

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

01 DEC 2016

DATE : \_\_\_\_\_

DAY : Thursday

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Neda report shows 'negligible' contribution of mining to GDP

By CAI U. ORDINARIO [@cuo\\_bm](#)

**M**INING and quarrying contributed less than a percent of the country's GDP between 2000 and 2015, according to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Based on the Mineral Asset Accounts of the Philippines, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto M. Pernia said the mining sector only contributed 0.7 percent of GDP and 5.6 percent of total exports.

Pernia added the sector has only been able to generate an average of 236,400 jobs annually between 2011 and 2015.

"Considering its small contribution to the economy and the contentious debate on mining and its links with issues on land-use, environment and social accept-

# 0.7%

**The total contribution of mining sector to GDP from period covering 2000 to 2015**

ability, the question for us is: How can we harness the full potential of the country's mineral resources

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

One of the ways to maximize the sector, he added, will begin with the release of the Philippines Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (Phil-WAVES) data next year.

Phil-WAVES, which began in 2013, aims to create macroeconomic indicators and develop the national accounts and ecosystem accounts. This will assist in evidence-based decision-making.

Pernia said this will help develop sound and effective policies, especially in the environmental sector.

"The proliferation of illegal small-scale mining activities that adopt destructive mining practices and standards, the limited number of processing plants to create added value to our mineral products, and the lack of an efficient revenue collection and distribution that will ensure the equitable and timely distribution of the mining income to legitimate beneficiaries," he said.

Earlier, Filipino taxpayers extended a total of P39.74 billion worth of tax perks to businesses in 2013, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Based on the preliminary results of the PSA's 2013 Annual Survey of Philippine Business and Industry, this was a 5.8-percent decline, from P42.19 billion in 2010.

The highest subsidy was extended to electricity, gas, steam and air-conditioning supply firms at P9.16 billion, or 23 percent of the total.

This was followed by professional, scientific and technical activities, which received the second-biggest amount of subsidy of 21.3 percent, or P8.45 billion of the total.

Subsidies provided to financial and insurance activities and agriculture, forestry and fishing were 16 percent to P6.38 billion and 15.8 percent to P6.29 billion, respectively.

The subsidies extended to agriculture posted the largest increase of P5.68 billion, from P619.3 million in 2010.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Miner investing \$250M to put up steel plant

By Amy R. Remo  
@amyremoINQ

A mining firm plans to invest \$250 million (equivalent to about P12.5 billion at the current exchange rate) to put up a steel-manufacturing project in Leyte, a move that will enable the Philippines to inch closer to its goal of becoming an emerging industrialized nation.

Charito B. Plaza, director general of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza), disclosed that Nicua Corp.

planned to produce from at least four mining sites in Leyte a total of 6.4 million metric tons of magnetite concentrate, which would then be processed to produce 3 million tons of steel and 27,000 tons of vanadium a year.

They just presented last week their proposed steel industry that they'll put up in Leyte because they have the abundance in iron there. Majority of the raw materials needed in manufacturing steel is iron, then chromite and nickel, which is al-

so abundant in (the Caraga) region. Once we develop the steel industry, it will propel our economy and of course industrialization because steel is needed in everything," Plaza explained in a briefing Monday night.

Based on what was presented to Plaza, Nicua's planned steel project is expected to employ 4,000 workers and inject more than \$5 billion annually into the economy at full operations.

In its project brief, Nicua noted that the country would,

for the first time in its history, become a producer and exporter of steel, steel alloys and steel products and join the ranks of the emerging industrialized nations.

The project, it added, would be majority owned and managed by Filipinos and provide a major boost to the economically depressed region of the Eastern Visayas and have a significant flow on effect to the rest of the country.

Being self sufficient in steel, national foreign exchange sav-

ings would exceed \$1.5 billion annually, it said.

Its proponents noted that the proposed steel project would have a considerable economic advantage. For one, it would benefit from the availability of nearby cheap and abundant geothermal power and low cost production of iron ore in the vicinity. Also, the project was expected to generate substantial secondary industries, the brief stated.

According to Plaza, the proposed project would help offset

the \$3 billion worth of steel being imported by the country yearly.

"Peza is going to assist (the company) all the way. We will put up a technical working group because steel is a basic (raw material). (Such a project) is one of the priorities of Peza," she said.

Nicua has been producing magnetite, which is used for iron production, from its sites in MacArthur and Javier in Leyte since 2010. Its production is exported to China. INQ

# THE STANDARD

01 DEC 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

32

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Sand miner eyes Leyte steel mill

By Othel V. Campos

**C**HINESE black sand miner Nicua Mining Corp. has proposed to put up a \$250-million iron-ore processing facility in Leyte to help develop the Philippine steel industry.

The mining firm's decision came at a time when the Philippines' and China's economic ties started warming up with a whole package of investments and financial assistance promised by China to the Philippine

government.

Nicua in a recent meeting with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority stressed the benefits of having a strong steel industry, especially in the "depressed region of Eastern Visayas."

"We will be creating a technical working group that will identify the required assistance this company will need. Once we have developed our steel industry, it will propel our economy towards industrialization," said Peza director-general Charito Plaza.

A black sand or magnetite sand miner, Nicua proposed to utilize 6.4 million metric tons of its mining output in Cebu to produce 3 million MT of steel and 27,000 MT of vanadium, a chemical ele-

ment used as base for steel alloy to produce hi-speed tool steel for aircraft and jets.

Using heat from the kilns and electric arc furnace, the company is eyeing to produce as much as 90 megawatts of power to stave off its power requirement of 210 MW that will be sourced from geothermal power plants in Leyte.

