



Kalibkasan

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OFFICE OF THE
Regional Executive Director

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▶ A POLICY...FROM PAGE 1

When Executive Order (EO) 192 was issued on June 10, 1987, the newly established government of the late President Corazon C. Aquino was faced in addressing two major crisis that were hurting the country: one was the energy crisis that took toll in 1979 and the other was the environmental degradation and destruction that left most of the country's forests and mountains denuded. Executive Order 131 was signed to address these problems, establishing the Department of Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources (DEENR). However, the implementation of the EO was cut short, as it was amended by EO 192, reorganizing DEENR and renaming it as DENR or the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The authority to govern energy matters was vested in the Office of the President for serious attention, while the equal attention to protect and manage the environment and natural resources were retained in the Department.

Executive Order 192 decentralized the DENR with six staff bureaus: Forest Management Bureau (FMB), Lands Management Bureau (LMB), Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) now Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), and Environmental Management Bureau (EMB). Each Staff Bureau, except for the ERDB, has one Regional Technical Director (RTD) assigned in every DENR regional office in the country. All RTDs report to the Regional Executive Director (RED) of the DENR regional office, where they were assigned.

However, in the late 1990s, according to MGB Acting Assistant Director Danilo Uykieng, there came a need for the mining industry to support the continued economic development in the country. Republic Act (RA) 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act, and RA 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act, were enacted in 1995 and 1999, respectively, and transformed the two staff bureaus of DENR, the MGB and EMB into line bureaus. It was entrusted to MGB to support and sustain the continued industrialization in the country by specializing and hastening the acceleration of raw minerals and mineral supply. On the other hand, the increasing air and water pollution caused by industrialization, led the government to turn EMB's focus more on its own sector to effectively address pollution problems.

The MGB and EMB remained part of DENR, but both, in some sense, became autonomous in terms of implementing policies and enforcing laws. Their former

RTDs were designated as Regional Directors and had to report to their respective bureau Directors in the central office and not anymore to DENR REDs. This set up was formalized even by the implementation of DENR Rationalization Plan when it uniformed all Directors in the Regions (whether RTDs or REDs) as Regional Directors, creating an impression that all Directors are of the same level, and MGB and EMB RDs are in charge of their own regional operations.

On August 15, 2018, the DENR Administrative Order (DAO) 2018-18 was issued, bringing back the supervision of MGB and EMB regional operations to DENR Regional Executive Directors.

DAO 2018-18

Provides centralized and balanced management of regional operations

DAO 2018-18 restored the centralized management and coordination of all bureau regional operations. Whether they are forestry, biodiversity, lands, environmental, or mining issues and problems, it is the DENR REDs who would provide the overall command concerning them. Issues and problems emanating from these five environmental sectors would again be weighed for check and balance and the more practical hierarchical arrangement among Regional Directors would make it easy for the DENR Secretary to implement programs and enforce laws effectively in the regions.

Strengthens coordination of DENR with MGB and EMB at the regional level

When MGB and EMB became line bureaus, MGB and EMB Regional Directors report to their respective National Directors for final decisions. Now that DAO 2018-18 is enforced mining and environment problems and issues in the regions can be resolved immediately because the MGB RDs and EMB RDs can act through the supervision of the REDs without needing to get the approval of their respective Bureau Directors.

Strengthens coordination of DENR with MGB and EMB at the lowest level of field operations

The DAO also strengthens the coordination of DENR with MGB and EMB at the provincial and community level. Before, the PENROs and CENROs have no jurisdiction over mining and environment problems. They handle staff bureau concerns such as those related to forestry, biodiversity and lands. With the issuance of DAO 2018-18, the PENROs and CENROs, under the supervision of REDs, act as field commanders in their respective area of jurisdiction (provinces and communities) and are deputized to enforce mining and environmental laws and provide additional manpower and technical support at the MGB and EMB Regional Offices.

"The Secretary wants to strengthen the coordination of DENR with EMB and MGB at the lowest level of field operations. EMB and MGB have regional offices, but they have none in the provinces and communities, where the actual mining and environment problems exist. *Ang problema kasi ng environment at ng mining ay nasa level ng CENRO and PENRO*, so can you imagine why we are having problems on law enforcement. For example in Region 3, if the problem is in Bataan, but the Regional Office is in Pampanga, how can the problem be immediately addressed? But now that we have PENROs and CENROs who can monitor and enforce mining and environmental laws, problems can be easily solved. The Secretary wants strong collaboration in the Regions. Aside from having MGB and EMB at the core of Regional operations, he also wants the two to operate down at the PENRO and CENRO level," Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones explained.

Enables greater accountability

Defining the hierarchical management structure for

regional operations clarifies not only the level or rank distinction of different Regional Directors, but also their command responsibilities and accountabilities in carrying out their tasks and functions. The DAO 2018-18 simply shows that the REDs are the highest authority in the regions.

"The DENR is the umbrella organization and under it are bureaus. Whether staff or line bureaus, the bureau RDs should be under the command of DENR Regional Executive Directors," said MGB Assistant Director Uykieng.

"The EMB and MGB RDs hold Director II job position just like the PENROs, while the DENR REDs hold Director IV job position. The DENR REDs are really higher in rank than Bureau RDs," said Undersecretary Leones.

According to USec Leones, Secretary Roy Cimatu wants to maintain such hierarchical management structure for greater command responsibility and accountability. No Regional Executive Director, PENRO, or CENRO, now, can refuse blame or accountability for any wrong decisions or actions made in the regions because the DAO explicitly and specifically details their roles, responsibilities, and functions in relation to mining and the environment.

