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IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Building resilient communities still top priority—Cimatu

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

[@jonlmayuga](#)

THE Duterte administration will continue to pursue policy reforms aimed at strengthening the country's resilience to the impacts of climate change, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

As the country braces itself for more strong typhoons, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said building resilient communities remains a top priority for the government.

Cimatu attended a pre-Sona (State of the Nation Address) forum held in Davao City on July 17. Key members of the President's Cabinet met to discuss highlights of the administration's accomplishments and its priority programs for the next three years.

The DENR chief said the Duterte administration will continue to pursue reforms that integrate climate and disaster risk considerations into development policies, strategies, plans and programs.

Cimatu said the DENR will continue to coordinate closely with other line agencies under the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction to ensure that they work together toward the goal of

establishing adaptive and resilient communities.

The DENR chief cochairs the cluster with Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, while the Climate Change Commission acts as the cluster secretariat.

Cimatu said the Cabinet cluster supports the creation of the Department of Disaster Resilience and other legislative proposals that promote disaster and climate resilience, such as the proposed National Land Use Act, Land Administration Reform Act, Integrated Coastal Management Act and National Building Code of the Philippines.

He said the establishment of a department devoted to disaster resilience is necessary to help the government manage broader climate-disaster governance arrangements, and oversee the implementation of disaster risk and vulnerability reduction and management.

Cimatu said the government will provide the ability to generate, synthesize and disseminate knowledge, methodologies and decision-making tools to ensure climate resilience.

He said the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) commits the installation of more than a dozen doppler weather radars and high-frequency Doppler radar networks in various parts

of the country.

The DOST, he added, is also set to install several flood forecasting and warning systems in major river basins, a borehole seismic station in Kanlaon Volcano in Negros Island, and probabilistic seismic hazard analysis in Metro Davao.

"With the help of Congress, we intend to adopt a national land use policy that will optimize balanced development," he said. "We hope to achieve this through rational and just allocation, utilization, management and development of our country's land resources under the proposed National Land Use Act."

This policy, he said, will be complemented by the planned delineation of forest limits, which would enable the DENR to sustainably manage, conserve and protect the country's remaining forests from further depletion.

Cimatu said the cluster will also work for the swift enactment of the Integrated Coastal Management Act, which would ensure optimum and sustainable resource utilization of the coastal and marine environment.

The cluster, he said, supports the proposal to prohibit the conversion of irrigated lands as it would address the threats to the country's food security.



REVOKE ECC PERMITTING COASTAL DEVELOPMENT, AEROTROPOLIS PROJECT IN BULACAN

THE Advocates of Science and Technology for the People (Agham) calls on Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to revoke the environmental clearance certificate (ECC) issued to Silvertides Corp., contracted by San Miguel Corp. to begin its Bulacan Aerotropolis project along the northern coast of Manila Bay through massive land-filling activities.

We believe that the ECC was issued without the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) carefully considering informed opinions on the detrimental impact of coastal "land development" to peoples and the environment. We also believe that the opposition to the coastal developments by residents, fisherfolk, environmentalists and even local and national government officials was taken for granted.

The 2,070-hectare proposed "land development" project will directly displace

fishing communities in Bulakan, Bulacan, and destroy a natural environment found by government scientists to be vital to the sustainability of the entire Manila Bay's fish production, and which contributes significantly to our country's food security. San Miguel claims this Aerotropolis is a decongestive solution to Manila's airport traffic, and will provide jobs for locals. There should be no contest between our food security and a poorly thought solution to airport traffic.

Land development through land-filling along a coastal corridor is basically reclamation. What is not discussed is how reclaimed areas are highly vulnerable to storm surges and liquefaction during earthquakes, and they increase flood risks inland. This is because such developments destroy the mangrove environment that mitigates the risk of such geohazards.

Together with Bulacan locals and our partner organizations, we found that despite the perennial risk from geohazards, the coastal communities in these areas choose to stay because of the greater value they place on their livelihoods and their homes. Thus, almost all of them oppose the reclamation because of what they stand to lose, and because they have no alternative livelihood skills.

Locals have identified what is culturally significant to them: passive and active fishing practices, fishponds and salt beds, and marine-catch trading. These are dependent on their coastal resources and the oceanographic conditions in the area. Geophysical and environmental changes brought by reclamation will negatively impact this culture.

The community-led social and ecological impacts assessments that have been made are consistent with our find-

ings, significantly asserting the peoples' anxiety over the Aerotropolis project. There is no way such development can ensure them their livelihoods, homes and culture.

We urge the DENR to be more transparent in issuing ECCs, as many locals continue to be uninformed about the details of the developments that will affect their areas. Technical reports and documents should be easily accessible and not withheld from the public's reach.

We call on President Duterte to declare Manila Bay a no-reclamation zone, in order to protect and preserve its environmentally critical habitats for the benefit of the Filipino people, from this generation to the next.

ADVOCATES OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY FOR THE PEOPLE,
Quezon City



Palawan: PHIL's last or lost frontier?

STORY & PHOTO BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

A UNIQUE place to visit in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, is the headquarters of the Palawan NGO Network Inc. (PNNI), which is conspicuously attracting local and foreign tourists.

The small semi-concrete, semi-wooden structure sits at a corner lot with two huge wooden fishing boats in front, and "adorned" with rusty chainsaws around its perimeter fence.

Situated at Manalo Extension corner Gabinete Road Intersection, the PNNI headquarters house a small museum of "illegals" which para-enforcers of the group confiscated over the years, a testament to the group's advocacy and commitment to protecting the country's last ecological frontier against destruction.

Environment advocacy

FORMED in 1991, the PNNI's small group of para-enforcers, mostly volunteers and environmental advocates, were able to confiscate via citizen's arrest almost all illegal and unusable equipment—all used by individuals or organized syndicates engaged in various environmental crimes—from illegal fishing, illegal mining and quarrying, illegal logging and illegal wildlife trade.

Name it and the PNNI and its small museum sure have it on display in the museum: fishing boats, trucks, tricycles, motorcycles and the infamous chainsaws, tree-cutting tools like hand saw and ax, fishing gear, nets, compressors, oxygen tanks, cyanide, dynamite, spear guns and even improvised guns or *paltik*.

"We've stopped counting at 700. That was last year," said Robert Chan, executive director of PNNI, of their most prized possession—chainsaws.

A chainsaw can cut 20 trees a day—it is so notorious that it was declared illegal to carry it in the forest without the necessary permit.

With such number of confiscated chainsaws, the group was able to build a "Christmas Tree" that was neatly stacked on top of each other, towering their small headquarters.

With over 1,000 chainsaws, it is perhaps the biggest attraction in the group's unique museum that wows visiting tourists.

said powerful politicians are taking advantage of the dire situation of poor Palawēños.

"We have the saying *isang kahig, isang tuka* [one scratch, one peck]. In Palawan, it's *isang araw, isang kain* [one day, one meal]," he said in mix English and Filipino.

Worse, there are extreme cases when some families sleep with empty stomachs because they have nothing to eat all day, he said.

Comanaging Palawan

INTERVIEWED by the BUSINESS-MIRROR, Executive Director Nelson P. Devanadera defended Alvarez's policies as chairman of PCSD.

While admitting that poverty is a serious problem in Palawan, he said the provincial government and PCSD are not remiss in their duties to address it, including the many problems besetting the province.

PCSD, in partnership with various law enforcement agencies, have also confiscated illegal tools used by unscrupulous individuals and groups in their assault of Palawan's environment, including its threatened species targeted by illegal wildlife traders.

According to Devanadera, he is pushing for the revival of the 10-year "Palawan Integrated Natural Resources Management Project" because of the comanagement agreement between the provincial government and the DENR.

Joining forces, he said Palawan would get stronger protection measure from both the DENR and the provincial government by pooling their resources together.

With the various threats to Palawan, he deemed it the right time to revive such plan.

If implemented, he said it would strengthen Palawan's protection through enhanced law enforcement activities. It would also regulate potentially destructive development projects, such as mining, logging and operation of agroforestry plantations.

It will also promote inclusive growth through livelihood projects that will address hunger and poverty in the province, which will eventually reduce human pressure on the province's environment and rich biodiversity, he said.