"Because of the cheap geothermal power, the steel produced will be in the lowest quartile of the world steel price," the com-

pany said in a presentation.

The Chinese company said the project could inject more than \$5 billion annually into the economy and reduce the country's growing steel importation, now valued at \$3 billion yearly.

The company said about \$1.5 billion in foreign exchange savings would be generated once a national steel industry was established.

Employment is seen to grow from an initial 3,000 to over 4,000 including facility staff and

security people.

Nicua said the steel company would be majority Filipino-owned with the minority shares held by the Chinese businessmen.

Nicua mines magnetite sand or magnetite iron ore crystals from the rice lands converted as mining areas in Leyte for export to China.

The Environment Department suspended its mining license in 2012 after two fish kill incidents in nearby Lake Bito were traced from its operations.

# Coal plants under tight DENR watch

By TARAYAP

ILOILO CITY - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) stressed it will regularly check on the two companies operating

coal-fired power plants in Panay for environmental compliance.

"There will be strict monitoring," DENR Western Visayas Regional Director Jim Sampula told Manila Bulletin.

Last November 28, President Rodrigo Duterte led the ceremonial inauguration at Malacañang for the 135-megawatt plant of Panay Conception Power Corp. (PCPC) in Concepcion town, Iloilo.

## 'No more open dumpsites in Cavite by 2017'

By ANTHONY G. [REDACTED]

TRECE MARTIRES CITY, Cavite—The provincial government of Cavite warned that local government units (LGUs) will be sanctioned if open dumpsites are not shut down by next year.

Engr. Rolinio P. Pozas, Provincial Government-Environment and Natural Resources Office (PG-ENRO) head, said that administrative charges, among others, await officials of LGUs for non-compliance with the solid waste management law.

The existence of dumpsites in Cavite province has been a ticklish issue for years.

Cavite does not have its own landfill area. Pozas said that the province relies on the landfill areas of neighboring Laguna province.

Open dumpsites are illegal under the law. Dumpsites are under the watch of the LGUs.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), along with the Ombudsman and Commission on Audit (COA), are taking actions against non-complying LGUs.

Pozas said that the concerned LGUs have at least 30 days to comply with the provisions of RA 9003 and their own submitted solid waste management plan.

"We see that by January 2017, there will be no more open dumpsites with the actions being taken by all concerned," Pozas said.

Cavite is the country's most populous province with over four million residents.

## Pasig River: Postcards from the future

THE Pasig River should be considered a national cultural heritage, as well as an important waterfront development with a highly efficient water transit system. Since the 16th century, the Pasig and its tributaries were the site of the settlements of those Filipinos of the Tagalog culture (*Taga-ilog*). It also facilitated the direct trade between the Tagalogs and the Kapampaangans in Pampanga (Pampang, meaning by the riverbanks).

In his book, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society*, William Henry Scott wrote that the ancient Filipinos traveled by boat not on wheels.

The river network systems and tributaries of the Pasig River are vast and expansive. Through the Pasig River, one can travel from Laguna Lake all the way out to Manila Bay, and even reach the innermost cities in the Pampanga River delta out in the Candaba wetlands.

In other cities of the world such as Dubai and the rest of the United Arab Emirates, waterfronts are valued so highly that they are considered prime real estate. Water transport in such cities as Singapore, New York and Venice are an important mode of transportation.

In 1905, Daniel Burnham created the City Beautiful plan for Manila, in which he prioritized the pedestrian over the horse-drawn carriage, and the utilization of the waterways. The plan called for regaining the luster and use of the rivers and esteros of Manila. Burnham saw Venice, Paris and Naples in the Pasig River, Binondo Canal, Manila Bay, and the other waterways. Riverbanks, Burnham wrote, "will be created with shaded drives".

The Pasig River alone, excluding the other connecting rivers, tributaries and esteros, is 27 kilometers long. It is seven times longer than the famed



FELINO A. PALAFOX, JR.

### The decline of the river

Factories, houses and other developments treat the waterfront as the "back of the house," dumping toxic wastes in the river and eventually killing marine life. The river is nowhere close to the paintings and pictures of life by Pasig of old preserved in museums and galleries. Today, it is a grave reminder of the years of abuse of an environmental treasure.

In the past few years, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission has intensified its drive to clean up the river, and there are few successes such as the revival of the Estero de Paco. But generally, the revival of the river has proven to be challenging because of biological issues, and constant human abuse of the river. Those who live in the many informal settlements by the river, and because of a general lack of sewerage infrastructure, continually dump polluted or contaminated water in the Pasig.

### Issues on informal settlers

Every river rehabilitation plan has proposed the resettlement of informal settlers, but every one of them are always confronted with the challenge of finding an appropriate relocation site for them, convincing the informal settlers to move and settle in the new area. Informal settlers move out of the resettlement areas because of inadequate services, and the distance to their place of work. What if, aside

somewhere far, the surrounding areas of the site of their informal settlements were to be developed into a low- to medium-rise urban housing, taking into consideration the 10-meter easement from the river? In turn, these informal settlers would help in cleaning and rehabilitating the Pasig River, and in keeping watch

### Nearby manufacturing plants

Japan, China, and Malaysia have also suffered from polluted rivers, with manufacturing plants in the river areas being a major contributor to the mess. These plants directly dumped their chemical wastes and raw sewage onto the rivers. Japan and Singapore successfully implemented the relocation of these plants far from the rivers.

But relocating is not a simple matter. The local government units can set a deadline for the relocating of the plants, or they can allow the plants to stay but create stricter zoning regulations. The sewage water from these plants should be treated before returning it to the river.

