

DATE : 09 JUN 2019

DAY : Sunday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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The Manila Times



09 JUN 2019

Duterte to arrest BoC execs who will allow trash imports

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Saturday issued a stern warning to all officials of the Bureau of Customs (BoC) to shape up or prepare to get arrested amid the entry of shipments of garbage to the country.

During a television interview over the Sonshine Media Network on Saturday, Duterte said he would prevent contraband from entering the country, including illegal trash and narcotics.

"I will not allow it and anybody — any Customs employee *o opisyal* (or official). *'Pag pumirma ka sa release papers niyan, sabihin mo hindi niyo alam* (If you sign the papers for its release and you say you don't know), you go out or I

will even arrest you," the President added.

"Toxic *'yan eh*. Hospital waste *pati 'yung plastic* (It's toxic. It's hospital waste and plastic). Those are toxic materials. Plastic is the toxic material. The ones that they use in the chips are toxic materials," he said.

The President then threatened to throw Customs officials into the Manila Bay should they refuse to obey his order.

"Well, this time [I will have con-

tainers made as your coffins. I will throw you into the bay]," he said.

Duterte issued the statement days after he reiterated the seriousness of his warning to declare war with Canada had it shown defiance over his order to take back its garbage.

"It's a matter of respect. If you make us a garbage dump (expletive), and they thought I was joking — I told them I would send the garbage back if we don't reach an agreement, I will declare war," the President said in his speech on Thursday.

He added that Canada should show respect, as he said the media portrayed his outburst as plain "braggadocio and hubris" because "they don't know me."

"And then of course, the Navy and the police will start to arrest

my Navy men. *Baka magbarilan pa. 'Di kung magbarilan, o 'di mag-giyera tayo. Hindi naman ako papayag nang ganun lang* (There might be shooting, and if there's shooting, we will fight. I can't just let it pass)," he added.

Canada eventually allowed the return of the garbage imported by a private firm between 2013 and 2014.

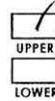
The garbage was shipped back to Ottawa on May 31.

BoC spokesman Erastus Sandino Austria earlier confirmed that out of the 103 shipping containers of Canadian garbage, 34 were locally disposed of.

Of the 34, 26 were brought to a Tarlac landfill, while the whereabouts of the eight containers is still being determined.



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S. Korea to take back remaining trash shipment

By EVELYN MACAIRAN

The remaining 5,000 of the 6,500 metric tons of garbage from South Korea that arrived at the Mindanao International Container Terminal (MICT) in Misamis Oriental last year will be sent back to where it came from by next month.

John Simon, Bureau of Customs (BOC)-MICT sub-port collector, said officials of the South Korean government are set to arrive on Wednesday for a two-day meeting on the return of the garbage.

"The commitment is there. We will just discuss the details... The idea is how to fast-track everything. The soonest

we could do it, the better," Simon said.

The BOC reexported shipping containers, which contained 1,500 metric tons of garbage, last January.

Simon said they hope the remaining garbage would be returned early next month if not by the end of this month.

He said there were two

garbage shipments, both misdeclared as synthetic plastic flakes, that arrived from South Korea on July 21 and Oct. 20 last year.

Both shipments were reportedly consigned to Verde Soko Philippines Industrial Corp.

Simon commended the South Korean government for its commitment to adhere to the Basel Convention, which prohibits the export of hazardous waste.

He said officials from both sides would formulate a plan to move the household waste placed at a recycling plant

reportedly owned by the consignee in Barangay Sta. Cruz in Tagoloan.

"We are discussing final details of the reexportation... We would like to know from the South Korean delegation if they will hire a chartered ship," he said.

At least 69 shipping containers or 2,000 tons of toxic waste from Canada that arrived in 2013 and 2014 were shipped back to Ottawa last month.

Another 2,561 tons of electronic waste from Hong Kong departed at the MICT last Monday.



Trusted Since 1933

The Manila Times

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3 Bulacan sanitary landfills idle

THE sanitary landfills in the towns of Norzagaray, Obando and the City of San Jose del Monte (SJDM) in Bulacan are now non-operational, said Lormlyn Claudio, regional director for Central Luzon of the Environmental Management Bureau.

In Norzagaray, the privately owned Wacuman Inc. stopped operations of the sanitary landfill last year, affecting half of the town's garbage collection.

In Obando, Mayor Edwin San-

tos stopped the operation of the city's sanitary landfill in 2017, while Mayor Arthur Robes of the City of SJDM also closed up the city's landfill from the time he was elected in 2016.

Emelita Lingap, Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Bulacan provincial officer, confirmed that the three landfills were indeed non-operational.

Officials of Obando and the City of SJDM have likewise confirmed that the sanitary landfills

in the areas stopped operations in the past few years.

Lingap also noted that the sanitary landfill in Norzagaray stopped operations because the road leading to it is now undergoing repairs.

In the meantime, Lingap suggested to the local governments and municipalities where the sanitary landfills are located to bring their waste materials to the landfill located in Metro Clark in the Pampanga-Tarlac area.

FREDERICK SILVERIO



ARROYO BILL TAKES ON TOXIC WASTE DISPOSAL

By Maricel V. Cruz

SPEAKER Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has sponsored a bill providing for a framework for the handling of hazardous and radioactive wastes, coming in the wake of a series of alleged garbage dumping into the Philippines by other countries.