"The Secretary wants strong collaboration in the Regions. Aside from having MGB and EMB at the core of Regional operations, he also wants the two to operate down at the PENRO and CENRO level."

- Usec. Jonas R. Leones

Enables effective enforcement of environmental laws in the regions

Before, the MGB and EMB police their own sectors in the regions. Through the DAO, the DENR REDs, ARD for Technical, PENROs, and CENROs were given powers to police the mining and environment sectors. They were given the authority to issue orders to remedy any practices

that are not in accordance with the laws, to suspend operations that are life threatening, to arrest offenders and seize illegally-sourced products, tools, equipment, and conveyance used in the commission of anything illegal in mining and the environment.

The DENR REDs, PENROs and CENROs are provisioned to be members and participate in the committees under environmental laws, rules, and regulations. DENR REDs are required by law to participate proactively as member of the Mine Rehabilitation Fund Committee (MRFC) and Multipartite Monitoring Team (MMT), while the PENROs and CENROs are required to participate effectively in the MMT of MRFC. Membership and participation in these committee and team would help ensure compliance of companies in relation to mining requirements and regulations.

The DAO also specifies the powers and responsibilities of the REDs, PENROs, and CENROs in relation to enforcing PD 1586 or Establishing an Environmental Impact Statement System Including other Environmental Management Related Measures and for other Purposes, RA 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, RA 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999, and RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Strengthens unity of command and command responsibility

To operationalize unity of command and effectively carry out command responsibility, the DAO gives the REDs the authority to recommend jointly with the MGB and EMB Directors to the Secretary the following: a) reassignment/recall/designation of EMB and MGB RDs; b) appointment of EMB and MGB RDs, and c) filing of administrative complaints against EMB and MGB RDs.

With such mechanism the REDs have the leverage of maintaining or putting in place the right, most bright and skillful, or most effective EMB and MGB RDs he can best work with. It also gives the REDs a leeway to get away or get rid of inefficient, ineffective, and/or corrupt EMB and MGB RDs. (Alvin D. Gatbonton)



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ITOGON LANDSLIDE: A PAINFUL DRRM LESSON TO LEARN

by: Fatima R. Leya

Catastrophe is one word to describe the aftermath of Super Typhoon Ompong. The aim for zero casualty amidst a natural disaster remained elusive, despite some provinces' disaster risk reduction preparedness and heeding to the warnings of PAG-ASA and National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC).

DRRM planned, prepared, and enforced, so what could go wrong?

A poverty-driven industry

Itoyon, which sits southeast of Baguio City and generally characterized by a mountainous terrain, is highly regarded as a mining municipality. Twenty percent (20%) of the land or about 10,000 hectares are mining areas. Its rich mineral resources have since been extracted by mining companies as early as 1900s.

Among the mining companies is the Benguet Corporation (BC), whose gold mining operation in the area dates back in 1903. BC has mined out 2,500 hectares of Itoyon, extracting gold ores and then exporting them abroad, as how most mining firms in the country operate. The firm closed its open pit mining operations in 1997, but has claimed private ownership over the land. Twenty years later (2017), BC decided to stop completely its mining operations and filed its mining rehabilitation plan for review, which is currently pending at the Contingent Liability and Rehabilitation Fund Committee (CLRFC). Nonetheless, illegal small scale miners started to encroach in the area, treading the path of dangers, for the hope of extracting gold from the abandoned mining site.

Since then, small-scale mining has become the livelihood or main source of income of many Itoyons. The gold that they sell earn them as much as 8,000 per month – an amount they use to support their families, but by no means, can compensate the life that they risk every time they attempt to scour the old mining site for gold ores. Nevertheless, small-scale mining for Itoyon is everything, if they don't mine, they won't have anything to get them through the day. Some have even built shanties inside, and refused to leave the place.

Notoriously dangerous occupation

Small-scale or artisanal mining is a “notoriously dangerous occupation.” It ranks among the top occupations for related diseases and fatal accidents. Its operations are often unregulated, undertaken by subsistence miners who have no formal work and security arrangements. They lack the necessary knowledge and skills in mining and only use manual labor and simple implements. Small-scale miners acquire the skills on mining through years of experience.

“The moment I sat as Mayor of Itoyon, I ordered the stop of illegal small scale mining, but it was ignored,” said Mayor Victorio Palangdan. The small-scale miners said that BC did not prevent them from entering the site, and in fact, claim that they were given permission by the mining company to do artisanal mining.

Benguet Corporation's press release on their website, says otherwise. BC denies giving permission to small-scale miners to mine the area. It also claims that efforts to rid the mining site of small-scale mining encroachers

With winds packing at 200 kph and gusts of over 300 kph, Typhoon Ompong pinned down provinces in Northern Luzon, ravaging fields and communities, and leaving thousands of people in great anguish over the lost of their properties, livelihood, and loved ones. Itoyon was one of the towns with an ungrateful fate.

have carried out since 2000. But the miners were persistent until now.

There are more than 10,000 unregulated small scale miners who operate in Itoyon. Only ten small-scale mining associations, with about 500 members, were given contracts by the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board. This means that the thousands other miners are illegal. Many are not native of the area; they are from other provinces, who migrated in the town to do mining.

What could have gone wrong?