### Raw sewage in Pasig River

The conventional way of solving the issue of sewage pipes directly leading into the Pasig River is to open up the roads and fix the sewage networks. Prefabricated concrete slabs can also be used to make the construction faster, since road constructions in the Philippines take a very long time to complete. Another recommendation is to distribute water treatment plants along the river. The Pasig River flows through the cities of Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati, Pasig, and Taguig, yet the water treatment plants

area of the river.

### Postcards from the future

In 1997, Palafox Associates created a rehabilitation master plan for the Pasig River as a consultant to the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC). The rehabilitation of the Pasig River preserves our identity as a people and as a nation. The vision is to transform a "back-of-the-house" garbage dump into a "front door" of development by increasing tourism, alleviating poverty, providing an alternative transportation system while preserving the country's natural resources.

To achieve this vision, Palafox Associates prepared a master plan with a three-fold approach and objectives: 1) integrate and update the sectoral development plans of government and non-government agencies; 2) identify urban renewal areas for riverbank areas on both sides of the river; and 3) address the matter of environment protection areas, inclusive of a 10-meter setback.

The study area along the Pasig River is a 138-hectare span from the Guadalupe Bridge to the Makati-Mandaluyong Bridge. Terminals that integrate different modes of transport such as bicycles, buses and trains will be strategically located in major centers near the river. Industrial and manufacturing plants fronting the river with expiring lease terms will be converted into mixed-use development as offices and residential and commercial sites. Parks, greens and open spaces will create a "breathing space," a setting ideal for leisurely walks. An esplanade is also provided for in the plan.

Within the 15-year time frame, the river should have been pulsating with life, with a past that is very much part of the present and a future

01 DEC 2016

# The Manila Times

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

B7

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## QC to build waste-to-energy project

THE Quezon City government has approved the development of an integrated waste-to-energy facility as a bold step to address the city's garbage problem, according to the office of Mayor Herbert Bautista.

The go-signal came after the 38-member City Council gave Bautista the authority to forge a joint venture agreement with the private sector for the development of the city's own waste-to-energy plant, which the Mayor earlier described as vital in the city's effort to avert a possible crisis in waste management with the impending closure of the landfill facility in Payatas in three years.

As provided under a resolution approved by the City Council, the city government shall ensure that the project configuration of the proposed WTE facility is compliant with the required laws and regulations including but not limited to the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000; Clean Air Act; Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Act; Renewable Energy Act of 2008; and guidelines governing the establishment and operation of waste-to-energy technologies for municipal solid wastes.

Bautista has already convened the city's Public Private Partnership (PPP) Selection Committee, which has been tasked to oversee the pre-selection and selection of private sector proponents for PPP projects, with solid waste management as one of the areas identified by the committee and as one of the projects that will be pursued by the city through PPP.

If plans do not miscarry, the Mayor said, the city government expects to earn additional revenue as the electricity generated from the soon to be developed waste-to-energy facility can be sold to electric companies.

Bautista said the city government is expecting to generate 30 to 35 megawatts of power from the city's new energy source.

Savings that can be derived from the sale of power or electricity will be used by the city government to fund the construction of additional school buildings, health centers, hospitals and multi-purpose halls, he added.

Bautista also expects a reduction in the electrical consumption of city government-owned facilities and properties with the development of the city's new energy source.

The city government currently spends P1 billion annually for solid waste management, which includes hauling services, post-closure care and maintenance of the Payatas controlled disposal facility, special operations, and toxic/hazardous waste collection, treatment and disposal.

Quezon City generates about 2,000 to 3,000 tons of garbage daily.



## QC cuts garbage hauling expenses

OF all the cities in Metro Manila, Quezon City made the biggest cut in cutting expenses for garbage collection and hauling last year - from P1.014 billion in 2014 to P768.3 million in 2015.

Based on the audit report of the Commission on Audit (COA), the city cut its expenses on trash collection by 24.2 percent.

The city spent P755.26 million in 2009, P828.71 million in 2010 and P920.76 million in 2011. It paid P903,715,477 in 2012 and P994,590,354 in 2013.

Quezon City was a recipient of the Seal of Good Housekeeping in recognition of its solid waste management practices. In 2014, it won the National Environmental Compliance Audit.

The city implemented waste-reduction initiatives through "grass-

roots" approaches through the Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department (EPWMD). It introduced the city hall waste segregation program, materials recovery facility and held solid waste management summit for officers of barangay (villages) and Homeowners Associations, Barangay Recyclable Trading and an ordinance on plastic bag reduction.

San Juan City reduced its expenses for environment/sanitary services from P72.3 million in 2014 to P65.6 million in 2015.

It is followed by Malabon City which spent only P100.8 million for such services last year compared to P104.1 million in 2014, and Mandaluyong City which spent only P222.7 million in 2015 from P226.5 million in 2014.

MA. REINA LEANNE C. TOLENTINO

# INQUIRER

01 DEC 2016  
DATE

✓  
UPPER HALF

A-18  
PAGE

✓  
LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

REDUCING WASTE

## PAMPANGA STUDENTS BUILD 'BOTTLE SCHOOL'

By Tonette Orejas  
@torejasINQ

LUBAO, PAMPANGA—About 1,800 students at the San Pablo II National High School here have pooled together 9,000 PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles filled with shredded plastic wrappers.

"Eco-bricks" are how they call now the bottles that used to contain 250 to 500 ml of water, soda or juices. They have also stockpiled hundreds of 1.5-liter bottles.

After collecting the bottles for three weeks, they are out to embark on what may possibly be a feat or a model for Pampanga province and the rest of

the country.

"They're building a 'bottle school,'" said Olivia Ichan, the school principal whose students come from 15 villages here.