Palawan is experiencing massive environmental destruction. Illegal wildlife trade, in the words of Devanadera himself, is quite "alarming," and what is considered the last ecological frontier may soon become a lost ecological frontier—if it is not at that stage already—unless something concrete is done to save the island paradise.



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Palawan: PHL's last or lost frontier?

Sadly, the chainsaws and other "illegals" on display are proofs that the threat to Palawan's environment and natural resources is serious, and the "goons" behind the illegal activities are armed and dangerous.

Real threats

THE organization, which operation is financed mostly by tourists visiting their headquarters through entrance fees and voluntary donations, however, seems to be losing the big fight, as Palawan, the country's so-called last ecological frontier, continues to face serious environmental threats.

Since PNNI started to enforce environment laws, chainsaws kept on coming in as if there's an unlimited supply of this infamous tool in Palawan, Chan said in a mix of English and Filipino.

"We don't know where they are coming from, really," he lamented.

Deadly game

WHILE the group was able to score big in its campaign for the environment, it also suffered huge setbacks, with sweat, tears—and blood.

"We decided to enforce the [environment] laws because the authorities are not doing it," he quipped.

"In the last 10 years, 10 members of our para-enforcers were killed—an average of one dead environmental defender a year," Chan, a lawyer, said.

Apparently, he said even some communities who are supportive of their advocacy before are now afraid to go out in the open for fear for their lives.

PNNI has over 60 member-organizations—but not all are actively involved in environmental advocacy—with some members focusing on labor rights, human rights, women and children, agriculture and agrarian reform, and people's organizations with varied interests.

Besides, Chan said, the threats are real and no organization is willing to gamble with the lives

of their members, especially in a place like Palawan, where illegal activities is a way of life. "As I've said, we've lost 10 para-enforcers already," he said.

'Island paradise'

PALAWAN, the biggest province in the Philippines in terms of total land area, is known as an island paradise. It is home to a matchless number of species of flora and fauna, and home to unique ecosystems. Because of its aesthetic beauty, Palawan is fast becoming a tourist magnet in Luzon.

It's relatively pristine waters, intact forest ecosystems, plus the fascinating and breath-taking landscapes uphill and the white sand beaches in coastal areas make Palawan one of the most sought-after vacation places in the country.

El Nido, Puerto Princesa, Coron, Quezon and Taytay are just a few of the places being promoted by the Provincial Tourism Office and the Department of Tourism.

Poverty stricken

THE island, however, is besieged by various environmental problems. Illegal logging, mining and quarrying, slash-and-burn agriculture and illegal wildlife trade are just some of its major threats.

Conversion of forests into agro-forestry plantations and road construction that passes through virgin forests are also being blamed for the environmental degradation of the province.

People in Palawan, where poverty incidence remains high, are also highly dependent on the

province's natural resources. Timber poaching, cutting of trees for fuel and making charcoal, catching animals and birds for food and for the pet trade are some of the biggest challenges facing Palawan—something PNNI blamed to extreme poverty and weak law enforcement, including wrong policies that seemed to favor destructive development rather than environmental protection.

Chan lamented that it is unfortunate that Palawan, a province rich in natural wealth, remains poor, with people going hungry and forced to do illegal activities at the expense of the environment.

Contentious issues

THREE most contentious issues in Palawan today seemed to have ended not on the side of environmental protection.

These include the removal of five protected areas in the coverage of the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-Nipas), the comanagement agreement between the provincial government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the division of the Palawan into three provinces.

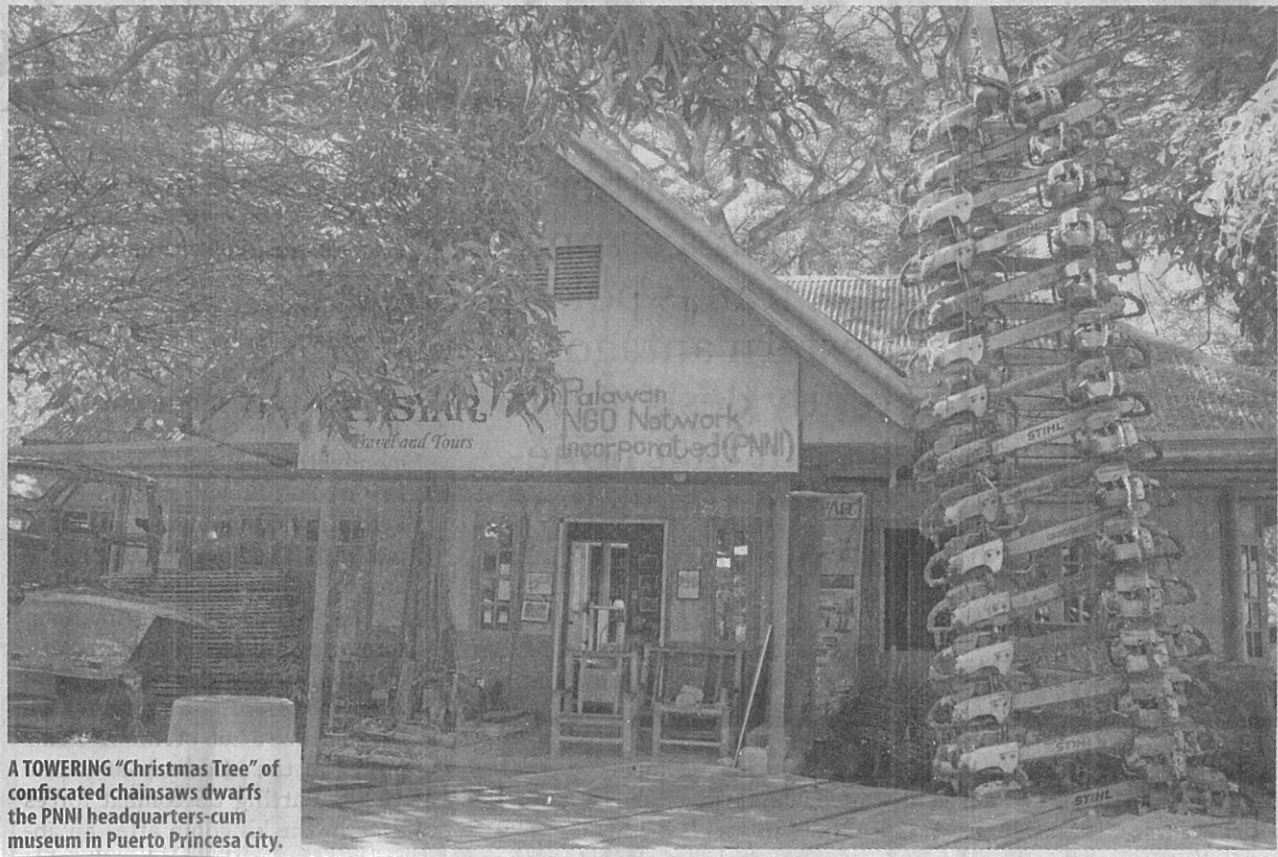
The E-Nipas, enabled by Republic Act 11038, became law last year while the implementing rules and regulation were put in place in May this year.

According to Chan, the comanagement agreement does not sit well with Palawan nongovernment organizations (NGOs) because they have no representation in the crafting of the plan.



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A TOWERING "Christmas Tree" of confiscated chainsaws dwarfs the PNNI headquarters-cum museum in Puerto Princesa City.

The management plan, he said, paves the way for the construction of roads that would pass through forests, the establishment of plantations—such as rubber, palm oil and coconut—and the construction of indigenous people's villages, which spell out their eventual relocation outside their ancestral lands.

Moreover, Chan said the move to divide Palawan into three provinces "smells fishy."

He said the move is in preparation for the plan to shift to a federal government, thereby, qualifying Palawan as one region under one governor, instead of its being part of the proposed Minparom Federal Region composed of Mindoro, Palawan, Romblon and Marinduque, where there is a possibility that the governor's bid to stay in power may be thwarted.

Politics and environmental advocacy

IN Palawan, politics and environmental advocacy do not jibe well.