The entire mining area, claimed to be owned by BC, has already been classified by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) as a geohazard and landslide prone area. The LGU was fully informed about it; that is why it issued order to vacate the place.

Mayor Palangdan clarified that days before Typhoon Ompong hit Northern Luzon, evacuations of residents in vulnerable areas of Benguet were conducted. “We did pre-emptive evacuation days before the landfall. I sent my policemen to have them evacuated but they ignored and laughed. Our warning just fell on deaf ears,” said the Mayor.

Refusing the LGUs directive, the miners and their families chose to stay inside the old bunkhouse of BC. The bunkhouse, for them, was the safest place for any storm, as it has been their shelter for the past years. Yet, Ompong is much stronger than what they thought it is.

According to MGB Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR) Director Fay Apil, the town's average rainfall every September is about 500 millimeters (mm) only. During Typhoon Ompong, 900 mm rainfall was recorded in just 12 hours. The heavy outpour of the rain and the very strong gush winds saturated the area's thick soil cover, causing the enormous landslide. The landslide covered the BMC's bunkhouse and buried alive over 70 people.

Preventive measures ordered

The landslide incident that killed at least 70 people in Itoyon led Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to stop all mining operations in CAR.

“We ask our small scale miners to cooperate and stop all small scale mining activities in the region, while we wait for the approval and proclamation of *Minahang Bayan* applications,” Secretary Cimatu said in a press briefing.

Secretary Cimatu made a directive to MGB to prioritize and make a careful review of *Minahang Bayan* applications. He wants stricter rule for identifying mining areas. He wants to ensure the welfare of the miners – that none of them would be allowed to live and operate in areas prone to natural disasters.

Meanwhile, aware that the region's recovery from the tragic disaster would take time, Secretary Cimatu assured the victims of immediate assistance. Aside from the livelihood assistance that will be provided by other national agencies, the DENR through the NGP's forest protection program will give alternative livelihood to the victims.

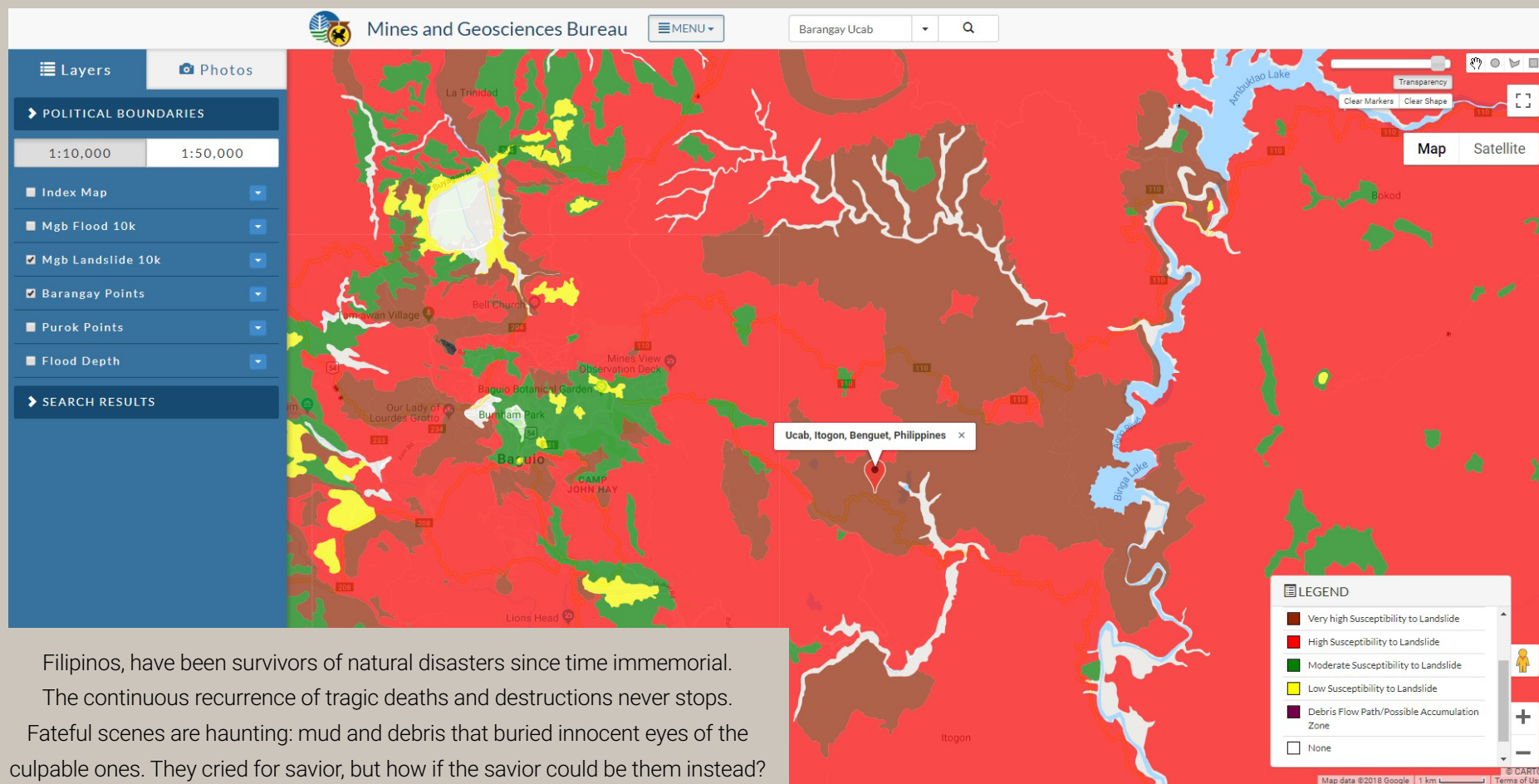
“What happened in Itoyon is a wake-up call to all of us. Strong typhoons always pose great uncertainty and danger that is why people need to consider the worst-case-scenario and heed to the warnings and instructions of experts and authorities. It has happened, and it can happen again,” the Secretary warned.