The structure is patterned after the Guatemalan model (HugtForward) bottle schools, according to lawyer Vivian Dabu, executive director of Kapampangan Manalakaran Inc. (Kamai), a nongovernment organization.

Dabu said the eco-bricks are going to be arranged and sandwiched in wire mesh to fill walls and doors.

The bottom of 1.5-liter bottles are to be cut and placed upside down on wet cement as

floor tiles. The body of the bottles will be cut in half to serve as roof tiles.

The structure, which is being built on a 20-square meter lot in the 2-hectare campus, is named the Center of Creativity. "We plan to exhibit our art works or other talents here," said Blessie Jayne Lampa, president of the supreme student government.

Construction period, which will take 15 days, will start today. This work-in-progress is done "bayanihan"-style. Each student is contributing 15 minutes of labor to the construction and will take turns helping maintain the place, Lampa said.

The village council has con-

tributed sand. Aside from providing a mason and a laborer, Kamai showed films produced by Conservation International and organized forums on climate change and solid waste management.

Ichan said the collection of PET bottles and plastic wrappers has reduced the school's garbage to less than three sacks weekly. Dried leaves are no longer brought to the town dumpsite but are used to enrich gardens.

PET bottles are reused as receptacles for growing vegetables or made into household items like chandeliers, brooms, vases, solar light bulbs and curtains. INQ

HOLIDAY RECYCLING

## IN RIZAL, CHRISTMAS TREES RISE FROM SCRAP

By Maricar Cinco  
@maricarcincoINQ

Plastic bottles, used cardboard and scrap from local junk shops end up as Christmas trees put on display in every town government compound in Rizal province.

In Tanay town, for instance, a 7.6-meter (25-foot) high tree made from recyclable materials collected and donated by more than 100 residents, was lit last week, said Carlos Inofre Jr., the town's environment officer.

"Truckloads of trash were brought in. It took us over a month to finish the tree," Inofre said.

Gov. Rebecca Ynares had required Rizal's 13 towns and one city to put up a Christmas tree made from recycled materials.

She said local governments have been undertaking the project since 2013, but only government employees were taking part in the activity.

"Now, even school children with their parents and [local prisoners] helped make the decors. Even the mayors themselves supervised [the activity]," Ynares said in a telephone interview.

The activity was part of a provincial government environmental project, launched in 2012, that included forest rehabilitation and solid waste management.

### History

Inofre said Tanay's Christmas tree comes with a twist.

"We incorporated Tanay's history since the 1500s. Like pictures of the town's first church or how the old municipal building looked like," he said.

He said they wanted the tree to become not only the town's central holiday attraction, but a

ing away school supplies, soil fertilizers and detergent to households that segregate their wastes.

"We're glad that people seem to have internalized our projects already when they volunteered to help make the Christmas tree," he said.

### Garbage truck

Antipolo City and Cainta town lit up their trees. Ynares had scheduled lighting ceremonies last week.

The local government with the best looking Christmas tree, Ynares said, would be given a fitting prize—garbage trucks.

Inofre said the campaign on proper waste disposal has translated to savings for the Tanay government.

He said the town spends only P1 million annually for garbage collection and disposal to landfills, lower than the expenses of nearby cities which shell out as much as P50 to P80 million.

When the holiday's over, where does the tree end up, then?

"Well, we can use them for festivals next year and the following Christmas season. In Tanay, *walang sayang* (nothing is wasted)," Inofre said. INQ



01 DEC 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B-6

PAGE

LOWER HALF

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Duterte threatens climate pact withdrawal

By GIOVANNI NILLES

President Duterte warned anew that he would withdraw from the global climate change agreement if funds totaling \$200 billion are mismanaged.

He reiterated that he would still allow coal power plants in the country because coal is still the cheapest fuel and, with a little help from modern technology, would be the safest.

"My misgivings on climate change – it was a Cabinet decision. It was not only me who decided, we voted on it. But if you really read... in between the lines, it said it's a binding agreement and all members must agree to it. Binding – you have to have exact obedience – but there are no sanctions for violations," Duterte said.

The Chief Executive believes that small and developing nations like the Philippines should be given enough leeway to develop economically before being pressed to bring

down carbon emissions to a minimum.

He expressed doubt that the pact, signed in Paris, would be able to achieve anything if nations like the US, China and Russia would fail to abide by the deal.

"The US was not a signatory to the Kyoto protocol... they did not sign and now they come up with an idiotic thing on climate change – well and good if it's good for the community," Duterte said.

The fund, he said, is not something to be given away whenever a country is hit by a calamity like what happened to Tacloban City during Super Typhoon Yolanda three years ago.

"You don't get paid because you suffer. It's a common fund you can borrow to start building whatever gadget and everything to promote in a minimal thing your carbon emission. So, that's the prob-

lem. Who gets the deal here?... You know how big nations go around international treaties," he added.

The President said the coun-

try still needs coal plants to power its economy, pointing to the inadequacy of electricity that on several occasions led to day-long outages.

Even with the coal plants, the country produces minimal carbon emission when compared to that of bigger and developed nations, he said.



01 DEC 2016  
DATE

✓  
UPPER HALF

B-6  
PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Phl braces for La Niña rains

By HELEN FLORES

The country faces above-normal rainfall from La Niña, a top official of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) warned Tuesday.

PAGASA deputy administrator Flaviana Hilario said the possible occurrence of a strong La Niña or El Niño (prolonged dry season) in the country was due to climate change.

"As of now we are experiencing a La Niña condition," she told reporters.

Hilario, who previously

headed the Climatology and Agrometeorology Division of PAGASA, said although the country's current condition could not be considered full-blown La Niña, it could also bring above-normal rainfall in the country, especially in the eastern side.