PNNI has been criticizing Palawan Gov. Jose Alvarez, a billionaire whose family once operated the biggest logging company in the province, for his alleged policies as chairman of Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), particularly the push for the co-management agreement with the DENR and the division of the province into three distinct and independent provinces.

Chan, who accused Alvarez of vote-buying supported and even endorsed Arthur Ventura who eventually lost in the last election,



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Violations continue in Panglao

A NUMBER of resorts on Panglao Island in Bohol continue to violate easement regulations, despite the six-month period given them to address these problems.

Several areas in the surrounding waters were also found to be polluted, a separate government report also noted. The deadline for the Bohol local government unit (LGU) and tourism stakeholders to improve water quality or fix their respective violations ended on May 31.

"The compliance is still low. Less than half of the resorts along Alona Beach have complied with the easement ordinance," disclosed a government official, after a team from the Department of the Interior

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and Local Government (DILG), Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) and Department of Tourism (DOT) inspected the island recently.

The source explained there is "some confusion" as to which easement regulation should be followed. The national regulation for easement on beaches is 20 meters, but the LGU had issued its own ordinance sometime ago, adding another 10 meters for the no-build zone. "Definitely, no one was able to comply with the 30-meter easement ordinance," said the source.

The government source added that the quality of the water around the island "has generally improved, but sometimes there is a spike [in fecal coliform levels], because when it rains, this sometimes affects the sampling." He said the water samples are also affected by the pump boats which throw their garbage into the waters. He declined to say which areas of Panglao recorded the spikes in fecal coliform contamination.

A report from the DILG obtained by the BUSINESSMIRROR showed the water sampling conducted by EMB-7 (Central Visayas Region) last April showed "fecal coliform in six stations are found to be within standards. However, the results from stations 4, 5, 6 and 8 failed or [were] below the normal water quality standard."

Stations 4, 5, 6, 8 are Danao 2 (540 most probably number per 100 milliliter), Danao 3 (540 mpn/100 ml), Tawala 1—where

Alona Beach is located (240 mpn/per 100 ml) and Tawala 3 (540 mpn/100 ml).

The source noted that a number of resorts have also grouped themselves to invest in common sewerage treatment plants, to address the water pollution problem in the island. "They are doing it right now. The DENR and EMB are providing technical advice to them," he added.

He said members of the inspection team recommended to their respective department heads the adoption of the suggestion of the Panglao LGU for government "to issue a specific executive order, like the one which created the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force," to enforce the laws and ordinances needed to rehabilitate the island. He explained that this would prevent resorts from halting to court the LGU and government agencies, when implementing the law.

The source didn't say if a closure of the contaminated areas was proposed by the inspection team. With the recent inauguration of the Panglao International Airport, government officials involved in the rehabilitation of the island have been hesitant to force a total closure of Alona Beach as this would affect tourist arrivals. Last November, after an interagency task force chaired by Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu inspected the island, the popular beach named after a 1970s-era sexpot was ordered closed, and then reopened sometime after.

In 2017, visitor arrivals in Bohol reached 1.1 million, of whom over 700,000 made their way to Panglao.

President Duterte is expected to emphasize his administration's policy on sustainable tourism in his State of the Nation Address today.

Meanwhile, the government source said "stakeholders [in Panglao have been] alerted that they cannot be accredited by the DOT unless they have complied with the environmental requirements. So a lot of them are fixing their ECCs [environmental compliance certificates]."

As of May 31, 2019, there were 11 resorts and 23 Mabuhay accommodations in Panglao Island and Alona Beach that are accredited by the DOT, as per data provided by DOT-Region 7.

The interagency task force chaired by Cimatu, which closed Boracay Island for six months in 2018, has been monitoring several tourism destinations such as El Nido and Coron in Palawan, Siargao in Surigao del Norte, Panglao Island, as well as Baguio City for violations of environmental, local government and tourism laws

Boracay Island is still undergoing rehabilitation and was recently inundated by floods brought by rains from a typhoon. Government's drainage projects have yet to be completed.

Also, a separate government source recently said the DILG will be recommending the closure of Bacuit Bay and the Corong-Corong outfall in El Nido, and prohibiting water activities for three months. (See, "DILG to recommend El Nido closure," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, July 15, 2019.) Ma. Stella F. Arnaldo



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330 tons of garbage collected at Baseco in just 3 weeks

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

About 30,000 kilograms of garbage, mostly single-use plastics, have been collected along the Baseco Beach in Manila within just two weeks of cleanup operations.

The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission's (PRRC) "river warriors" led the cleanup operations last July 8, primarily to save the often-neglected mangrove nursery in Baseco.

A thorough cleanup of the area led

to the collection of at least 1,000 sacks of garbage weighing roughly 30,000 kgs, which were mostly single-use plastics, as well as various personal care and household items.

Executive Director Jose Antonio Goitia explained that just beyond the shores of the Baseco Beach is a pond which houses the mangrove nurseries of PRRC, and partner-organizations Villar Sipag and Baseco Kabalikat.

However, solid and domestic wastes have made their way to these locations,

which affect the water quality and habitat of aquatic species already beginning to thrive there, he added.

"Baseco is at the corner of the Pasig River and Manila Bay. It is a critical area for rehabilitation since it is situated near Manila Bay's sea wall and its community is susceptible to the effects of flooding and storm surges caused by typhoons or heavy rains," Goitia explained.

"This is the reason why together and in partnership with Senator Cynthia Villar, non-government organizations, and inter-agency partners, we are planting mangroves, which serve as buffer zones to protect our people and the environment from potential threats of calamities and natural disasters," he also said.



1,000 sacks of trash collected from Baseco

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According to the PRRC river warriors, the wastes are washed ashore to the mangrove sites by the strong current of Manila Bay, particularly during high tide. **(Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)**



Taguig cleaning drains, creeks to fight dengue

By Joel E. Zurbano

THE Taguig City government is taking preemptive measures to protect and guard city residents from the threat of dengue.

Personnel from the city's Solid Waste Management Office are clearing drainages and creeks to maintain the cleanliness of waterways in various barangays.

They are using heavy equipment for debris clearing operations and for the desilting and dredging of waterways so floodwaters may pass through them freely, the office said in a statement.

On Friday, the city's Sanitation Office also conducted misting and larvicide operation in Barangay Lower Bicutan.

Mayor Lino Edgardo Cayetano said the program aims to eliminate dengue-carrying mosquitos and other insects that pose a danger not only to children but also to adults.

"The priority areas are schools and high population areas in the city," the mayor said.

The Department of Health earlier declared a national dengue alert due to the rapidly rising cases of dengue in several regions of the country.

Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III said among the regions that have exceeded the epidemic threshold are Mimaropa (Region IV-B), Western Visayas (Region VI), Central Visayas (Region VII), and Northern Mindanao (Region X).

Several dengue cases were also reported in the province of Cavite.



City-wide clean-up sa Marikina isinagawa

Pinangunahan ni Marikina City Mayor Marcelino 'Marcy' Teodoro ang pagsasagawa ng city-wide clean-up sa kabuuan ng lungsod.

Kasama ni Mayor Teodoro si Marikina Acting City Administrator Adrian Salvador at iba pang department heads sa pagsasagawa ng paglilinis sa kanilang siyudad.

Ayon kay Salvador, kung sa ibang lungsod ay puspu-

san pa lamang ang paglilinis upang maibalik ang dating ganda ng mga ito, kilala naman aniya ang Marikina sa pagiging malinis nitong lungsod dahil na rin sa disiplinado ang mga residente dito.

Ang grupo naman ni City Environmental Management Office (CEMO), na pinamumunuan ni OIC Ramil Manuel ay ineskoba ang lahat ng sidewalks sa may

2,446 kalsada sa lungsod upang alisin ang mga lumot, na maaaring magresulta upang madulas ang mga naglalakad dito, lalo na ngayong panahon ng tag-ulan.

Tiniyak din ng lokal na pamahalaan na istrikto sila sa pagpapatupad ng kanilang ordinansa na nagpapataw ng parusa sa mga taong nagkakalat sa lungsod. (Mer Layson)



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SAKO-SAKONG BASURA NAHAKOT SA DALAMPASIGAN

LAS PIÑAS CITY - DAAN-DAANG volunteer mula sa gobyerno at pribadong sector ang nakilahok kahapon upang magtulong-tulong sa paghahakot ng mga sako-sakong basura mula sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay sa may Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat Eco-tourism Area malapit sa Coastal Area.