A landslide in Cebu also

Days after the Itoyon landslide, a community in Sitio Savindulan of Brgy. Tinaan, near a quarry site in Naga City, Cebu, also suffered a huge landslide. Sixty-five (65) people were killed in the unprecedented landslide. Secretary Roy Cimatu deployed a team from the MGB to conduct and make an assessment of the area. He relieved four officials of MGB while assessment is being conducted. Residents were ordered to force evacuate 1 kilometer away from the landslide area and were given immediate assistance. Secretary Cimatu also banned the quarry operations in the whole of Naga City, Cebu, until assessment is completed. He also imposed adoption of the geohazard map developed by the MGB among LGUs to avoid future incidence.



Landslide area in Itoyon, Benguet (Photo Source: DENR-CAR)



Screenshot of a geo-hazard scale mapping system (1:10,000) in MGB website

Filipinos, have been survivors of natural disasters since time immemorial. The continuous recurrence of tragic deaths and destructions never stops. Fateful scenes are haunting: mud and debris that buried innocent eyes of the culpable ones. They cried for savior, but how if the savior could be them instead?

USE OF GEOHAZARD MAP: AN ISSUE OF NEGLIGENCE AND IGNORANCE

by: Dianne Segunial

A part of denuded mountain slope collapsed during the surge of Typhoon Ompong (international name, Mangkhut) in the Philippines. At least 79 were reported dead in Itogon, Benguet, buried alive by a huge landslide.

In the geohazard map, produced by the Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau (MGB), 10 provinces have the highest percentage of landslide hazards. They are Kalinga with 59.61%; Quirino, 61.22%; Apayao, 65.03%; Aurora, 66.24%; Ifugao, 66.59%; Davao Oriental, 68.66%; Nueva Vizcaya, 73.27%; Abra, 73.83%; Mountain Province, 74.73%; and Benguet with the highest percentage of 85.37%.

Considering what happened in Itogon, Benguet, it seems that the lessons in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) have not been quite clear and absorbed by many Filipinos. Tragic incidents of landslides claiming lives continue to happen, despite DRRM warnings and existing geohazard maps.

In 2009, Typhoon Pepeng left Cordillera Region with misery as it caused more than 40 landslides. It was quite inauspicious for the people not to notice the very visible warning sign in Little Kabungan that says landslide risk. It was the total disregard of the people to the warnings that claimed 400 lives when Typhoon Pepeng's 12-hour continuous rainfall resulted to landslides.

It was because of such geologic tragic events that the government worked on the completion and assessment of all 1,634 cities and municipalities in the Philippines to produce a central geohazard map. A budget of Php 400 million was allotted for its completion in year 2014, but as early as 2011, in the early stage of geohazard mapping, the scale of 1:50,000 was presented and the warning sign in Little Kibungan was an outcome of that initial scale.

In 2011, Typhoon "Sendong" struck upstream of

Cagayan de Oro (CDO) with its exceeding rainfall. A similar picture of devastated mountainside collapsing due to the strong typhoon took over the news. Despite MGB's seminars on geohazard maps with the barangays in Cagayan de Oro, 1,472 human fatalities, 1,074 missing people, and 1,748 injured were still registered in International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies records.

Geohazard maps

Measuring the risks and assessing 1,634 cities and towns to generate a detailed geohazard map was not a simple and easy task. The MGB formed teams of geologists and deployed out in the country's 15 regions. There were regions that were difficult to assess than the others. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARRM) for instance, had been a challenge to many geologists. Negotiations with the Moro-Islamic Liberation Front, Moro National Liberation Front, and the Abu Sayyaf, had to be negotiated.

The increasing number of landslides and flashfloods that claim thousands of human lives and cost hundreds of million pesos economic loss due to the continuous visit of super-typhoons led the DENR through the MGB to develop and produce a geohazard map. The scale of 1:50,000 geohazard map was successfully completed, but it was recently magnified five times by the 1:10,000 scale. This wide scale was developed due to the urgency for more detailed map as continuous visit of super-typhoons and increasing number of landslides are being experienced.

Under the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, local government units (LGUs), using the geohazard map as basis, are responsible for evacuating individuals and families residing in flood and landslide-prone areas

and secure a safe ground to ensure their safety during crisis such as natural disasters.

As the latest issue about the Itogon landslide fills the media and the public, Itogon Mayor Victor Palangdan insisted that they urged the villagers to evacuate before the onslaught of the typhoon. However, despite their warnings and prepared vehicles for the evacuation, the villagers refused to heed and remained in their areas, Palangdan said.

It is not for the government to escape blame or accountability because it may have some flaws also or shortcomings in enforcing the DRRM law, especially the responsibility of obliging or forcing the people to evacuate; however, if only the people believed and took heed on the warnings of the LGUs about the information on the geohazard map, they could still be alive today.