She said a full-blown La Niña event might be exper-

rienced later this year or in early 2017.

Hilario said for the past three months, the sea surface temperature (SST) in the Pacific was recorded at -0.5 degrees Celsius.

"For it to be considered a La Niña event, the SST in the Niño 3.4 region must be -0.5 for five consecutive months," Hilario said.

The country had experienced strong El Niño events in 2014 to 2015, causing billions of pesos worth of damage in the agriculture sector.

An official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), meanwhile, urged local government units to adopt the manual on retrofitting of irrigation systems developed through the Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Project (PhilCCAP).

PhilCCAP, a \$4.97-million project funded by the World Bank, is managed by the DENR together with the Department of Agriculture, PAGASA and the Climate Change Commission.

"The whole Philippines is

vulnerable to climate perils. So it's safe to say that almost all the irrigation systems in the country must be retrofitted. The upcoming irrigation projects should use this manual," Wilbur Dee of the DENR's Project Management Office said.

Dee also serves as project manager of PhilCCAP.

The six-year project aims to improve the country's agriculture and natural resources sectors' ability to adapt to the effects of climate change. The project will end this month.

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

# The potential cost of US climate inaction under Trump

**UNITED NATIONS, New York:** Although US President-elect Donald Trump has hinted he may be softening his stance on climate change, many are still uncertain of what lies ahead concerning climate action within and beyond the United States.

In a meeting with New York Times on Tuesday, the newly elected US President Donald Trump promised "an open mind" to climate change, contrary to prior statements in which he described it as a "hoax" created by China.

Despite acknowledging "some connectivity" between man-made emissions and climate change, Trump's controversial environmental policies still appear to remain on the table, sparking concerns across the globe.

Among Trump's environmental policies is the withdrawal of the US from the Paris climate agreement, the rollback of the Clean Power Plan which aims to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions, and the diversion of billions in payments to UN climate programs towards building up domestic coal, oil and gas industries.

On Tuesday, the President-elect also announced his intention to eliminate all climate change funding and research by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), an organisation that conducts comprehensive research on global warming. Bob Walker, who is appointed to lead the NASA transition team for the new administration, described NASA's climate work as too "politicized."

"The election of Donald Trump to the US presidency has raised acute concern...in relation to fu-



**A demonstration against the XL Pipeline. PHOTO BY IPS**

ture global action to curb climate change and help people in the poorest, most vulnerable countries cope with its devastating effects," Director of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) Andrew Norton told IPS.

Norton stressed the importance of the US to continue being a leader in the fight against climate change, including upholding its commitment to the Paris Agreement.

"Action by all countries is crucial to keeping temperature rise to within 1.5 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels to avoid severe damage to vulnerable countries and communities," Norton told IPS.

In an effort to keep global warming below 2 degrees celsius as agreed in the Paris Agreement, the U.S., which is the second biggest greenhouse gas emitter in the world, has pledged to decrease its emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

Global action against climate change is therefore only stronger with the US as part of it, said Norton.

Union of Concerned Scientists Director of Strategy and Policy Alden Meyer told IPS that despite uncertainty in the US role, the Paris Agreement will continue on as agreed.

"[Nations] wanted the US to stay in, but if they didn't, it wasn't going to stop them from moving forward...there's a sort of spirit of 'we're in this together and we're going to go ahead and know that the US will come back in at some point'," Meyer told IPS.

But it will be a tough road ahead to secure effective and inclusive climate policies at the federal level, Meyer added.

Soon after the election, the President-elect appointed climate change skeptic Myron Ebell, who urged the senate to reject the Paris Agreement, to lead the transition

at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a discouraging signal in the global struggle against climate change.

Both Meyer and Norton also pointed to the implications of a Trump administration on climate finance.

"There is no doubt that if the US canceled the climate finance it has pledged it would have a huge effect on the speed and ability for the poorest, most vulnerable countries to protect themselves from the worst effects of climate change," Norton said.

Of particular concern is the UN Green Climate Fund established during the 2010 UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun to address pressing climate mitigation and adaptation needs of developing countries. Developed nations agreed to mobilize \$100 billion per year by 2020 as part of the initiative.

The U.S. promised \$3 billion, representing approximately 30 percent of the total nearly \$10 billion pledged. So far, only \$500 million has been approved by Congress.

If the U.S. government cancels their payments, there will be a major gap in much needed climate finance for developing countries that often lack such resources.

"It would put some pressure on countries like Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Japan and others to step up to the plate and fill any hole created by that," Meyer told IPS.

The effects of such policies are not isolated to developing countries, but also have major implications domestically.

The most at risk is the Clean

p.2

# The Manila Times

01 DEC 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## The potential cost of US climate inaction under Trump

Power Plan, which aims to reduce carbon pollution from power plants. Coal burning is the U.S. top source of greenhouse gas emissions, and is responsible for a number of respiratory illnesses, premature deaths, and the contamination and destruction of essential natural resources.

Since 2010, almost one third of the country's coal plants have been phased out as part of the EPA initiative. These retirements are one of the main reasons that U.S. carbon emissions have declined 12 percent in a decade.

In his 100-day plan, President-elect Trump vowed to cancel all restrictions on US energy production, including those in the Clean Power Plan, in order to create millions of jobs. However, due to global trends in the expansion of renewable energy, coal and gas may soon be obsolete.

"If the US turns away from climate action, isolation from the developing global green economy could lock the US into technologies that will be increasingly redundant and fossil fuel energy that will be increasingly expensive in relation to renewable alternatives," said Norton.

Trump also plans to green light mega infrastructure projects such as the controversial Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines.