Ang mga sako-sakong basura ay nahakot matapos ang isang linggong pag-ulan dala ng habagat.

Nagkalat ang plastic at iba pang mga basura sa ilang kilometrong haba ng baybayin sa habitat bago magsimula ang paglilinis dakong 6:00 ng umaga.

Napag-alaman na lingguhan naman ang ginagawang paglilinis sa naturang lugar mula ng magsimula ang Manila Bay Cleanup project.

Subalit kahapon sa ginawang paglilinis ay naging mas malaki ang volume ng basura na kailangan pulutin na

naipon dahil sa isang linggong pag-ulan at malakas na ulan dala ng bagyo at habagat.

Ayon sa pahayag

ng Parañaque City Environment and Natural Resources Office, wala ang mga naturang basura noong nakaraang Sabado

matapos ang kanilang huling sama-samang cleanup sa lugar.

MARIVIC FERNANDEZ



VILLAR PINANGUNAHAN ANG PAGLILINIS SA RAMSAR SITE. Bilang bahagi ng pagdiriwang ng *National Disaster Resilience Month*, pinangunahan ni Sen. Cynthia A. Villar ang clean up activities sa Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park na inorganisa ng Manila Bay Sunset Partnership Program Inc. at itinaguyod ng Maynilad. Nagsasagawa ang senador, na inaasahang mananatiling chairman ng Senate environment and natural resources committee, ng regular na paglilinis sa wetland park na napabilang sa Ramsar List of "Wetlands of International Importance" noong March 15, 2013. Isinusulong ni Villar ang isang malinis at luntiang kapaligiran.



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Single-use plastic ipagbabawal

Upang mapigilan ang polusyon sa bansa, prayoridad ni Senador Cynthia Villar ang panukalang-batas na magbabawal sa single-use plastics.

Layunin ng Senate Bill No. 333 o Single-Use Plastic Product Regulation Act of 2019 na i-regulate ang manufacturing, importation at paggamit ng single-use plastic products.

Sinabi ni Villar, na inaasahang chairperson ng Committee on Environment and Natural Resources sa 18th Congress, na mahalaga ang pagsasabatas ng panukalang ito dahil sa

pag-aaral na sa buong mundo, ang Pilipinas ang pangatlong pinakamalaking producer ng plastic wastes na napupunta sa karagatan.

Aniya, mamamatay ang mga isda at magiging disyerto ang mga karagatan sa taong ito.

Sinabi pa ng Nacionalista Party senator na umiigting ang suliranin sa plastic waste dahil na rin sa mga produktong nasa plastic sachets.

Sa ilalim ng panukala, pagbabawalan ang food establishments, stores, markets at retailers na magbigay ng single-use plastics.

Hihikayatin din ang

consumers na gumamit ng reusable materials samantalang ang manufacturers ay dapat na mangolekta, magre-

cycle at itapon ang single-use plastics. Hindi na rin papayagan ang importasyon ng single-use plastics.



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Green soldier Ecological warrior troops to a mangrove forest to pick up plastic containers and wrappers that causes destruction to the delicate environment.



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Water level at Angat Dam continues to rise

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**

The water level at Angat Dam continued to rise on Sunday — but only slightly.

Based on the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) monitoring as of Monday morning, the Angat Dam's water level was 161.45 meters, slightly higher by 10 centimeters from last Saturday's 161.35 meters.

It can be considered just a slight improvement as compared to the past two days, where Angat Dam's water level increased by more than two meters.

It is higher than the 160-meter critical level but still way lower than the 180-meter minimum dam operating level and 210-meter normal high water level.

PAGASA weather specialist Ezra Bulquerin said a weak southwest monsoon or "habagat" will persist over Ilocos Region and Cordillera Administrative Region this Monday.

Meanwhile, the rest of the country can ex-

pect fair weather throughout the day, he added.

Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, and Apayao will have cloudy skies with isolated rain showers and thunderstorms.



Angat water level increases slightly

The water level at Angat Dam in Bulacan slightly increased yesterday.

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PAGASA weather specialist Ezra Bulquerin said a weak southwest monsoon or "habagat" will persist over Ilocos region and Cordillera Administrative Region today.

The rest of the country can expect fair weather throughout the day, he added.

Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, and Apayao will have cloudy skies with isolated rain showers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers.

PAGASA continues to warn the public of possible sudden rains that may cause flash floods or landslides during severe thunderstorms.

Throughout the week, the State weather bureau said the habagat will be temporarily weak while a ridge of high pressure area or an anti-cyclone system will be the dominant weather system affecting Luzon. **(Ellalyn Ruiz)**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



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CARTOON

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LEBEL NG TUBIG SA ANGAT NAKABABAWI NA

UNTI-UNTI nang nakababawi ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa Bulacan dahil na rin sa sunod-sunod na mga pag-ulan na dala ng bagyong Falcon at Goring.

Batay sa pinakahuling datos mula sa Pagasa Hydrology Division, alas-6 ng umaga ng Linggo ay umakyat na sa 161.45 meters ang lebel ng

tubig sa Angat Dam mula sa 161.35 meters na naitala nitong Sabado.

Maliban sa Angat, patuloy rin sa pagtaas ang lebel ng tubig sa La Mesa Dam na umakyat sa 73.37 meters mula sa 73.21 meters kahapon

Dahil sa patuloy na pagbuhos ng ulan na nararanasan sa malaking panig ng bansa

hanggang ngayon, patuloy rin sa pagtaas ang lebel ng tubig sa iba pang mga dam sa Luzon tulad ng Ambuklao, Binga at Pantabangan

Gayunman, may naitalang pagbaba ng lebel ng tubig sa San Roque Dam sa Pangasinan, Magat Dam sa Isabela at Ang Caliraya Dam sa Laguna. **DWIZ882**



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P20M to revitalize Baguio parks

The allocation of the funds for the greening and reblooming project is just an initial wave of support from the tourism body

By Aldwin Quitasol

BAGUIO CITY – The Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) will commit some P20 million for the greening and reblooming of the famous Burnham Park and Sunshine Park most frequented by both residents and tourists here.

This was communicated by TIEZA chief executive officer Pocholo Paragas to Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong, Vice Mayor Faustino Olowan and some members of the City Council, as well as veteran urban planner Architect Joseph Alabanza.

Paragas informed them that the fund was previously approved by the board way back in 2015 but it took some time to facilitate the release of the funds for the project

due to alleged differences in the priorities of the tourism department and the local government.

Paragas said that the allocation of the funds for the greening and reblooming project is just an initial wave of support from the tourism body to the city government as there is the upcoming funding support for projects in the comprehensive development plan for the 34-hectare Burnham Park complex.

Recently, Magalong ordered the City Environment and Parks Management Office, in coordination with other offices of the city government to seek and present practical and feasible plans for the improvement of Burnham Park. The mayor eyes the rehabilitation of the park to be done in three months.

In his inspection of different parts of the park, he observed some portions of the park that are in sorry state.

Magalong said the

rehabilitation will not be extensive like that of Boracay and other places of the country. He said the city government will focus on the greening of Baguio and the rehabilitation and construction of quality sewerage systems.



Park rehab Funding for the rehabilitation of Burnham Park is just an initial wave of support from tourism authorities.



Coop reports improved power service

PALAWAN Electric Cooperative (Paleco) said it has reduced the frequency and duration of power interruptions by at least 50 percent after undertaking several solutions to address technical issues.

Paleco said among the efforts it implemented are massive clearing of trees in the entire coverage area; thermal scanning of power substation equipment and distribution lines to prevent hotspots; transformer load management as well as massive inspection, re-sealing, modification and change of defective big load meters and instrument transformers.

The cooperative also conducted meter clustering of residential consumers, clearing of areas with suspected pilferages, coordination of protective devices, improve-

ment of grounding system, and capacitating of technical personnel on distribution maintenance and substation operation.