Arroyo's Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes Management bill consolidated House Bills 2964, 142, 540, 1528, 3610, 4287, 5901, 6596, 7093, 8288 and 8776.

The passage of the bill is considered one of the legacies of the former President who later served as Speaker.

Arroyo said electronic equipment contain heavy metals such as lead, cadmium and mercury, as well as other hazardous component or additives.

The lawmaker said requiring the recycle and reuse of these electronic equipment will greatly reduce the amount of hazardous materials being discarded in solid waste management facilities.

"Disposing these metals from such equipment via traditional methods can pose a significant threat to public health and the environment," said Arroyo.

The substitute bill declares it is the policy of the State to advance the protection of human health and the environment from the potential risks of hazardous and radioactive wastes within the framework of sustainable development.

Towards this end, the State shall develop and implement national and local integrated and comprehensive hazardous and radioactive waste management programs focusing on pollution prevention and resource conservation and recovery, which shall: 1) improve waste management techniques, organizational arrangement, methods of collection, separation and recovery of waste; 2) promote environmentally safe disposal of residues; 3) minimize the generation of waste, process substitution, resource recovery, recycling and reuse and treatment; and 4) institutionalize public participation in the development and implementation of hazardous and radioactive wastes management programs.

It shall also apply to the generation, possession, collection, recovery, reuse, storage, transport, treatment and disposal of hazardous and radioactive wastes in the country for whatever purpose. The bill shall also cover the transit and entry into Philippine territory of such wastes.

The bill mandates the departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Health, and the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute, in coordination with the Department of Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Commission on Higher Education, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Philippine Information Agency and the local government units, to conduct a continuing education and information campaign on hazardous and radioactive wastes management.



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SoKor toxic waste probe

Pinagtibay na ng House Committees on Good Government and Public Accountability, Ecology, and Local Government, ang report tungkol sa pag-iimbestiga sa pagtatambak ng toxic waste ng South Korea sa Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental.

Ang pinag-isang pagding ay pinamunuan ng Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability ni Chairman Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo (Camiguin), Committee on Ecology ni AKO Bicol Party-list Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr., at Committee on Local Government ni Negros Occidental Rep. Juliet Marie de Leon Ferrer.

Ang imbestigasyon ay batay sa inilabas na House Resolution No. 2317 ni Misamis Oriental Rep. Juliette Uy, tungkol sa pagtatapon ng hazardous plastic garbage mula South Korea sa PHIVIDEC Industrial Estate sa Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, at sa February 6, 2019 privilege speech ni Iligan City Rep. Frederick Siao, tungkol sa dumating na shipment ng 51 container van ng basura sa Port of Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, mula sa South Korea.

Bert de Guzman



Editorial EDITORIAL Editorial

Mas mahigpit na pre-inspection sa Bureau of Customs

BASURA, ilegal na droga at iba pang kontrabando, ilan lamang ang mga ito sa laman ng dumarating na kargamento sa ating bansa.

Kaya naman marami ang hindi natutuwa dahil tila naging tambakan ng basura ang Pilipinas.

Dahil dito, pinakikilos ni Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza ang Bureau of Customs (BOC) na magpatupad ng mahigpit na pre-inspection sa mga dumarating na containers mula sa ibang bansa.

Dapat nang magpatupad ng pre-shipment inspection (PSI) ang BOC upang matigil na ang importasyon ng mga kontrabando na naglalaman ng basura o ilegal na droga mula sa iba't ibang bansa.

Sa ilalim ng pre-shipment inspection, susuriin at beberipikahin ng third party surveyors ang shipment details ng bawat container bago ito makalabas sa bansang pinanggalingan.

Sa ngayon, inoobliga lamang ang pre-inspection sa mga bulk at break-bulk cargo na liquid, granular o particulate form tulad ng krudo, petrolyo, grain, coal at iba pa.

Ang paghihigpit na ito ay kasunod ng pangamba na muling gawing tambakan ng basura ng ibang bansa ang Pilipinas gayung naghahanap ng pagdadalhan ng kanilang mga basura ang mga bansa sa North America at Europe.

Pagkatapos ng pagpasok ng mga kargamentong naglalaman ng basura at ilegal na droga, hindi tayo dapat pumayag na muling makapasok sa bansa ang anumang uri ng basura at mga kontrabando kaya kung dapat maging mas mahigpit sa pag-iinspeksiyon ng mga kargamentong ipapasok sa bansa, gawin na!



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Abante TONITE

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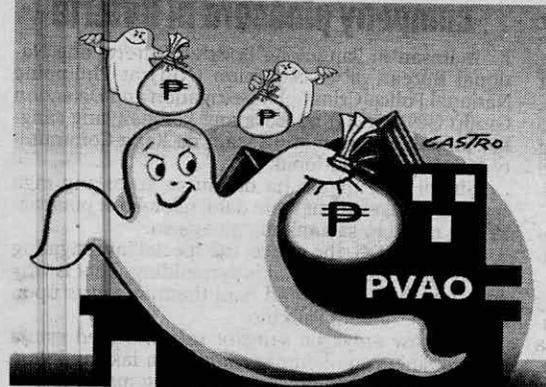
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Sulat kay Editor

#MoreFishNotPlastic

Dear Abante Tonite,

Magandang araw mga ka-abante, nais ko lamang ibahagi ang tuwa na aking nararamdamang nang mabalitaan ko na ang lalawigan ng Cauayan, Negros Occidental ay nagsusulong na rin ng mga programang pang kalinisan. Nag viral ngayon ang ZERO-WASTE CANTEEN sa Bulata National Highschool sa nasabing bayan. Imbes na plastic ang gamitin ay repurposed coconut huts at bamboo chunks ang kanilang ginagamit upang paglagyan ng mga pagkain sa kanilang kantina.