The 1,172-mile long Dakota Access Pipeline has been met with widespread criticism and resistance due to the reported destruction of sacred Native American sites, potential threat of water contamination, and fueling of climate change.

# DENR calls for meatless diet to fight climate change

BY MICAH YVANA M. VARDELEON

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has urged the public to avoid consuming meat as a way to fight climate change during the celebration of the second World Meatless Lunch (WML) Day in Quezon City.

Livestock is considered one of the most significant contributors to climate change.

More than half or 51 percent of greenhouse gases emitted worldwide are linked to livestock, said Raster Deocaris of Meatless Monday Philippines.

Data showed that the world



■ Livestock account for about 32 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, prompting environmental activists and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to call for people to adopt a meat-free diet to combat climate change. PHOTO BY MEATLESS MONDAYS

livestock population accounts for 32 billion tons of carbon dioxide annually. Reducing meat consumption would likewise reduce harmful emissions by reducing demand for livestock production.

However, hazards caused by livestock do not stop with the colorless gas emissions from cattle belching, fertilizer use, manure management, or disposal of crop residues.

It also drains water resources. About 250 gallons of water are needed for wheat for a loaf of bread while five thousand gallons of water are used for grains and hay for a pound of meat, according to several studies.

DENR Secretary Regina Lopez said that meatless does not mean tasteless.

She urged the public to consume more vegetables, more fruits, and

more water instead of meat.

"Diversify your food for the environment," added Deocaris.

"If you go this way, then you will be healthy. If everyone is healthy, we will have a much, much better country," said Lopez.

WML is a non-governmental organization launched in 2012 that aims the public to ditch meat and to eat plant-based proteins instead.



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Environmental groups urge stronger forestry law

PHILIPPINE environmental groups joined forces on November 28 and 29 to call for the passage of an enhanced forest law they say will provide a framework for ensuring Philippine forest resources are responsibly and sustainably managed by present and future generations.

Organized by Haribon Foundation and Tanggol Kalikasan, Inc., the policy review aimed to revisit existing forest management policies, revise the proposed bill, and develop strategies to galvanize concrete legislative action.

"Protecting natural forests is inevitable because of its ecological, social and economic importance. With our changing landscapes, the reason for hastening the passage of this law is no longer a simple matter on promoting proper utilization; it now becomes a race against time," said Louie Ignacio, Public Advocacy manager for Haribon.

In a previous meeting, the group has identified that no clear plans have yet been presented in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) agenda concerning forest management priorities.

To this day, the 1975 Revised Forestry Code remains as the legislative basis for forest management and utilization. While it was amended several times, it still addresses problems of exploitation rather than conservation.

Over more than two decades, many other related bills were filed at the lower house including House Bills 50, 907, 1104, 1171, 12123, 1423 and 1893.

An enhanced forest law

The Forest Resources Bill (FRR)

Unlike the Sustainable Forest Management Bill (HB 3580) that is focused on production forests and logging, the FRB seeks to put into light the need to ensure that the next generations will continue to benefit from our forests for many years to come.

During the bill review, Maria Belinda de la Paz, Haribon, Chief Operating Officer, reiterated the Paris Agreement, stressing the need to ensure the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation components at all levels.

In the face of climate change impacts and natural disasters, the group is lobbying for the inclusion of critical provisions that are essential to protect our remaining forest.

Fr. Pete Montallana from the Save Sierra Madre Movement cited how the mountain range has recently saved millions from an imminent disaster.

"When super typhoon Lawin (intl name: Haima) hit the North, it was the Sierra Madre mountains that weakened the force of what could be another typhoon catastrophe," said environmental advocate and Franciscan priest Fr. Montallana.

From Category 5, Lawin was brought down to category 3 after slamming matchless against the longest mountain range in the country.

Among the other main stipulations in the forest resources act is the campaign on the functional definition of "forests."

According to Haribon Foundation, the longstanding definition of the term forest adopted by the DENR is questionable. Forest is best described as not merely tree planta-

FRB aims to protect natural forests and prioritize restoration of denuded forests. In the bill, participatory processes, community ownership and accountability comprise its important provisions.

"We need to incorporate check and balance and transparency if we want the track of poverty alleviation," said Estacio Lim from Tanim Kalikasan, Inc.

Healthy forests mean a steady supply of food, medicine and shelter for wildlife. The group holds that the future of today's forests counts on the support by champions and key decision makers.

Moving forward, the working group reconvenes in December for the final document and in preparation for next year's groundwork.

Groups who participated in the policy review include representatives from various civil society organizations, the academe and related line agencies.

**KITTY AMANTE/HARIBON  
FOUNDATION**

## Not 300, but 5,000 trees to be cut for road

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.  
@nburgosINQ

ILOILO CITY—More than 5,000 trees, not only 300 as earlier declared by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), would be cut down to widen the two-lane national highway that links Iloilo province to the provinces of Aklan and Capiz.

Mayor Tomas Peñaflorida of Pototan town in Iloilo said the tree cutting along the 13-kilometer stretch of the national road in his town is covered by a permit that the DENR in Western Visayas region issued to the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)

He said the project would

widen the two-lane national highway into four lanes, affecting 5,123 mature mahogany trees.

The road section where the trees would be cut stretches from the town's boundary with Zarraga town on one end and Dingle town on the opposite end.

### Saddened

"We are saddened by the loss of our trees," Peñaflorida told the Inquirer. "But we have to give way to a project that will benefit the whole province and those passing our town."

He said the permit also required the DPWH to replant 100 trees for each tree cut, in designated areas along the highway.

used to post on its trunks poems about trees and nature.