"For PALECO, these unplanned power interruptions are caused mostly by heavy vegetation and wildlife incursion attributed to the vast forest cover of Palawan. Unfortunately, DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) and local government policies are stringent in Palawan which limit PALECO to conduct massive line clearing to protect the integrity of the lines," said Jeffrey Tan-Endriga, company chairman.

Endriga said at least 40 percent of the total power interruptions recorded from January to May 2019 are attributed to power plants which may be caused by abnormal engine

tripping, old-aged generating units and uncoordinated protection equipment settings between some of the new power players.

"The current dispatch protocol was needed to be fixed due to being opposed to the concept of merit order as well as the directive of the Senate committee on energy gives priority to less reliable and more expensive power providers," he said.

The cooperative is also installing additional substations in at least three locations to correct the quality of electrical operations parameters such as voltage, frequency and current as well as improve the reliability of power delivery to consumers in far-flung areas.

Paleco said it will install a supervisory control and data acquisition to ensure real-time monitoring and

faster response to required line operations as well as the stability and reliability of power delivery and upgrading of existing lines.

"With the approval of our capex, we can now start the much-needed facility improvements which will lead to the improvement of electricity services in our franchise area. We hope to further reduce our system interruption duration and frequencies by at least 50 percent from the previous year as what we have already achieved in the first semester of 2019," Endriga said.

He added the problems in power supply in the region are also affected by transmission and generation issues and not distribution dilemmas alone. He noted the company's capital expenditure projects were only approved in November 2018 and procurement is ongoing.



This is On Me

Floro Mercene

Coffee could soon be extinct

RESEARCHERS from the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens in the United Kingdom warn that wild species of coffee may soon go extinct. Sixty percent of these wild species

is threatened by climate change, deforestation, diseases and drought. They are vital for developing coffee crop production to support the global demand for coffee. Arabica, the most

popular kind of coffee, is already endangered, but less popular species should also be protected. In order to have coffee crop that is resilient to diseases and climate change, we need to preserve a diverse range of wild coffee species. Fewer coffee crops would mean that prices would increase and future coffee may lose the quality that we enjoy now.

Forest habitats are vital for the growth of coffee. The increasing prevalence of deforestation threatens the populations of wild coffee.

Besides this, these plants grow in a very specific habitat. Any changes in temperature or rainfall could render certain forests as uninhabitable by coffee in the future. In Ethiopia, 85% of the land currently being used by coffee may no longer be used for coffee by 2080.

According to the head of coffee research at Kew, Aaron Davis, the coffee species being threatened are those that can be used to further develop coffee in the future. Losing these species would mean that we

risk the long-term sustainability of the coffee industry. He also said that we must work towards improved management and creation of protected areas for wild species coffee. More focus and research in germplasm, or seed banks and living collections of coffee, would also help keep our coffee populations resilient in the future. Coffee drinkers can also learn more about the impact of the coffee that they drink and make sure that these are coming from plantations that also seek to protect forests.



WRIT OF KALIKASAN PETITION

IBP WANTS CALIDA'S ACCUSATION EXPUNGED

Human rights lawyer Chel Diokno and two others from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) have asked the Supreme Court to strike off from the records the government's accusation that they misled a group of fishermen into asking for court protection of the fishing grounds in the West Philippine Sea that have been seized by China.

Petition withdrawn

Diokno, with IBP lawyers Andre Palacios and Gil Aquino, formally withdrew on July 19 the writ of kalikasan petition they filed on behalf of 27 fishermen from Pag-asa (Thitu) Is-

land in Palawan and from Subic, Zambales.

The lawyers informed the court that the fishermen have either told them they wanted to withdraw the case, or could no longer be reached.

They, however, did not offer a reason for their clients' change of heart, except for a handwritten letter from six Palawan fishermen telling the lawyers to withdraw the case "*nang sa gayon ay maging tahimik na ang aming mga buhay* (so our lives can return to normal)."

The 20 other fishermen could not be contacted because they are either still in Pag-asa

Island or they have left their homes that have been claimed by the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

Diokno and the two IBP lawyers joined Solicitor General Jose Calida in asking the Supreme Court to dismiss the writ of kalikasan case.

But they also complained how the chief government counsel "attacked the[ir] integrity and credibility" during the oral arguments on July 2, and asked the Supreme Court to expunge Calida's formal manifestation "in order to preserve the sanctity and integrity of the judicial process." —DONA

Z. PAZZIBUGAN INQ



TITLE:

CONGRATS, Sen. Manny Pacquiao, for beating Keith Thurman.

Parang boksing din ang pulitika. Sa kasagsagan ng laban sa boksing, kanya-kayang taktika at pagpapakita ng lakas ang napanood.

Ganito rin sa pulitika. Kung may knockout sa boksing, meron din sa pulitika.

'Yung pagkatalo ng Otso Diretso nitong nakaraang halalang 2019, isang malinaw na halimbawa ng knockout.

Wala ni sinomang kasapi ng Otso Diretso ang nagwagi sa kabila ng mga mapanirang dila at demonstrasyon ng mga ito.

IBANG TAKTIKA

Pero naging kaiba ang boksing nitong nakaraang halalan.

Si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang binakbakan nang binakbakan ng Otso Diretso sa paniniwalang kung guguhito, guguhito rin ang kanyang mga kandidato.

Inihalo pa nila ang mga paninira ng mga dayuhan gaya ng mga nagsasabing mga protector daw sila ng human rights na nilalabag ng Pangulo at ilan sa kanyang mga kandidato.

Ngunit kabaligtaran nga ang nangyari.

Kahit ipinagmimisa kantada pa ng Otso Diretso na matitigok sa halalan, sina Sen. Christopher Lawrence 'Bong' Go at Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, ay naging number 3 at number 5, ayon sa pagkakasunod.

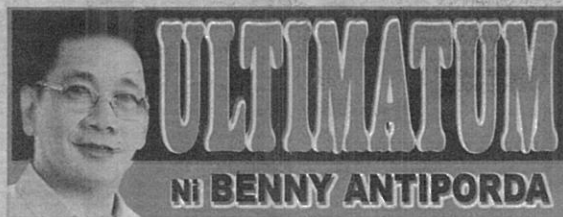
Binansagan si Sen. Go na isa lang tuta ni Pang. Digong o walang alam sa serbisyo-publiko at si Sen. Go naman na berdugo ng mahihirap sa giyera sa droga.

Hindi pinaniwalaan ng mga botante at mamamayan ang mga paninira ng oposisyong pulitikal at naging malaking sampal sa kanila ang resulta ng halalan.

IBA TALAGA ANG PULITIKA

May malaki nga lang ang pagkakaiba ng boksing sa pulitika.

Sa boksing, madaliling makatanggap ng pagkatalo ang tao at maghahanda ulit ito sa susunod na laban.



ALA NANG GINAWA KUNDI ANG MANIRA

xing arena na roon ginaganap ang laban.

Pero sa pulitika, kaiba, ialo na sa Pilipinas.

Hindi matanggap ng mga talunang Otso Diretso ang kanilang pagkatalo at tuloy-tuloy ang mga ito sa laban kahit tapos na ang pampulitikang boksing. Kung ang halalan ang boxing arena, lumalagpas ang mga ito.

Palibhasa, nasanay na sila na dinaraan sa ibang arena ang laban gaya ng people power na nakapagtatakang inaangkin nila.

SULSOL SA MGA DAYUHAN

Nitong nakaraang mga araw na kinatigan ng 18 bansa kontra 14 ang kahilingan ng Iceland na mag-imbesta ang United Nations Human Rights Commission sa umano'y paglabag ng administrasyong Duterte sa karapatang pantao, agad na sinulsulan ng mga kritiko ang International Criminal Court na imbestigahan na si Pang. Duterte dahil may batayan na umano.

Pero nakalimutan ng mga kritiko na may kabuuang 47 miyembro ng UN-HRC at 15 sa mga nalalabing bansa ang nagpakita ng kawalan ng interes sa kahilingan ng Iceland.

Nakalimutan din ng mga kritiko na gumagana ang sistemang pangkatarungan ng mahal kong Pinas at nako-convict ang mga napatutunayang mapang-abusong pulis sa giyera sa droga.

Nakalimutan din ng mga kritiko ang napakahalagang usapin, ang soberenya ng bansa.

