PENROs to capacitate at least two staff members per office on the technical aspect of SWM Program implementation. They will educate and train them with regard to monitoring and evaluation of proper solid waste disposal and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations. Once capacitated the CENRO and PENRO SWEET members will go to the LGUs to train and capacitate LGU SWEET members, who in turn, will train and capacitate Barangay SWEET members.

SWEET responsibilities include monitoring and evaluation of SWM related activities, reporting violations to the Office of the Mayor or City/Municipal Council and/or EMB Regional Offices, disseminating information, education and communication (IEC) materials, and documenting best practices for adoption or replication.

According to the Executive Director, the persistence of NSWMC Secretariat and the effectiveness of SWEET have enabled the dramatic increase of LGUs' submission of 10-Year Solid Waste Management Plan in 2014, 2015, 2016, with the highest submission recorded in 2015. In 2017, the submission of LGUs' plan reached to 1,526 reducing the number of uncompliant LGUs to only 108.

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Tanong mo kay p.p. Q & A

WHAT IS SALN

SALN stands for Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL BASIS FOR REQUIRING SUBMISSION OF THE SALN?

Under Section 17, Article XI of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, "A public officer or employee shall, upon assumption of office and as often as may be required by law, submit a declaration under oath of his assets, liabilities, and net worth. x x x".

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TO FILE THEIR SALN?

Personal information to include complete residence address; position; office and office address; name of employee's spouse (if any) and his/her employment; name and age of unmarried children below 18 years of age living in the employee's household

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SALN?

Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth
 Business Interest and Financial Connections
 Relatives within the fourth degree of consanguinity/affinity in the government service

TO WHOM SHOULD THE SALN BE SUBMITTED?

The SALN must be submitted to the Human Resource/Personnel Division/Section for evaluation and determination whether the statements have been properly accomplished. A SALN is deemed properly accomplished when all applicable information or details required therein are provided. Items not applicable to the filer should be marked N/A (not applicable).

WHAT WILL BE THE LIABILITY OF A PUBLIC OFFICER WHO FAILS TO FILE HIS/HER SALN?

Republic Act No. 6713 prescribes the following penalties:

- Imprisonment for a period of not more than five (5) years
- Fine of up to Php5,000.00
- Dismissal from the service

The SALN shows that an employee did not exploit his or her public office for illegal gain. It can also be used to prosecute those who misuse their office in order to enrich themselves.

by: DENR Central-Personnel Division