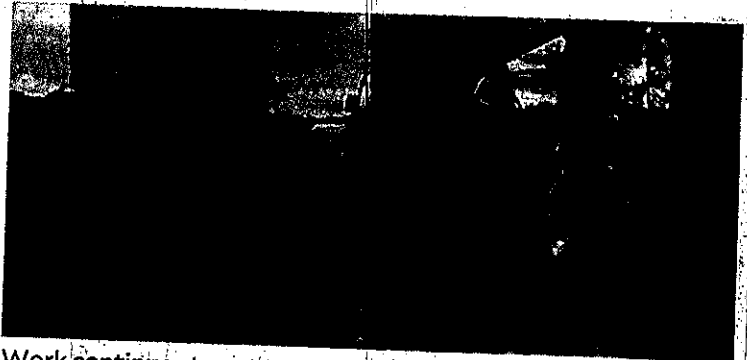
Peñaflorida said more trees will have to be felled for the road widening project that will cover the 16-km stretch from the town proper.

### Consultation

Jim Sampulna, DENR regional executive director, said he received additional requests for permits to cut trees from the towns of Dueñas and Dingle for the project.

But he said the DENR would only issue such permits if local governments can prove the plan went through public consultations and dialogues.

He said he issued the permit to cut trees in Pototan because



Work continues to cut trees along a section of the highway in Pototan town in Iloilo for a road-widening project. —PHOTO FROM POTOTAN FACEBOOK PAGE

Pototan residents earlier expressed dismay over the cutting of the trees, many of which are between 20 and 25 years old. The trees, which used to line

the stretch of national highway from Iloilo to Capiz and Aklan, provided shade to motorists, with the verdant scenery offering respite to travelers. People

he was convinced by its importance. "This is for the benefit of all, especially those using the road," Sampulna said.

Peñaflorida said the two-lane road linking Pototan and Iloilo City needed to be widened to avoid vehicular accidents. The volume of vehicles traversing this stretch has increased, he said.

The trees cut will be stored at the DENR depot so these can be used by the Department of Social Welfare and Development for its projects.

Peñaflorida said he would ask the DENR to auction off a portion of the cut trees and distribute the proceeds to villages where the trees were felled to fund barangay projects. INQ

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## SOLCOM launches tree sanctuary

CAMP G. NAKAR, Lucena City - The military's area command here has launched a tree sanctuary pilot project by planting endangered and indigenous trees at the compound of Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM).

SOLCOM chief Lt. Gen. Ferdinand Quidilla said the project is supported by provincial and municipal local government units, and private organizations with technical supervision coming from the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau of the Department of

Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Quidilla said the sanctuary aims to be a showcase for the urban populace, especially the youth, where they can readily see how the different tree species look like as well as to enhance public awareness on the uniqueness, diversity, and fragility of ecosystems. It will also serve as a source of planting materials and haven for indigenous wildlife in order to help preserve remaining forest ecosystems; as additional greenbelt of

carbon sink in mitigating the climate change; and to add tranquility, particularly to the camp.

An "adopt a tree" program is applied to this project to ensure maximum survivability of the endangered and indigenous tree species.

Under this program, a civilian participant and one military personnel will adopt one tree; their partnership involves caring, maintaining, and securing the said plant. The partners should continuously visit the planted seedling until this grows to become tree. (Danny J. Estacio)

## 'Museums' of biodiversity and rich marine life a must-see for luxury travelers

Alexandra Cousteau, filmmaker and environmental advocate for the oceans, represents a new wave of luxury traveler heading for El Nido Resorts in Palawan, these days.

Together with her husband and two children, the granddaughter of legendary explorer Jacques-Yves Cousteau was a recent visitor to three of the four resorts named after the islands that host them: Miniloc, Lagen, and Pangulasian.

According to Joey Bernardino, marketing director of El Nido Resorts, which also includes Apulit island resort: "Cousteau is the epitome of the responsible traveler, one who favors destinations that support economic, social, and environmental sustainability. And, we expect that her visit will attract many other guests who share her passion for the environment."

Cousteau was in the Philippines recently to muster support for the campaigns of Oceana, the largest international environmental organization concerned primarily with oceans conservation. She capped her stay in the country with a visit to El Nido Resorts that included two days of diving with husband Fritz Neumeyer, a green architect based in Berlin, and bring her five-year-old daughter Clementine snorkeling for the first time.

She observed that there are places in the Philippines and in El Nido that



A school of yellow snappers in south Miniloc Island, in El Nido, Palawan. Photo by Oceana. (Danny Ocampo)

don't exist anywhere else in the world. They are like "museums of what (ocean life) was like hundreds of years ago." The National Geographic emerging explorer wanted her pre-schooler to experience them and "to see the extraordinary wonders the ocean has to offer."

Among the diving spots that amazed Cousteau and her group was South Miniloc, a dive site that was brought to the attention of millions of viewers by her grandfather Jacques when he visited Palawan on the boat *Calypso* in 1991.

Javi Hernandez, chief operating officer, observes that upscale travelers from the West eager to discover rare marine life, endangered species, and

undeveloped natural territories have become a niche market for El Nido Resorts. The Philippines is part of the Coral Triangle, the global center of marine biodiversity. The Solomon Islands, Palau, and Indonesia are also part of the Triangle. But in many of these places that boast a staggering number of species, it takes hours to move from one marine habitat to the next.

El Nido Resorts, on the other hand, offers guests the advantage of over 800 marine species, 400 kinds of corals, and 500 marine vertebrae within an area of 200 kilometers. Cousteau articulated the advantage offered by the Philippines and Northern Palawan: "It's the center of the center of marine biodiversity in the world."