Pinapalawig din ng eskwelahan ang #MoreFishNotPlastic para sa kampanya laban sa single-use plastic. Nakakamangha ang proyektong ito lalo pa't isa ang kantina ng mga paaralan sa kadalasang gumagamit ng mga plastic. Sa dami ng mga mag-aaral na bibili ay siya ring dami ng plastic na nagagamit ng isang beses lamang at itinatapon (ikinakalat) na lamang pagkatapos. Ang proyektong ito ay nagmumulat sa murang isip ng mga kabataan na kailangan din nilang maging katuwang sa pagsulong ng kampanya sa pangangalaga ng kalikasan. Patunay na rin na maliban sa segregation at reduce, reuse, recycle ay pinaigting na rin ang ganitong adhika upang mamulat ang susunod na henerasyon sa kalagayan ng wastong pangangalaga sa kalikasan.

Ang mainam pa nito, dahil nagsimula ang proyekto sa isang paaralan ay maari rin itong ipatupad hindi lamang sa mga paaralan sa Negros kundi sa lahat ng paaralan sa buong Pilipinas. Pasasaan ba at makakasanayan din natin ang magmalasakit sa kapaligirang kumakalinga sa atin. Hindi pa huli ang lahat lalo na kung magsisimula na tayo ngayon. Sa pagkakaisa ng bawat tao ay may malaki at kamangha-manghang pagbabago.

Rochelle ng San Vicente, Bulacan



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FACE MASK CHALLENGE LAUNCHED VS. POLLUTION

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) has embarked on a campaign dubbed "mask challenge" to call for action against air pollution.

For its "We want clean air" mask challenge, EMB is seeking either photos or videos of people with their face masks, particularly those made of recycled materials. Ten winners will be chosen.

"Face masks do little to protect people from air pollution but can be an effective way to highlight how much Filipinos want clean air," EMB OIC Assistant Director Vizmindia Osorio said in an interview over the weekend.

The contest focuses on face masks, especially from recyclables to help show urgency for protection from polluted air which most people breathe, she added.

Recyclable materials are among wastes generated in the country. Experts identified waste, households, industry, transportation, and agriculture as the main human sources of air pollution.

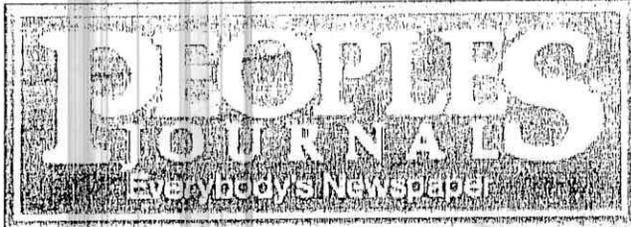
The mask challenge is an activity for the country's annual June celebration of World Environment Day and Philippine Environment Month both focusing on air pollution this year, the EMB official said.

"Share your most creative mask photo, a commitment to beat air pollution and challenge your friends to join you in making a difference," said EMB in its contest promotion.

The contest is open to people in the National Capital Region as well as Regions III (Central Luzon) and IV-A (Calabarzon). Entries must include captions on how they can help address air pollution, noted EMB while maximum length of video entries must be 30 seconds.

Entries will be accepted until June 21.

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How indoor pollution hazards affect human health

WHEN most people think about air pollution, most think of smoke belching vehicles. They rarely think of the air that they breathe in their own homes.

In a new study of indoor air quality, a team of researchers at the Washington State University (WSU) has found surprisingly high levels of pollutants, including formaldehyde and possibly mercury, in carefully monitored homes, and that these pollutants vary through the day and increase as temperatures rise.

Researchers know that air pollution, whether inside or outside, has a significant impact on people's health, including their heart, lungs, brain, and neurological health. But, while the government has increased regulation of outdoor air pollution over the past 40 years, there is little regulation of the air in people's homes.

"People think of air pollution as an outdoor problem, but they fail to recognize that they're exposing themselves to much higher emission rates inside their homes," study lead author Tom Jobson said.

These emissions come from a variety of sources, such as building materials, furniture, household chemical products, and from people's activities like cooking.

One of the ways to clear out harmful chemicals is with ventilation to the outdoors. But, with increased concern about climate change and interest in reducing energy use, builders are trying to make homes more airtight, which may inadvertently be worsening the problem.

In their study, they found that formaldehyde levels rose in homes as temperatures increased inside — between three and five parts per billion every time the temperature increased one degree Celsius.

The researchers also found that pollution levels varied throughout the day — they were highest in the afternoon and lowest in the early morning. Until now, manufacturers and builders have assumed that pollutants stay the same throughout the day as they consider the emissions from their materials, so they may not be getting a true picture of how much pollution people are exposed to indoors, he said.

The researchers also were surprised to find in one home that gypsum wallboard emitted high levels of formaldehyde and possibly mercury when it's heated. That home, built in the early 1970s, had radiant heating in its ceiling, which was a popular heating system at that time.