Geohazard maps have been produced to warn the public and Local Government Units (LGU) of the risk that they may encounter within their places. Tens of thousand copies of geohazard maps along with manuals and other information materials have been distributed by MGB to LGUs. It has also been conducting various seminars and workshops to local government officials and school teachers, teaching them the proper use of the maps and disaster awareness and preparedness.

The geohazard map has been made even better and easier for the public to access through the Internet. [The geohazard map is accessible and downloadable on the following websites: DENR (www.denr.gov.ph), MGB (www.mgb.gov.ph), Philippine Information Agency (www.pia.gov.ph), and Environmental Science for Social Change (www.essc.org.ph)]

Hard to accept, but the problem on DRRM could really be an issue of negligence and ignorance.

DENR-ERDB ECOTOURISM TRACKING TOOL: KEY TO PREVENT ANOTHER BORACAY-LIKE CRISIS IN THE FUTURE

by: Martina R. Constantino

The biggest challenge in the history of ecotourism in the country could probably be marked on April 21, 2018 – the day when Boracay Island, the country's premiere ecotourism destination, was closed to local and foreign tourists. Its closure, the result of many years of neglect and abuse of environment and natural resources, makes some people wonder whether ecotourism sites, as many claim they are, are truly ecotourism areas as far as ecotourism principles are concerned, or are they only using the word "ecotourism" as tagline to add value and be patronized.

Ecotourism's principle of sustainability, underscored in the definition of DENR, is anchored on its capacity to foster community participation in the management of ENR; economic benefits for the enrichment of host community, culture and indigenous knowledge and practices; environmental education and ethics; and satisfaction of visitors. However, with the fate that many ecotourism sites are heading (e.g. Panglao Island in Bohol, Coron and El Nido in Palawan, and Siargao), it is quite conclusive that there is something wrong with the way ecotourism operates in the country.

Secretary Cimatu believes that "lack of guidelines, standards, and certification mechanism as an ecotourism area" is one reason why Boracay suffered from environmental degradation.

The concept of ecotourism was embraced by tourism as its way of protecting nature. However, many tourism sites were not conscious of ecotourism principles – that they should put attention on development dimensions other than economic; having practical assessment and monitoring of performance to ensure that social, cultural, and environmental concerns are also considered.

This was affirmed by Dr. Henry A. Adornado, former Director of Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), now Regional Executive Director of Region IV-B (MIMAROPA) when he said that many want to ride on the popularity of ecotourism, but not conscious of its social, cultural, and environmental preconditions.

Ma. Lourdes Reyes, Supervising Science Research Specialist of ERDB is bothered by this development and said, "Many claims to be ecotourism sites but do not adhere on the principles of ecotourism. This is alarming and we have to act on it before it is too late."

The ERDB, aware of this predicament has conceptualized and developed the "Ecotourism Tracking Tool in Monitoring and Evaluation of Ecotourism Sites or Projects in the Philippines." In consultation with the Department of Tourism (DOT), Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), Forest Management Bureau, Department of Science and Technology, and University of the Philippines Los Baños – College of Forestry and Natural Resources, it conducted a study in 2013 to 2014 in order to provide a quality certification system that sets standards and parameters for the effective management of ecotourism sites.

Ecotourism Tracking Tool in Monitoring and Evaluation of Ecotourism Sites

The Ecotourism Tracking Tool (ETT) is a monitoring/tracking document developed to monitor and evaluate ecotourism sites and projects in the country. Its goal is to standardize the monitoring and evaluation of ecotourism sites and ensure that they adhere to ecotourism principle of sustainable development. The set of standards and parameters used to monitor and evaluate ecotourism sites include policies, operation and management, socio-cultural, ecotourism products and services, economic benefits, financing/enterprise building, bioecological, and facilities. These criteria want to ensure that community participation in the management of ENR; economic

benefits for the enrichment of host community; culture and indigenous knowledge and practices; environmental education and ethics; and satisfaction of visitors are fostered to attain sustainable development of ecotourism areas.

Its intended users include government agencies such as DOT, DENR, and LGUs; private and business sectors; and the local communities affected and benefiting from the ecotourism activities or projects. These users must answer and rate every criterion of all eight parameters, compute for the final rating, then give the corresponding qualitative interpretation as follows:

- 91% to 100% - High Ecotourism Adherence (Platinum Certification)
- 81% to 90% - Moderate Ecotourism Adherence (Gold Certification)
- 71% to 80% - Fair Ecotourism Adherence (Silver Certification)
- 61% to 70% - Low Ecotourism Adherence (Bronze Certification)
- 51% to 60% - Candidate Ecotourism Project

To qualify as an Ecotourism Enterprise or higher, all eight parameters must be satisfied. Therefore in cases when a Sub Score under at least one parameter totaled 0, the site/project will automatically not qualify.

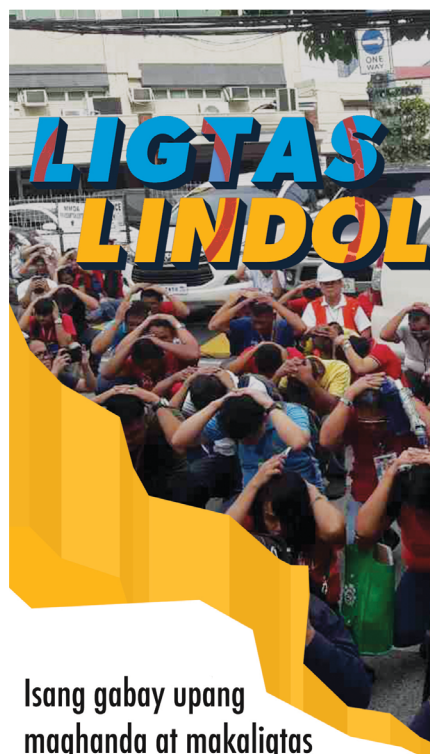
The ERDB Chief has high hopes for the newly launched ecotourism tracking tool - that it will help systematize the protection and conservation of ecotourism destinations prone to environmental degradation and prevent another Boracay-like crisis in the future.