Sa soberenya, pantay-pantay at hiwa-hiwalay ang lahat ng bansa at hindi dapat pinakikialaman ng iba ang isang bansa kung paano ito pamahalaan ng isang lehitimong gobyerno at lider.

Sa oras na magdala ang isang kritiko ng mga dayuhan upang makialam sa mga panloob na usapin naging bopos isang

itong anyo ng pagtataksil sa bayan.

Nagiging tuta na rin ng mga dayuhan ang papalit na lider at sira na ang kalayaan ng isang bansa na dapat nitong taglay-taglay sa harap ng iba.

SI BIKOY AT WPS

Bahagi ng tuloy-tuloy na pagtatangka upang maagaw ng mga oposisyong pulitikal ang liderato ng bansa sa labas ng halalan ang tuloy-tuloy na paninira.

Nagpetisyon ang oposisyong pulitikal sa Supreme Court para mag-isyu ang SC ng Writ of Kalikasan sa gobyerno na protektahan at huwag hayaang sirain ang mga yamang-dagat sa WPS ng bansang China.

Anak ng tokwa, 'yung mga mangingisda na todo-reklamo umano na naging batayan ng pag-sasampa ng kaso ng mga oposisyon ay pumalag dahil niloko umano sila.

Pumirma umano ang mga ito sa papel sa paniniwalang magkakaroon sila ng mga benepisyo pero kaso naman pala iyon na sila ang ibabala sa kanyon o labanan sa paglilitis.

Ito namang kaso ni Bikoy, sinamahan pa ng simbahan ito nang magbunyang ng kaugnayan umano ng pamilya Duterte sa malakihang droga, at idinamay na nito si Sen. Go.

Ngayong naging saksi si Bikoy ng mga kaso ng sedisyon, libelo at iba pa laban sa mga miyembro ng Otso Diretso at mga taga-simbahan, tinatawag naman nila itong sinungaling at hindi dapat paniwalaan.

Sa palagay ninyo, mga Bro, saan tayo patungo sa ganitong kalagayan?

Anomang reaksyon o reklamo ay maaaring iparating sa 0922840-3333 o i-email sa banti-



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DUTERTE MAY TACKLE DRUG WAR, SEA ROW

STORY BY THE INQUIRER STAFF

Lawmakers want to hear the President speak about the 'realities in the country,' including 'gut issues' like unemployment and rising prices, in his State of the Nation address to Congress.

FROM A1

By the Inquirer Staff
@Team_Inquirer

Buoyed by his high ratings, President Duterte may continue to defend his controversial stand in the Philippines' territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea and his brutal war on drugs in his speech at the opening of the 18th Congress on Monday.

Thousands of protesters plan to march on the legislative complex in Quezon City to denounce Mr. Duterte's policies while the Senate and the House of Representatives, sitting in a joint session, listen to the President detail his plans for the second half of his term.

The police and the military have gone on full alert, although no threat to public safety has been monitored.

The annual presidential address to Congress, a borrowing from an American tradition, is a gala affair in the Philippines, with legislators and their spouses coming in formal attire—the traditional barong tagalog for men and the *terno* for women.

School has been called off at all levels in Quezon City to ease vehicular congestion on the road to the legislative complex.

The joint session starts at 4 p.m.

Attack on critics

Maria Ela Atienza, a political science professor at the University of the Philippines, on Saturday said Mr. Duterte's first three State of the Nation addresses were consistent attacks on his critics and his speech on Monday could be no different.

Atienza noted that Mr. Duterte enjoyed a "renewed

mandate" as a result of his allies' victory in May's midterm elections and high popularity ratings in opinion polls.

In the latest Pulse Asia poll, Mr. Duterte scored approval and trust ratings of 85 percent.

In the most recent Social Weather Stations poll, his net satisfaction rating was +68 percent.

Mr. Duterte, Atienza said, can be expected to continue defending his war on drugs, especially with the United Nations Human Rights Council's recent decision to investigate the thousands of alleged extrajudicial killings in his crackdown on narcotics.

He can also be expected to continue attacking Western countries for interfering in Philippine domestic affairs and imposing their own standards on the Philippines "without understanding actual conditions" in the country, she said.

And as in the past, the President may also "continue attacking [his] local critics, particularly institutions like the [Catholic] Church and opposition groups that claim human rights have been sacrificed in the war on drugs," Atienza said.

Fishing deal with Xi

Mr. Duterte, she said, can also be expected to "lecture" on the constitutionality of his verbal agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping allowing Chinese to fish in Philippine waters in exchange for China's allowing Filipinos to fish at Panatag Shoal, a traditional fishing ground for Filipinos that China seized in 2012.

He may also continue to defend his policy of greater cooperation with China amid widespread criticism of his handling of the June 9 sinking of a Philippine fishing boat in the South China Sea after being hit

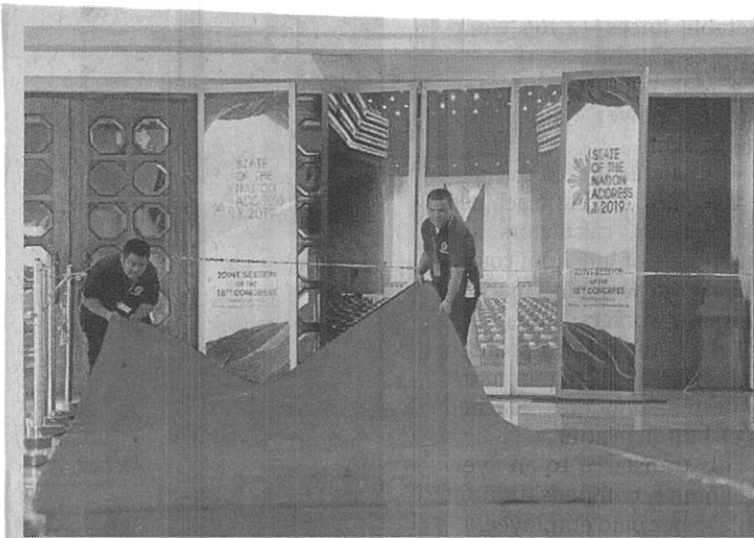
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RED CARPET WELCOME Utility workers roll out the red carpet at the North Wing lobby of the Batasang Pambansa Complex in Quezon City as part of preparations for President Duterte's State of the Nation address on Monday. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

by a Chinese trawler, which then abandoned the boat's crew in the open sea.

Press Secretary Martin Andanar, speaking in a radio interview on Sunday, said Mr. Duterte could mention the South China Sea territorial dispute in his speech, but whether he would lecture on the legality of his fishing deal with Xi depended on his mood.

"It is highly possible that he will mention the West Philippine Sea and his stand," Andanar said, using the local name for the waters within the Philippines' 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea.

"If he will deliver a lecture, off the script, I don't know. That will depend on the prerogative and mood of the President," Andanar said.

He said the President cut his speech from 28 pages to 19 pages during a rehearsal at the Palace with film and television director Joyce Bernal.

The speech may run for 45 minutes to an hour, depending

on Mr. Duterte's reading speed and on his veering off the script, as he is wont to do, Andanar said.

"I don't know what else he is going to say," he said.

Real state of the nation

Senators on Sunday urged Mr. Duterte to speak about the real state of the nation.

Senate President Vicente Sotto said he wanted to hear the President focus on bringing down the number of drug dependents through a "demand-reduction strategy."

"I want the demand-reduction strategy to be given more efforts. We have a strong and good supply-reduction strategy, but we have to do better in reducing the demand [for narcotics] as part of prevention," Sotto said on radio.

"The day we stop [people] from buying [illegal drugs] is the day they (drug dealers) stop selling," he added.

Detained Sen. Leila de Lima said she hoped Mr. Duterte would dispense with his usual

"crude jokes" and just discuss the realities in the country.

She said Mr. Duterte should explain to the public his defeatist stance in the country's territorial dispute with China and the government's failure to stem the proliferation of illegal drugs despite his bloody crackdown on narcotics.

"Mr. Duterte should admit to the Filipino people that his war on drugs achieved nothing but spill the blood of his countrymen," De Lima said in a statement.