After finding high levels of formaldehyde in the home, the researchers suspected the gypsum wallboard radiant ceiling in the home. About half of the gypsum used in homes as drywall is made from waste products of the coal industry. They pulled a piece from the home, heated it up in their laboratory, and measured high levels of formaldehyde — as much as 159 parts per billion. (ScienceDaily)



MPIF Commits P1.5M for Puerto Galera's Marine Protection, Inspection and Conservation Guardians

PUERTO GALERA, Philippines, 1st and 2nd June 2019 - Shore It Up, Metro Pacific Investments Foundation Inc.'s flagship program, is celebrating another year of elevating environmental awareness and conserving aquatic life in coastal municipalities through this year's Shore It Up Weekend.

After commemorating its 10th year, Shore It Up has chosen to revisit and deepen its commitment to Puerto Galera, an old SIU community partner and the center of the center of marine biodiversity. Known as a designated UNESCO Man and Biosphere reserve and the number one hub amongst dive enthusiasts in the country, Puerto Galera boasts of over 30 dive sites that have been and are still popular within the diving community. Divers from across the country and the world travel to experience the one-of-a-kind diving experience in this municipality. Non-diving tourists also frequent this area for the beaches and nightlife, guaranteeing that Puerto Galera never runs out of visitors even during lean seasons.

As is the case with popular tourist

attractions, Puerto Galera is not immune to pollution and ecological malpractice that harbors negative effects to both underwater and coastal living. As a means to augment this, Shore It Up has dedicated specific efforts as well as sustainable programs that benefits not only the environment but the local community of Puerto Galera as well.

Similar with other Shore It Up weekends, a provincial-wide coastal and underwater clean-up were done towards servicing the seas and shores of this high-density tourist destination. During the underwater clean-up, 145 scuba diving volunteers collected around 616 kilograms of garbage, which were then segregated and counted by over 50 non-diving volunteers.

Plastic bottles, glass bottles, construction materials such as pipes and metals, soda cans, and fishing lines were the top five types of trash collected in the surrounding areas. Unusual finds such as a bicycle, a barbie doll mermaid, and an earring were also found within the Puerto Galera seas.

As a long-term commitment to the

municipality of Puerto Galera and the most significant highlight of this year's SIU Weekend, MPIFI President Melody del Rosario and Municipality of Puerto Galera Mayor Rocky Ilagan signed a Memorandum of Understanding that memorializes the beginning of the Marine Protection, Inspection, and Conservation (MPIC) Guardians Program in their area.

"Shore It Up is steadily making significant impacts in coastal areas by increasing community involvement in environmental awareness and providing programs for sustainable ecotourism, marine protection and conservation," says del Rosario.

"Communities that adopt SIU's programs and sustainable practices have seen and recorded economic gains and increased food security as early as one year after implementing it."

MPIFI is committing P1.5 Million over three years to provide local Bantay Dagats, with the technical knowhow, uniforms and equipment such as Global Positioning System, VHF communication, underwater action cameras and search lights among others, to better protect and conserve the aquatic natural resources that set Puerto Galera apart from everywhere else.

"The municipality of Puerto Galera is very much pleased that Shore It Up and the



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MPIF commits P1.5M for Puerto Galera's Marine Protection,
Inspection and Conservation Guardians

MVP group decided to implement their MPIC Guardians Program here in our community, so that these men can be in authority to better patrol our seas and heighten the protection and conservation efforts in our area," says Mayor Ilagan.

MPIFI collaborated with the Puerto Galera Local Government Unit in engaging and mobilizing almost a hundred volunteers from One Meralco Foundation, PLDT-Smart Foundation, Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation, Light Rail Manila Corporation, the Shore It Up movement, and the community of Puerto Galera. This year, the MVP Group became an even stronger partner in the program's efforts.

"I am glad that we have institutionalized collaboration among our member companies and with different stakeholders from government, academe and civil society – to rapidly respond to crisis, as well as to proactively support activities towards community development," says Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan.

With its current success, Shore It Up still looks forward to more years of growth and evolution in championing nature, anchored on a shared commitment of making a positive impact on the environment and pursuing the bigger challenge of attaining sustainability.



3,500 BILANG NG BENGUET PINE TREES ITINANIM SA BAKURAN NG "THE MANSION" SA BAGUIO CITY

INIULAT ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na umabot sa 3,500 Benguet pine trees ang itinanim sa bakuran ng "The Mansion" sa Baguio City bilang bahagi ng programa ng kagawaran na maparami ang bilang ng puno sa naturang lugar.

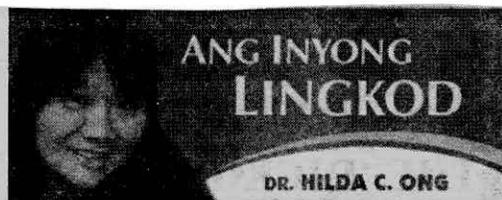
Ayon kay DENR-Cordillera Administrative Region Executive Director Ralph Pablo, ang kanilang hakbang ay bilang tugon sa direktiba ni Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na paramihin ang bilang ng Benguet pine trees sa Baguio City dahil patuloy na bumababa ang bilang ng mga punong-kahoy sa naturang lugar, partikular na sa Camp John Hay.

"Secretary Cimatu's order was to saturate Baguio with the smell of pine trees again and restore the city's claim to being the City of Pines," sabi ni Pablo.

Nakipagtulungan sa pagtatanim ng pine trees sa dalawang ektaryang bakuran ng The Mansion ang 350 miyembro ng Presidential Security Group (PSG).