Reyes, on the other hand, is optimistic that the use of this tracking tool to ensure sustainable tourism will make way for more policies and laws that will further enhance ecotourism management in the country.



Ecotourism sites in Puerto Princesa, and Bulusan, and Tibolo Cultural Village

At the moment, the creation of a joint memorandum with DOT requiring the use of this tracking tool is underway. The DENR-ERDB has distributed copies of the manual to various government offices, protected area managers, and local government units. Copies are also available at DENR-ERDB and downloadable for free at the ERDB website (erdb.denr.gov.ph).



Isang gabay upang maghanda at makaligtas sa LINDOL na

'THE BIG ONE'



ANG 'BIG ONE'

Dahil sa ating lokasyon, may malaking banta ng lindol na tinatawag na "The Big One" na labis na makaapekto sa Greater Metro Manila Area na direktang nasa ibabaw ng West Valley Fault.

Ang West Valley Fault ay bitak ng lupa sa ilalim na may habang 100 kilometro na tumatagos sa anim na lungsod sa Metro Manila at mga karatig-probinsya.



Ayon sa PhiVolcs, posibleng dahil sa pagbagsak ng mga tulay, pagkasira ng mga kalsada at gusali, mahihirapan ang mga Emergency Responders na kaagarang tumugon. Dahil dito, kailangang parating nakahanda ang lahat ng tahanan.

EMERGENCY HOTLINES

Naririto ang hotlines ng mga ahensya na maaaring tawagan kapag may emergency o krisis:

DILG (PNP)	911 117 0917-847-5757
Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP)	911 426-0219 426-3812 426-0246
Red Cross	143
Philippine Coast Guard	527-3877 0917-724-3682 0928-258-6841
Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA)	136
Office of Civil Defense (OCD)	911-1406 912-3046 912-2665 912-5668

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EAS CONGRESS 2018: CRUISING TOWARDS THE FUTURE OF HEALTHY OCEANS, PEOPLE, AND ECONOMIES

by: Janvin Brua

The East Asian Seas (EAS) region's coastal and marine resources are among the richest and most diverse in the world. Their contributions bear significant imprint to the Region's social and economic development. Yet, in spite of their significance, serious threats continue to haunt the Region's coasts and seas. Erosion and siltation, logging and mining operations, overfishing, blast fishing in coral reefs, conversion of mangrove forests, pollution, and climate change are among the obvious reasons for their continued degradation.

The need for a common understanding, appreciation of existing concerns, recognition of security, protection and sustainable management of coastal and marine resources, have led to the forging of a distinct kind of partnership and cooperation among coastal-endowed countries in the EAS Region.

In 2003, the EAS Congress was established as platform for shared responsibility and sustainable development of the Region's coasts and seas. A triennial event, the EAS Congress maintained its reputation as an intellectual melting pot for various oceans and seas-based fora. Knowledge sharing, collaborative actions, and partnership building advance the Region's cooperation and commitments in achieving sustainable East Asian seas and oceans.

EAS Congress through the years

The first EAS Congress was held at Putrajaya, Malaysia in 2003. Through the signing of the Putrajaya Declaration by 12 Ministers from the Region, the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) was endorsed and adopted. The SDS-SEA provides a common platform for capacity building, strategic action, and cooperation for the sustainable development and management of the East Asian Seas.

The second EAS Congress held in PR China in 2006 saw the signing of Haikou Partnership Agreement by 11 State Partners and of Partnership Operating Arrangements by 12 Non-State Partners. This formally established the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) as the regional coordinating mechanism for implementation of SDS-SEA.

The 2009 EAS Congress, hosted by the Philippine Government, highlighted the signing of the Manila Declaration on strengthening the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) implementation for the sustainable development and climate change adaptation in the seas of East Asia Region. The Manila Declaration provided recognition to PEMSEA's international legal personality and brought light for the serious rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The EAS Congress 2012, convened in Changwon City, Republic of Korea, resulted in the signing of Changwon Declaration Toward an Ocean-Based Economy. The World Bank called it the "Blue Economy," which promoted the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.

The most recent EAS Congress 2015 was held in Da Nang City, Vietnam. It witnessed the signing of Da Nang Compact on the SDS-SEA 2015 by 11 Country Partners, which adopted the post -2015 strategic targets to implement SDS-SEA for 2016 to 2021. The SDS-SEA 2015 was updated to address the changing context in ocean governance, in light of new or amended UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

EAS Congress 2018

The EAS Congress 2018 takes place on November 27-30, 2018 at the Iloilo Convention Center, Iloilo

City, Philippines. With this year's theme, "25 Years of Partnerships for Healthy Oceans, People and Economies: Moving as One with the Global Ocean Agenda," the Congress hopes to develop better and stronger regional actions to help achieve the targets set in the UN SDGs, particularly those related to global ocean agenda.