Gut issues

Sen. Nancy Binay said the President should "extensively tackle the gut issues," including unemployment, rising prices of basic goods, and low pay for workers.

"The Senate will be listening. Even with a giant list of legislative priorities, we are ready to help craft necessary laws that will benefit the people," Binay said.

Environmental groups last week said they hoped the President would talk about the destruction of the country's patrimony in China's aggressive encroachment on the West Philippine Sea.

According to the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, the Duterte administration has sold at least P773 billion worth of sovereign resources since coming to office.

It said the figure was the estimated total value of marine resources destroyed by Chinese vessels in the West Philippine Sea since 2016 and the value of land and water resources promised as guarantees for the loans for the Kaliwa Dam and Chico River irrigation projects.

—REPORTS FROM JULIE M. AURELIO, JEANNETTE I. ANDRADE, MARLON RAMOS AND JHESSET O. ENANO INQ

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PRRD to deliver 'meaningful' SONA

By **GENALYN D. KABILING**

Combating criminality and corruption, promoting inclusive economic growth, and tackling the West Philippine Sea (WPS) issue will likely take the spotlight in the President Duterte's fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA) today following a "meaningful" past year.

When he faces the joint session of the 18th Congress, the President is expected to highlight his accomplish-

ments in these areas in the past three years as well as plans to "further move the nation forward" for the remainder of his term, according to his spokesman Salvador Panelo.

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said President Duterte is 100 percent ready to deliver his 4th SONA after editing and cutting his speech to less than 20 pages.

"Ilang beses niya itong inedit from 28 pages, naging 19 pages na lamang ang speech. We are expecting it to

be at least 17 to 18 pages to last for 45 minutes and one hour, depende sa speed ni President. Based sa ensayo last Friday, kaya niya ito in less than an hour," he said.

"On his fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Rodrigo Roa Duterte will report to the Filipino people the achievements of the administration in the past three years, the present situation of the country, and his plans to further move the nation forward for the next three

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PRRD to deliver...

◀1

years," Panelo said.

"We can expect that he will tackle the promises he made on fighting corruption, illegal drugs, criminality, and rebellion," he said.

Panelo added: "We can also expect that he will speak about other major issues, such as that of the West Philippine Sea, ways to sustain the growth in our economy, as well as his legislative agenda."

The President will deliver his SONA amid criticisms from some groups for reportedly allowing Chinese fishermen in the country's local waters as well as a looming United Nations Human Rights Council inquiry on his bloody war on illegal drugs.

Duterte, who continues to enjoy high public trust and approval ratings, earlier asserted that he has done nothing unconstitutional about his West Philippine Sea policy and intends to "educate" his critics about the matter during the SONA. On the UNHR resolution about the drug war, Duterte maintained that he prefers to face a local court instead of an international tribunal to defend his campaign against drugs and crime.

The Palace has taken pride that the country has reached a "better and con-

stantly improving state" following the President's hard work to provide a comfortable life for all Filipinos. Among the President's feats highlighted by Panelo are the reduced crime rate, lower poverty incidence and unemployment, stable economic growth, improved social service, and infrastructure development.

"The past year has been meaningful and we are all excited for what was prepared for tomorrow's momentous event," Panelo said.

Ahead of the main event at the Batasan complex, the President had rehearsed the delivery of his speech at the Palace over the weekend.

According to Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar, the President's has been "hands-on" in crafting and editing the SONA speeches since 2016. "The President is really hands-on when it comes to his speech. He edits, reads line per line, every word, word for word. You can see how he looks into details in his speech," he said.

He said this year's SONA will likely focus on building the President's legacy, particularly in the areas of poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, and peace and order. He said the government intends to bring down poverty to



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14 percent from 21 percent by 2022 and hopefully propel the country into an upper middle class status.

"This Monday will be the day that you will know the future and how the future will look like in the Philippines," he said.

Andanar said another government priority will be pursuing the "Build, Build, Build" program that includes 75 railways, roads, bridges, airports, and other big-ticket infrastructure projects. He said around 28 to 35 projects would be completed within Duterte's term.

"At the end of the day, what is important is that President Duterte sets the bar of public service and sets the bar of infrastructure building, policy making, and poverty alleviation so that the next president, the president that will be elected in 2022, will have a bar to look up to and a bar to follow or even a bar to achieve — if not achieve, to surpass. Iyon ang pinakaimportante [that's the most important]," he said.

Priority measures

The proposed 2020 national budget, tax and trade reforms, and return of the death penalty are among the administration measures President Duterte hopes the 18th Congress will swiftly pass.

Other measures, including the creation of a Department of Disaster Resilience as well as another department for overseas Filipino workers will also be part of the President's legislative proposal to the next Congress, according to Panelo.

"Our priority is to provide a comfortable life for Filipinos," Panelo said in an interview with the Manila Bulletin ahead of the President's fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday.

In seeking the passage of the proposed 2020 budget, Panelo said the government hopes there will be no repeat of the reenacted budget early this year.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) had earlier announced that it intends to submit the proposed P4.1-trillion national budget for 2020 not later than the second week of August.

"We have experienced the impact of a reenacted budget as a result of a budget impasse and we hope that this would not happen again," Panelo said.

"The welfare of the Filipino people is our utmost priority and therefore we call on the members of Congress to act immediately so that government services will not be hampered," he said.



Rody to deliver legacy SONA

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte is expected to be both on legacy and lecture mode as he delivers today his fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA), where he is seen to cite the gains of his administration while responding to critics of his controversial policies.

Duterte's "legacy" SONA may highlight security and anti-poverty efforts as well as the government's infrastructure program, an endeavor that aims to become a "gold standard" for future leaders, according to Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanan.

"For the next three years, it's all about Duterte legacy... Legacy is a very important word," Andanan told radio station dzBB yesterday.

"(If the President leaves) hard legacy like subways, railway systems in Mindanao, bridges, highways... that will become the 'gold standard,' that will become the barometer, the bar that the next president will have to look at. They have to either match it or surpass it to improve the lives of every Filipino," he added.

The administration is planning to spend P8 trillion for infrastructure until 2022 to improve the competitiveness of the Philippines, which has been a laggard in the region when it comes to public infrastructure. Officials have claimed that the ambitious Build Build Build program would usher in a "golden age" of infrastructure.

Andanan said the fourth SONA, which may last for 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the speed of delivery, would be one of his most important speeches as it would contain plans for his last three years in office. Aside from infrastructure, two other themes that may be highlighted are poverty alleviation and peace and order.

"At the end of the day, what is important is that President Duterte sets the bar for public service and... for infrastructure-building, policymaking and poverty alleviation," Andanan said in a recent interview.

Rody to 'educate' critics

While SONAs have always been about achievements, today's address may also become a venue for Duterte to lash back at critics who question the legality of his decisions and policies, including his handling of the West Philippine Sea row.

Duterte has drawn flak for entering

into a fishing agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping, a deal that granted the Chinese access to the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. He had previously claimed the deal had made it possible for Filipino fishermen to enter Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, a fishing ground off Zambales that is within the Philippine EEZ but has been under China's control since 2012.

"Maybe during the SONA, I will educate people that what I did, I said you can fish, was right. It can't be unconstitutional," Duterte told reporters last July 8.

"To my countrymen, I do not have any sin to the Constitution, believe me," he added.

Andanan said it is "highly possible" that Duterte would mention his stand on the West Philippine Sea.

"Whether he would lecture, meaning off the script, I do not know. That will be the prerogative of the President. That will depend on the mood of the President," he said.

Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, an outspoken critic of Duterte's policies on China, has asked the Chief Executive not to mention the fishing deal in his SONA, saying it would make the agreement legally binding.

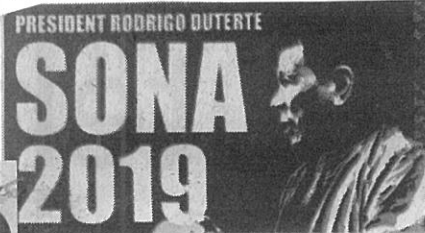
Andanan said law and order would also be mentioned in the fourth SONA but could not say whether the President would talk about the United Nations Human Rights Council seeking a comprehensive report on the Philippines' war on illegal drugs.