Ang The Mansion ay ang opisyal na "Summer Palace" ng Pangulo ng Pilipinas at matatagpuan ito sa eastern part ng Baguio City sa kahabaan ng Leonard Wood Road, sa kabila ng Wright Park.

Umaabot sa 74 percent ng kabuuang 14.7 ektaryang lupa ng The



DR. HILDA C. ONG

Mansion ang tinatawag na "open forest" dahil na rin sa nakatanim na iba't ibang uri ng puno sa paligid nito.

Ang pagbaba ng bilang ng Benguet pine trees sa Baguio City ay napansin ni Cimatu nang dumalo ito sa alumni homecoming ng Philippine Military Academy (PMA) noong Pebrero.

Dahil dito, agad na inatasan ni Cimatu si Pablo na magsagawa ng "inventory" sa mga puno sa lungsod upang makagawa ng aksiyon ang DENR na maparami ang bilang ng Benguet pine trees.

Lumabas sa isinagawang "inventory" na umabot sa 2,498,019 ang

mga puno sa paligid ng lungsod na may 5,750 ektaryang teritoryo habang ang bilang ng Benguet pine trees na may lapad na 124 centimeters ay umabot sa 351,493 o 14 percent ng kabuuang bilang.

Sa naturang bilang, 277,148 o 79 percent ang lugar na tinatawag na "closed forest" o "closed canopy" katulad ng Camp John Hay reservation at mga parke malapit sa Teacher's Camp at PMA.

Umaabot naman sa 70,735 puno ang matatagpuan sa tinatawag na open forest kung saan itinanim ang 3,500 saplings habang 3,610 sa mga ito ang makikita sa residential areas.



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Aboitiz to plant 9 M trees by 2020

True to its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint and minimize its environmental impact, the Aboitiz Group said it is on track to meet its nine million trees target by 2020.

As of last year, the group, through its simultaneous tree planting (STP) initiative, had already planted a total of 6.6 million trees or 73 percent of its target.

STP is under A-Park - the group's largest environmental program that supports the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) expanded national greening program (ENGP).

The Aboitiz Group and DENR have renewed their partnership to sustain ecological balance.

The planting of nine million trees by the end of 2020 would mean the conversion of an estimated 189,000 tons of carbon dioxide into oxygen or the equivalent of about 9,000 hectares of lush reforested areas, or more than 37 times the size of Bonifacio Global City.

"I express my heartfelt thanks to Aboitiz Equity Ventures and Aboitiz Foundation,



Erramon Aboitiz, AEV president and chief executive officer, led the 2018 Aboitiz Groupwide simultaneous tree planting activity at the Makiling-Banahaw Geothermal Facility in Laguna.

Inc. for teaming up with the DENR once again for the attainment of nine million trees under the A-Park Project by 2020," said DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu.

"It is heartening to know that working towards your corporate objective would also mean addressing poverty alleviation by engaging the services of the local people in forest activities like seedling production, plantation establishment, and maintenance and protection, among others," he said.

Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. executive vice president

and chief operating officer Sabin Aboitiz reiterated the group's commitment to DENR's programs.

"We strongly believe and adhere to the DENR's mandate to protect the environment and we anchor our initiatives to the ENGP to sustain ecological balance. Our enduring partnership with the DENR for community-based forest management is a testament to our shared responsibility and highlights our contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on Climate Action," said Aboitiz.



PH SLAMS INTRUSION BY 11 RIGHTS EXPERTS

THE Philippines on Saturday rejected a call for an independent United Nations probe into Manila's alleged human rights violations, describing it as interference in its affairs.

UN rights experts asked the UN Human Rights Council on Friday to look into the "staggering number of unlawful deaths and police killings in the context of the so-called war on drugs, as well as killings of human rights defenders."

President Rodrigo Duterte has overseen a narcotics crackdown in which police have killed more than 5,300 suspected drug dealers and users since he was elected three years ago.

Rights groups say the actual number of dead is at least three times higher.

"The latest call by 11 special rapporteurs of the United Nations for an international probe of the Philippines not only is intellectually challenged but an outrageous interference on Philippine sovereignty," Duterte spokesman Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

Some of the biggest names in human rights performing investigative tasks for the UN issued a joint statement on Friday, calling not only for an investigation of deaths linked to the government's war on drugs, but also on attacks on human rights defenders in the Philippines.

"Let the enemies of the state and their supporters from foreign soil be

June 10, 2019

forewarned that no amount of destructive narratives against this government will envelop it with the appearance of pretended truth to hoodwink the Filipino people in embracing it," Panelo said.

"The reasons foisted by them for the aforesaid investigation have been discredited and repudiated by the very nation they pretend to care about. The Philippines is a working vibrant democracy in this part of the world," Panelo said.

He said the Duterte administration had demonstrated strength and resilience in exercising the democratic rights outlined by the Constitution through the various institutions, with their respective allocation of power, geared toward the promotion of general welfare.

"PRRD's war against illegal drugs is pursuant to the primary duty of the state to preserve and protect the people. Law enforcement authorities operate on strict protocols. Any deviation from it is met with the unyielding strong arm of the law with no transgressors immune from it," the Palace official said.

He said the Judiciary sees to it that the law was being applied equally to all.

Panelo also cited the recently concluded midterm elections, saying, "The Filipino people have spoken anew, via the just concluded elections. Those who have spoken against the campaign on illegal drugs and human rights record of this President have been overwhelmingly rejected by the Filipino electorate."