The EAS Congress will showcase dynamic and engaging events. Its main features include International Conference and Environmental Exhibition, composed of Ocean talks (plenary sessions), SEA Exchanges (dialogues with partners), and Partnership Hubs (partner-led side events). The EAS Congress will also hold its Sixth Ministerial Forum, the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments Forum 2018, and the Fifth EAS Youth Forum.

The Philippines affiliation with the states of East Asian Region has led the country to be involved with SDS-SEA and adoption of ICM programs at the regional, national and local levels. Through the SDS-SEA and ICM programs, the country was able to implement innovative measures, utilize good technologies, adopt good management practices, and create investment opportunities to protect and sustain the country's marine and coastal resources.

"True to its commitment to conserve and protect the marine and coastal resources of the country and EAS Region, the Philippines is honored and privileged to host the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2018," said Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

BAGO LUMINDOL

• Siguraduhing ligtas ang pagkalagay ng mga mabibigat at mga nakabiting bagay.

• Pag-aralan ang "evacuation plan" sa inyong paaralan, opisina at sa inyong komunidad.

• Mag-ipon ng tubig na maiinom ng buong pamilya sa loob ng dalawang linggo.

Siguraduhing handa ang inyong "GO BAG" sa lahat ng oras.

GO BAG

Ang inyong Go Bag ay dapat mayroong mahahalagang pangangailangan gaya ng:

- Mga pagkaing hindi nasisira gaya ng mga de-lata
- Matibay na flashlight, de-bateriya o dynamo na radyo
- Ekstrang mga bateriya
- Fully-charged na cellphone at power banks
- First aid kit, mga gamit sa sanitasyon at personal na kalinisian
- Kumot
- Suplay ng gamot lalo na kung kayo ay nagme-maintenance
- Kopya ng inyong mahahalagang dokumento, emergency contact information, at ekstrang pera
- Tubig na maiinom ng buong pamilya sa loob ng tatlong araw

HABANG LUMILINDOL

Kung nasa loob ka ng tahanan o gusali, manatiling kalmado at gawin ang:



DUCK, COVER AND HOLD!

Yumuko at magtago sa ilalim ng matibay na mesa o muwebles at kumapit sa mga paa nito hanggang sa tumigil na ang pagyanig

• Umiwas sa mga bintangang salamin, mga aparador at mabibigat na gamit na maaaring mahulog

• Matapos ang pagyanig, agad na lumabas sa gusali at pumunta sa evacuation area

Kung nasa labas kayo nang mangyari ang pagyanig

• Lumayo sa mga gusali, poste ng ilaw, mga kawad o kable at anumang bagay na posibleng bumagsak.

• Kung nasa loob ng sasakyan, huminto at manatili sa loob hanggang tumigil ang pagyanig.

PAGKATAPOS LUMINDOL

• Pagkatapos ng lindol, alamin kung nagkaroon ka ng pinsala gayundin ang iyong mga kasamahan. Magbigay ng first aid kung kailangan.

• Mag-ingat sa mga basag na salamin at iba pang bagay na makakasugat.

• Magsuot ng matibay na sapatos para hindi masugatan ang inyong paa.

• Lumayo sa mga dalampasigan. Posibleng magkaroon ng tsunami matapos ang lindol.

• Posible ang pagkakaroon ng aftershocks o mga pagyanig, kaya manatiling kalmado at huwag bumalik sa loob ng gusali hanggang walang abiso na ligtas na ito.

• Tingnan ang mga linya ng tubig, gas at kuryente kung may sirang. Kung meroon, isarado agad ang switch o valve.

SOLO PARENT LEAVE

Itanong Mo Sa **p.p.**
Q & A

Q: WHO IS A SOLO PARENT?

A: A solo parent is one who is left alone with the responsibility of parenthood as a result of any of the following circumstances:

- woman who gives birth as a result of rape and other crimes against chastity
- death of spouse
- spouse is detained or is serving sentence for a criminal conviction for at least one year
- legal separation or de facto separation from spouse for at least one (1) year, as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the child
- declaration of nullity or annulment of marriage as decreed by the court or by a church as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the children
- abandonment of spouse for at least one (1) year
- unmarried mother/father who has preferred to keep and rear his/her child/children instead of having others care for them or give them up to a welfare institution
- person who solely provides parental care and support to a child or children
- a family member who assumes the responsibility of head of family as a result of the death, abandonment, disappearances or prolonged absence of the parents or solo parent.

Q: HOW CAN A SOLO PARENT BE ENTITLED TO PARENTAL LEAVE?

A: The solo parent may be entitled to parental leave when:

- He/She has obtained a Solo Parent Identification Card obtained from the Department of Social Welfare and Development
- He/She has rendered at least one (1) of service, whether continuous or broken.
- He/She has given advance notice to his/her supervisor on the period of leave
- His/Her child/children is of minor age

Q: HOW MANY DAYS MAY THE SOLO PARENT APPLY FOR PARENTAL LEAVE?

A: A total of seven (7) days every year shall be granted to any solo parent employee who has rendered service of at least one (1) year.

Q: IF UNUSED, DOES THE PARENTAL LEAVE PRIVILEGE ACCUMULATE OR CAN THESE BE COMMUTED?

A: No. If unused, it does not add to the employee's leave credits and is not convertible to cash.