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Record coral kill-off on Great Barrier Reef

P.1

**S**YDNEY (AFP) — A mass bleaching event on the Great Barrier Reef this year killed more corals than ever before, scientists said Tuesday, sounding the alarm over the delicate ecosystem.

The 2,300-kilometer long reef — the world's biggest — suffered its most severe bleaching in recorded history, due to warming sea temperatures during March and April, with the northern third bearing the brunt.

Follow-up underwater surveys, backing earlier aerial studies, have revealed a 700-kilometer stretch of reefs in the less-accessible north lost two-thirds of shallow-water corals in the past eight to nine months.

"Most of the losses in 2016 have occurred in the northern, most-pristine part of the Great Barrier Reef," said Terry Hughes, head of the Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University.

"This region escaped with minor damage in two earlier bleaching events in 1998 and 2002, but this time around it has been badly affected."

Further south over the vast central and southern regions, including major tourist areas around Cairns and the Whitsunday Islands, there was a much lower toll.

Bleaching occurs when abnormal environmental conditions, such as warmer sea temperatures, cause corals to expel tiny photosynthetic algae, draining them of their color.

Algae are vital to the coral, which uses the organic products of photosynthesis to help it grow.

The loss of algae makes the host vulnerable to disease and means it will eventually die.

However, coral can recover if the water temperature drops and the algae are able to recolonize them.

Environmentalists blame the burning of fossil fuels for global warming and repeated calls Tuesday for Australia to abandon coal mining to help prevent further bleaching disasters.

"This is the devastating price we are paying for the Australian government propping up the coal industry," said Greenpeace Australia reef campaigner Shani Tager.

"A credible plan to protect the reef must address climate change and start with a ban on new coal mines."

Canberra insists it is doing more than ever to safeguard the reef, which is also under pressure from farming runoff, development and the coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish, committing more than A\$2 billion (\$1.5 billion) over

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

RECORD CORAL KILL - OFF - ON GREAT BARRIER REEF . . . P.2



Undated handout photo received on November 29, 2016 from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, shows a scientist assessing coral mortality on Zenith Reef in the Great Barrier Reef off Northern Queensland following the bleaching event. Andreas DIETZEL / ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies. / AFP

the next decade.

Scientists estimate the northern region, which teems with marine life, will take at least 10-15 years to regain lost corals, but are concerned that a fourth major bleaching event may occur before that, hampering the recovery.

The reef studies center warned

earlier this year that if greenhouse gas levels keep rising, similar events would be the new normal, occurring every two years by the mid-2030s.

Given reefs need so long to recover from severe bleaching, it said "we are likely to lose large parts of the Great Barrier Reef in just a couple of

decades."

That study noted climate change had added 1.0 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming to ocean temperatures off the Queensland coast in March, when corals were first seen turning white.

There had been fears that the bleaching would badly hurt the tourism industry but Andrew Baird, who led teams of divers to re-survey the reefs in October and November, said the more accessible parts had not suffered as badly.

"The good news is the southern two-thirds of the reef has escaped with minor damage," he said.

"On average, six percent of bleached corals died in the central region in 2016, and only one percent in the south. The corals have now regained their vibrant color, and these reefs are in good condition."

Tourism on the World Heritage-listed reef employs 70,000 people and generates A\$5 billion in income each year.

Australia last year narrowly avoided UNESCO putting the site on its endangered list and must report to the World Heritage committee by December 1 on the progress being made to rescue the reef.



01 DEC 2016  
DATE

UPPER HALF

9

PAGE

LOWER HALF

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# 'Cabinet doing best to deliver public service

Malacañang has defended the Cabinet from criticisms that it is not organized and maintained that members of the official family are doing their best to get the job done.

"We at the Cabinet are striving our best to deliver public services, honoring the commitments of the President during the campaign," Presidential Communications Assistant Secretary Kristian Ablan said in a press briefing yesterday.

Ablan was reacting to former president Fidel Ramos' criticism that members of the Cabinet are qualified but can-

not work together.

Ablan also claimed that social networking sites may have played a role in highlighting the issues involving the administration.

"And if I may just mention that 20 years ago, there is no such thing as social media. And so what may be glaring to all of us today might not have been that glaring few decades ago. So just to put things in context," he said.

Duterte had described Ramos as his "number one supporter and critic." Ramos also scored Duterte earlier for his tirades against the Paris cli-

mate deal and his failure to attend the gala dinner and photo shoot of leaders during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meet in Peru last month.

### Cabinet spouses' project

Meanwhile, spouses of Cabinet members yesterday launched a project to build "homes" for drug dependents in Metro Manila as their contribution to the Duterte administration's campaign against illegal drugs.

The project is called "4R Home." The four Rs stand for

reform, recharge, reeducate and reintegrate.

4R Homes will be constructed all over Metro Manila. Each home will have a computer room, a gym, chapel and a clinic.

Each 4R Home will have a special area for income-generating facilities because drug surrenderers will be taught to repair cellphones and air-conditioning units.

Jocelyn Sueno, president of the Du30 Cabinet Spouses Association and wife of Interior Secretary Ismael Sueno, said the project would

cater to poor former drug users who cannot afford to enter regular rehabilitation centers.

"This free formation house is a special program designed to support President Duterte's campaign against illegal drugs," Sueno said during the project launch at The Fort in Taguig City.

"We thought the word rehab is too harsh, and as a mother it has a negative

connotation. So we changed it to home, which is a more motherly, loving word.

"This is a place where they can stay until they are ready to integrate again to the community," she added.

Other Cabinet spouses who attended the launch were Beth Dureza, Alelee Andanan, Lorna Esperon, Flor Evasco, Marie Difo, Bertola Medialdea, Marissa Aguirre and Mansol Tugade.

- With Helen Flores