"They have been resoundingly beaten in the polls. These special rapporteurs should by this time realize that they, who believed in the untruthful advocacies of the electorally vanquished pretenders, have likewise been demolished, beyond redemption," he added.

The 11 UN experts, who are independent and do not speak for the United Nations, include the special rapporteur on summary or extrajudicial killings, Agnes Callamard.

Callamard earned Duterte's ire when she called for a stop to the drug war killings in 2016.

Duterte's drug war is his signature policy initiative and he defends it fiercely, especially from international critics and institutions which he says do not care about the Philippines.

Critics have alleged the crackdown amounts to a war on the poor that feeds an undercurrent of impunity and lawlessness in the country. **AFP, Vito Barcelo**

CHRONIC DEFORESTATION. Human-driven and natural loss of trees is affecting wildlife, ecosystems, weather patterns, and even the climate. Forests cover about 30 percent of the planet's land mass, but humans are cutting them down, clearing these essential habitats on a massive scale. Officials also stress that the conversion of forests into agricultural land is a big reason for deforestation. **Kriem-Hill Benedick Siruno**



Phl not abandoning climate change talks – Locsin

By JANVIC MATEO and JESS DIAZ

Despite his exhortation to officials not to attend climate change conferences abroad, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. has clarified the country is not abandoning discussions on the matter altogether.

On Twitter, Locsin said members of Congress and non-government organizations (NGOs) from the Philippines may still attend climate change conferences – but on their own and at their own expense.

He also said that the country, recognized by experts as a leading voice on climate discussions, would still make arguments and proposals but only through the internet.

“NGOs (are) free to go on their own. Also members of Congress to talk in side events. DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) bars officers from Manila. (Philippine permanent mission) officers in NEW YORK to vote Yes to the strongest proposal,” he wrote Saturday.

“UN (United Nations) experts say the Philippine DFA’s – not NGOs’ – climate arguments and proposals are the strongest. So who will make and propose them now? We will – on the internet as UN Conference urged. (No more) traveling faces. But NGOs are free to come and go at their own expense,” he added.

Locsin noted a previous observation that conferences could contribute to worsening situation due to air travel requirement of participants.

“We can do this from home on the internet. That spares the planet from more jet travels that wreck the environment. That was the conclusion of a Nauru sponsored conference I attended as UN rep. An entire world summit was done online,” he added.

The foreign affairs chief issued the directive barring DFA employees in Manila from attending climate change summits after President Duterte claimed that these conferences did not accomplish anything and that they are a waste of money.

The Climate Change Commission has yet to comment on Locsin’s policy against attending climate conferences, but stressed that these are important.

Climate Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman said the Philippines, being one of the most vulnerable countries that bears the brunt of the devastating effects of climate change,

will continue to actively pursue climate action in the context of climate justice.

“We support the statement of President Duterte, our chairman in the Commission, that all governments must do their fair share in combating the climate crisis,” he said.

“Unfortunately, global action has been slow. The Philippines has been actively pursuing climate action, but largely on our own efforts and resources. We have no choice but to act, and sometimes we have bilateral partners to thank when they give some help. With the unrelenting impacts of climate change in our communities, we must do all we can to survive and thrive as a people and nation,” he added.

Extremely important

For Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, restricting official participation in climate change discussions may cost Filipinos “the right and opportunity to articulate” their views on issues of “extreme importance.”

In a letter to the President on Thursday, Salceda stressed that climate change discussions are extremely important “not only for the survival of humanity but because of immediate pragmatic considerations affecting the economic and other dealings of the Philippines with its Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other partners.”

He said the country should “continue to engage even if the pace of the negotiations are perceived to be slow.” Salceda pointed out that “negotiations are in a critical phase of rule making where the implementation of the modalities for the Paris Agreement (on climate change) are being worked out.” Salceda had been a participant in some of the conferences held abroad.

He emphasized that the Philippines always sends a “very lean and mean” delegation to the talks comprising trained representatives from critical oversight and sectoral agencies like the DFA, National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of Finance, Climate Change Commission, among other institutions.

He said “participation normally increases during the main conference of parties meetings, once every year, which also doubles up as a showcase of what countries are doing on climate change

mitigation and adaptation.”

“It is therefore a very important networking event where the Philippines also gets a comprehensive

overview of state-of-the-art climate change responses all over the world and touching base with old, current and potential partners,” Salceda said.



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'Step up climate efforts'

THE Climate Change Commission (CCC) has reiterated the need for the Philippines and other countries to step up efforts to address climate change.

The Philippines, one of several countries vulnerable to the devastating effects of climate change, should be at the forefront of the international efforts to address climate change, CCC Chairman Emmanuel de Guzman said.

"In accordance with the Paris Agreement, climate finance, capacity building, and technology transfer from the developed world must clearly come to our shore, considering that the country has been in the frontline of climate impacts," de Guzman said.

"All countries must exhibit leadership and deliver on commitments. Let us step up our global climate action toward securing a climate-safe future," he added.

EIRENE JAIREE GOMEZ



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\$500M pledged to fight climate change

By Catherine Triomphe

NEW YORK — US billionaire Michael Bloomberg pledged half a billion dollars on Friday to fight climate change, saying "our lives and our children's lives depend on it."

"The former New York mayor and philanthropist said the money will go toward closing coal plants — through lobbying state and local governments and utility commissions — and helping elect politicians who make battling climate change a priority.