DENR MEN & WOMEN BEHIND OPERATION "TYPHOON OMPONG" September 14-16, 2018

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NEW RULES FOR BORACAY'S CLEAN, SAFE, AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT

by: Fatima R. Leya

BORACAY GUIDELINES

To ensure that there will be no relapse following the island's successful rehabilitation, the BIATF had set strict guidelines for the establishments, locals, and tourists to follow. The said guidelines were crafted out of the Task Force's consultations with stakeholders, who raised valid concerns to ensure the island's clean, healthy, and orderly environment would be maintained even after the island reopens to the public.



The diving and water sports activities would be temporarily suspended. This was agreed upon so that the biodiversity assessment, currently being conducted in the island's marine resources would continue without disturbance. The numerous but barely regulated water activities of tourists are seen as one of the causes of coral damage in the island. With the imposed suspension, there will be more time for studies to assess the dos and don'ts for coral reef recovery.



The guidelines strictly impose a "no build zone" along the island's beach fronts. Following the demolition of temporary structures on the easement areas, tables and chairs, massage beds, beach umbrellas, and other structures at beach fronts are no longer allowed. **Parties are also prohibited within easement zone.** Because of such restrictions, tourists can now enjoy more spaces along the island's shores.



Entertainment or activities, which involve the use of fire and kerosene at the beachfront, are now prohibited.



The powdery-white sand, which the island is known for, has been greatly affected by such destructive activities. **Making sand castles will be regulated,** as this damages the sand and has become a business racket for some.



An island-wide smoking ban will be imposed, while the strict enforcement of law regarding wastewater discharge will continue. The establishments will have to abide to avoid cancellation of environmental permits.



A DENR Office will be installed in the island to ensure compliance of stakeholders. According to Secretary Roy Cimatu, **environmental patrollers will be deployed to conduct hourly monitoring and surveys.** Crackdown of violators of the island's rules and guidelines will be made hand in hand with the Philippine National Police (PNP) to maintain clean, healthy, and orderly environment.

It was six months ago when President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the closure of Boracay. Within those months, the Boracay Interagency Task Force (BIATF) has gone through the painstaking task of rehabilitation and restoration, transforming Boracay back as a "paradise" it once was. But there still remains a lot of work to do.

Aware of this, the BIATF has declared that the unveiling of Boracay on October 26, 2018 is just a "soft opening" as the island's rehabilitation works are still far from over. Before the much anticipated date, the task force laid down a plan to ensure the safety and comfort of tourists that will be visiting the island. Tourists can expect major changes, from coming in-and-out of the island to enjoying its famous beaches.

No more waiting time in ports

"Cagban jetty port will have additional lines to facilitate influx of tourists," according to DENR Undersecretary Sherwin Rigor. The idea is to organize tourist arrivals starting from Caticlan jetty port. Four lines will be opened with each assigned to cater local and foreign tourists, residents, and workers. With these additional lines, waiting time, which is the usual cause of travel delays, will be avoided.

"Improvements in Cagban Port were also made. Some buildings near the port have been removed to extend its capacity to hold tourists," Usec. Rigor added. It is also expected that the flow of tourists is going to be smooth with the designation of appropriate exit and entry points within the port.

Appropriate stops for vehicles

Aside from the newly constructed circumferential road, which will divert vehicles for logistics from plying the main road, the designation of 16 stops will also ease traffic congestion on the main road.

"Vehicles stopping just anywhere is one cause of traffic along the main road," said Undersecretary Rigor. "The task force wants the island to be walkable; thus, other than the designated stops for vehicles, sidewalks will be provided for locals and tourists," he said.

E-trikes instead of trikes

As part of the move to make Boracay more environment-friendly, tricycles run by diesel and gasoline will be replaced by e-tricycles. Aside from air pollution, traffic congestion will be avoided by the decommissioning of numerous unregulated tricycles.

The Department of Energy has donated 200 e-tricycles to Boracay. The e-tricycles will be run by an accredited operator, which will absorb existing tricycle drivers in the island. Apart from being a priority recipient of e-tricycles, drivers will also receive a payment for the salvage value of their replaced tricycles. Scheduled removal of old tricycles from the island has already been set by the LTRFB and DOTr.

Carrying capacity

The result of the study on the island's carrying capacity will now be applied in the opening of Boracay. Based on the carrying capacity assessment conducted by the University of the Philippines Los Baños and DENR Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), the island's overall carrying capacity is around 55,000. Currently, the island's population exceeds 15,000. According to Undersecretary Rigor, the island's population partly constitutes illegal settlers, mostly workers who built shanties in wetland areas. Most of these workers were already sent to their respective provinces, while some are subject for relocation in mainland Malay.

For tourists, only 19,000 are permitted to be in the island at any given day, while tourist arrival is pegged at 6,405, assuming their stay will only be for three days. To ensure that tourists will not exceed the set limit, the Department of Tourism will coordinate with hotels, resorts, and the airlines to regulate arrival of tourists in Boracay.

Strictly no littering

A viral Facebook post about litters left on the white sand beach during the island's dry run spur an outrage from the task force. In order to impose discipline among locals and tourists and maintain a garbage-free Boracay, the anti-littering law will be strictly enforced in partnership with the Compliant Association of Boracay (CAB). CAB volunteered to designate their own pollution officers who will be on the lookout for litterbugs. Any concerned citizen can also report violators so that appropriate penalties can be imposed.

Moreover, Cebu Pacific has donated trash bins for distribution around Boracay in support to the island's waste-free initiative and sustainable tourism development.