Bloomberg, in a commencement speech at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), took aim at climate change skeptics in the Trump administration.

"We will get deeply involved in elections around the country because climate change is now first and foremost a political problem," he said.

At least for the foreseeable future, winning the battle against climate change will depend less on scientific advancement and more on political activism," Bloomberg told the graduates of the prestigious university.

"We will defeat at the voting booth those who try to block action," he said. "Our message to elected officials will be simple: face reality on climate change, or face the

music on Election Day. "Our lives and our children's lives depend on it. And so should their political careers," Bloomberg said. In a statement, Bloomberg said the \$500 million investment was part of an initiative called Beyond Carbon which aims to close nearly 250 coal plants throughout the country by 2030 and prevent new ones being built.

"We're in a race against time with climate change, and yet there is virtually no hope of bold federal action on this issue for at least another two years," Bloomberg said. "Mother Nature is not waiting on our political calendar, and neither can we." Bloomberg's new campaign means he has pledged a total \$1 billion toward fighting climate change, including the 2011 Beyond Coal effort, which has so far closed 289 coal plants in the United States.

On its website, Beyond Carbon said it plans to work toward a "100 percent clean energy economy" and will also campaign against the construction of new gas plants in the United States.

The initiative will "turbo-charge work that is underway" and uphold US commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement, from which the Trump administration has withdrawn, it added. Bloomberg, who is the UN Secretary-General's climate change envoy. AFP



Lorenzana pushes for ASEAN template in managing South China Sea dispute

By **AARON B. REQUENCO**

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana is pushing for an ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) template of

managing territorial dispute in the wake of overlapping maritime claims in the vast South China Sea, the Philippine side known as the West Philippine Sea.

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By ASEAN template, Lorenzana refers to the peaceful dialogue and diplomatic negotiations that are spelled out by instituting "confidence-building measures" between and among the claimant-countries.

While pushing for this kind of template, Lorenzana said that no single military superpower should take control of the South China Sea since what is at stake is freedom of navigation and overflight in what he described as "global sea lines of communications" and "vital arteries of global trade."

"The ASEAN, a disparate grouping of among the most diverse nations, stands as a proud and enduring example of willful, sincere, and successful inter-state conflict management, which has and should, serve as an inspiration across the Indo-Pacific region and beyond," said Lorenzana in his speech during a security summit in Singapore.

Aside from conflict-avoidance, Lorenzana said that another factor that makes the ASEAN template successful is the fidelity of the member-countries to international law and regional norms and principles.

Lorenzana cited for instance the Ligatan and Sipadan dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia as well as the dispute between Thailand and Cam-

bodia over the areas surrounding the Preah Vihear Temple.

In the case of the Philippines, he cited the case of Sabah dispute with Malaysia.

"Instead of conflict, we have opted for various 'confidence-building measures' and cooperative mechanisms to resolve our disputes and address our shared concerns," said Lorenzana.

An example of a successful confidence-building measure, he said, is how Malaysia and Thailand for instance agreed to have a joint development in the Gulf of Thailand.

Such joint development, according to Lorenzana, has allowed both nations to peacefully manage their overlapping maritime claims, or the multilateral Malacca Straits Sea Patrol (MSSP).

Another example is the Philippines and Indonesia consensus to settle their maritime border disputes in the overlapping Exclusive Economic Zone of the Mindanao and Celebes Seas, said Lorenzana.

The Philippine defense chief discussed the issue of peaceful territorial dispute amid China's aggressive development and control in the South China Sea. China has already put up structures in some of the areas in the South China Sea and security experts said that China also started militariz-

ing the area.

In various cases, China has warned aircraft and vessels of various countries passing through the South China Sea to go away, stressing that the area is a Chinese territory.

But Lorenzana said that no single military superpower should take control of the South China Sea.

"In the South China Sea, where the Philippines is a claimant state, we espouse a dialogue-based, peaceful, and multilateral approach, which takes the interest of all relevant players into consideration in accordance with international law and regional norms and principles," said Lorenzana.

"As the ASEAN-China country coordinator, the Philippines believes that China as well as other claimant states should finalize a robust, mutually-beneficial and inclusive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, which would protect the interests of all relevant players as well as preserve freedom of navigation and overflight," he added.

China, however, has repeatedly rejected the United Nations ruling that nullify its claim on almost the entire South China Sea.

The Philippines, under President Duterte, has been leaning toward friendly ties with China for the past three years which experts said would weaken the case won by the Philippines against China in the UN arbitral tribunal.



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DIPLOMATIC POUCH

SUNG KIM

Your fish is your future

Lying within the global center of marine biodiversity, the Philippines is one of the world's top fish producing countries, and millions of Filipinos derive their livelihood from fishing. However, these rich and precious resources are declining rapidly, with research showing that 10 of the country's 13 major fishing grounds are already under threat due to overfishing, destructive fishing practices, habitat degradation, pollution, improper waste disposal, and extreme weather.



It is estimated that the Philippines loses nearly 68.5 billion pesos a year to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, a trend that affects the country's economic development through lost revenue and unrealized opportunities for local fishermen and associated seafood industries. With fish making up the major protein source in the Filipino diet, this decline in fish stocks also has implications for the country's food security, particularly for the nearly 52 percent of fisherfolk who already live beneath the poverty line. Illegal fishing practices also put law-abiding fishers and seafood producers at a disadvantage in both the domestic and global marketplace.

As we observed the International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing on June 5, I'd like to thank our Philippine partners for working with us to address the threats posed by illegal fishing and to protect our marine resources for future generations. For over three decades, the US government has worked closely with the Philippine government and local partners to achieve our shared goal of sustainable fisheries and healthy marine ecosystems. For example, the US Agency for International Development's five-year EcoFish Project worked with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and local governments to increase the number and weight of fish by 24 percent in focus sites. USAID's new 1.3 billion peso, five-year Fish Right project, launched in 2018, works with BFAR, DENR, and a consortium of local partners to address biodiversity threats and increase fish biomass in select marine biodiversity areas in the Philippines. Building on the gains of previous USAID-supported coastal, marine, and biodiversity conservation projects that introduced an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, the Fish Right partnership promotes the sustainable use of critical coastal and marine resources, enhances the resilience of these resources, and improves the ability of Philippine authorities to sustainably manage fisheries – for the benefit of all Filipinos.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has partnered with other US agencies, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to develop and implement ca-

capacity-building programs for managers of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This effort will continue to train new MPA managers to more effectively address threats to Philippine marine resources.

Recognizing the important role law enforcement plays in combatting illegal fishing and protecting marine resources, Philippine law enforcement officers have collaborated with US experts to better utilize sophisticated satellite data to detect boats fishing illegally in Philippine waters and to prevent and deter illegal fishing. We have helped to train nearly 100 officers and inspectors from BFAR and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on practical law enforcement techniques, such as how to board foreign fishing vessels, conduct comprehensive fisheries inspections, and draft briefings and affidavits for prosecutors.

This year, the US Coast Guard led a first-of-its-kind multinational fisheries law enforcement workshop in Manila that built capacity for at-sea enforcement operations in Southeast Asia. The workshop, which included participants from the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia, strengthened domestic fishery enforcement in each country and helped to improve regional cooperation, coordination, and interoperability.

American scientists also seek opportunities to collaborate with Philippine counterparts on marine science research projects. These scientific endeavors do not

just increase our joint understanding of oceanographic phenomena or marine species distribution, they help inform global and local evidence-based fisheries management policies and ensure that there will still be fish for Filipino generations to come.

Ensuring the health of Philippine fisheries – and the country's economy – will not just require robust law enforcement and improved science, it will also require innovative new ideas championed by young Filipinos. To that end, we have supported marine-focused education and empowerment camps for some of the country's most inventive and motivated emerging leaders. We are proud to see the dynamic youth pioneer new social entrepreneurship models in their communities, establish green businesses that address marine challenges, and strive to educate those around them about the importance of healthy ocean ecosystems.

The US government is honored to work alongside Philippine government agencies, civil society, and inspiring young Filipinos to address these challenges. And we will continue to work together to advance human and ecological well-being in the Philippines and to support initiatives that ensure the continued health of Philippine fisheries. We truly believe that your fish is your future.

* * *

(Sung Kim is the US Ambassador to the Philippines.)



EVERYMAN

PARADIGM SHIFT: LET IT HAPPEN

By Dorothy Jane B. del Rosario

LET me paint you a gruesome picture: Maybe 30 to 50 years from now, most of our trees would have been replaced by infrastructure. One day, we might have to breathe from oxygen tanks and the only way to live is for us to have power and privilege. Apocalypse begins. Is this even possible? Think about it.

Research shows that between 1990 and 2005, almost 32.3 percent of the Philippines' forest cover has been lost. Illegal logging has become widespread throughout the country, yet no one seems to have noticed it.

Given the increasingly frantic pace of life, we the youth tend to look at immediate things: How many likes would we get on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or so. We don't realize how crucial it is to think about far-reaching things like saving the planet. Instead we mull over what we see and what's right in front of us. We have lost our innate ability to care about the natural world. We feel small and powerless to believe that we, individually can make a big difference.

Let me give you this one metaphor: Think of the things happening around us like a bag of popcorn in a microwave oven. Heat is emitted at the first minute but it's not evident yet. However, when we reach the second minute, the kernel starts to do its thing. This situation can be compared to the extreme weather events that have been happening from then until now—signals of climate change, signals that we should open our eyes!

Subsequently, it is said that if we were to stop emissions, we would see drastically increased temperatures in succeeding years. At this moment, if we were to be engaged and involved in this dilemma, we could still make a difference.

Thirty years ago, the potentially disruptive impact of heat—trapping emissions from burning fossil fuels and rainforests became known. However, this kind of warning is still not enough for people to be convinced that if we don't do anything now, worst-case scenarios can happen, and we are vulnerable.

We can help empower the youth and be proactive. In our generation, information spreads fast—often like a virus. What if we take on this challenge to save the environment and make that challenge viral as well? If these influencers can produce content to earn money, why can't we do the same to make a difference? We can get the youth to be more informed, involved and engaged.

Plant trees? Ditch your car? Take shorter showers? What other challenges can you think of? These can also spread and people might be informed and get involved through this. Once we all get to know our shared vulnerability, we could open our eyes and see what things we can do to improve our environment.

We cannot just close our eyes and hope for the best. It's not just having the motivation and perseverance, or to use one's voice to let the youth be involved. This paradigm shift will only take place—if and only if we chose to take on this change, open our eyes, and see what awaits us in the future. What's right in front of us now is the power to respond and take individual action—before we pay a steep price.