"We do not accept that decision. We will not allow the investigators to come in. That's the decision. Now perhaps, that decision has to be reviewed. (Whether) the President will mention it, we don't know," the presidential communications secretary added.

Priority measures

Duterte is also likely to enumerate his priority bills, which officials say have higher chances of being passed because the two legislative chambers are now dominated by his allies. Andanan said among the measures that may be mentioned are the proposed National Land Use Act, which calls for sustainable use, management and development of lands. The President also mentioned the bill in his third SONA.

'I can't be anyone else other than the Rodrigo Duterte that I am'

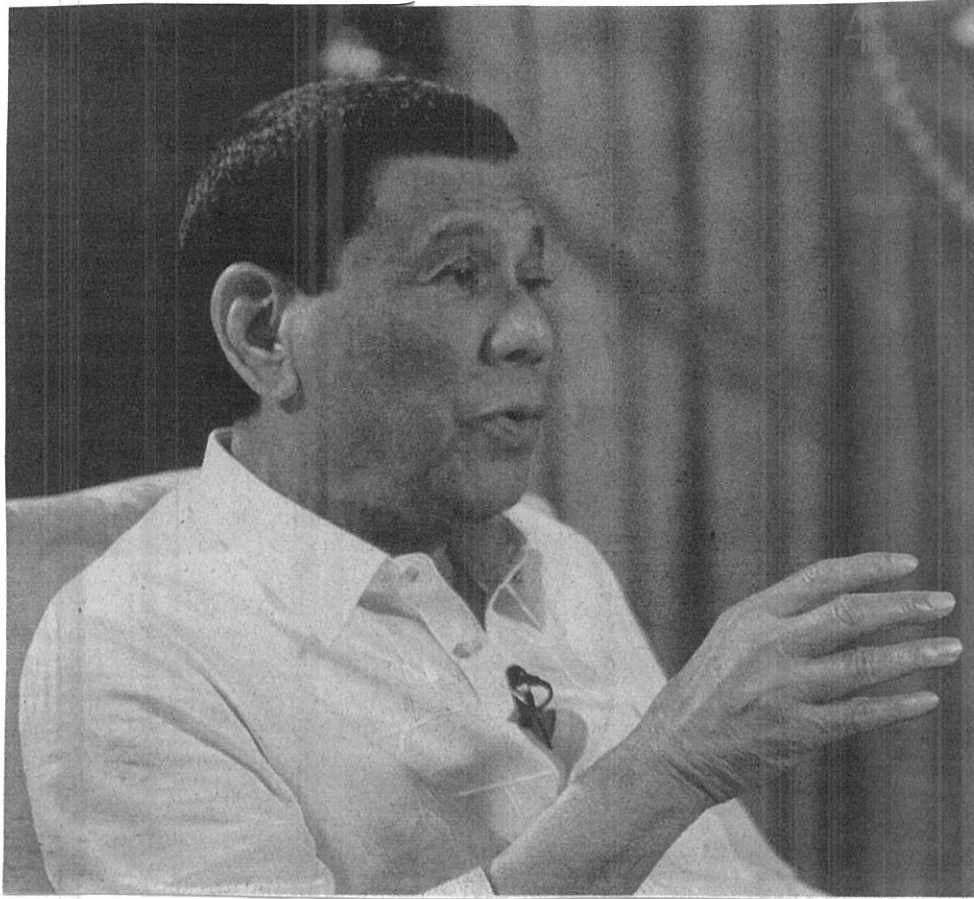


PHOTOS BY
J. GERARD SEGUIA

DAYS ahead of today's State of the Nation Address (SONA), *The Manila Times* President and CEO Dante "Klink" Ang 2nd interviewed President Rodrigo Duterte in Malacañang, which yielded three stories as published by the paper about the Philippine leader's relentless war on drugs, push for agricultural reform and poverty alleviation as his main legacy.

The rest of the three-hour interview that has not been published gives readers a further glimpse into the persona of the maverick mayor from Mindanao who was catapulted to the presidency by tradpol*-weary voters three years ago (*traditional politician).

Duterte has managed to sustain popular support for his unorthodox



leadership style halfway through his term, despite the heavy bombardment of criticism directed at him by his political opponents, as well as the local elites and some traditional international institutions alike.

Duterte interestingly describes himself in his own words as a nobody, whose name never figured in any award-giving body in school when he was a student. What makes him different, he says when asked, is that his natural tough-talking self happened to have broken through the conventional mold of a city mayor in a remote province down south to become president of the country.

In the selected excerpts below from the interview, the President answers questions about the focus of his administration in the last half of his six-year term, especially about strengthening the middle class and his foreign policy.

Q: Going forward to the next three years, what will be your priority measures that are likely to be the focus of your administration?

(After mentioning his government's top accomplishments such as the passage of the PhilHealth (Universal Health Care) law, educational reform, the "Build, Build, Build" program, professionalization of the police force and improved law and order situation, Duterte's reply to this question largely formed the basis of a story published by the Times under the headline "Duterte: Use coco levy for agri reform," on July 13.)

Because we [America and the Philippines] are friends, because we have the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty and we have been very close, okay *ako dyan* (that's just fine with me).

Pero yung sabihing may giyera doon (But to say, if there's a war in that region) then you ask for the Philippines to send a contingent, we give in to their request. But this cannot go on forever and you know there are things which I cannot elaborate [on] but I will just mention it. *Meron tayong binili na* (we bought) hand-me-down NATO helicopters. Three of those helicopters crashed, killing all my pilots. I have been asking them questions [to explain] but there has never been a satisfactory answer.

During the time of the Maranao rebellion and the shabu [operations there] everywhere, *yung mga luma nating baril, alam mo pag luma lumalaki na ang bala natutunaw yan so wala nang trajectory iyan* (our firearms are outdated, they have lost their trajectory).

Alam ko na kulang ang baril (I know we didn't have enough guns) so I tried [approaching] China. I went to China purposely to just buy guns on credit. *Sabi ko wala akong pera* (I said I didn't have money). I was with my Cabinet members and that was [what] I told China. I said, 'Can you give me a liberal term?' [They said,] 'No need. We will give it to you for free.'



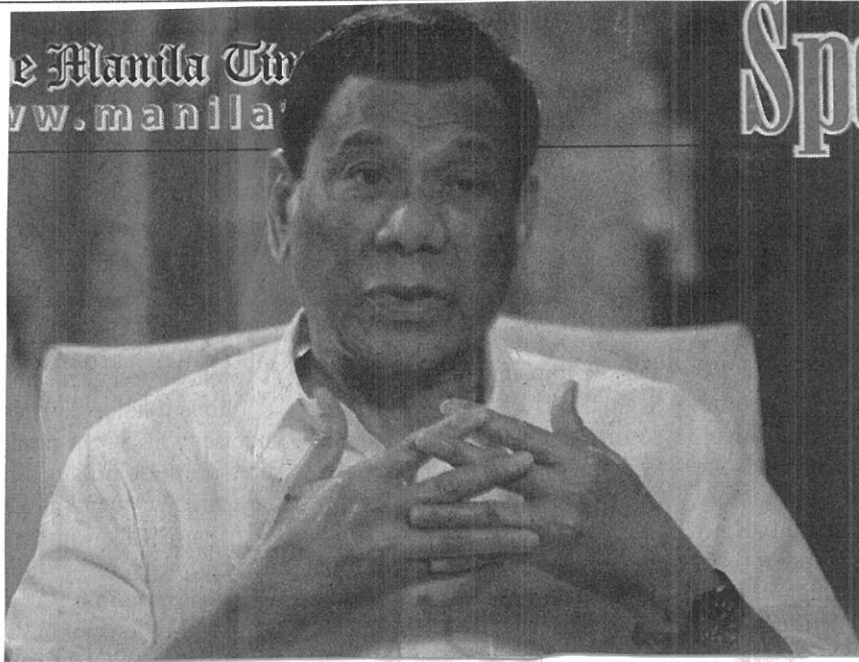
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I can't be anyone...

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Q: In the 2018 SONA, you mentioned you were going to push for the Land Use Act. Is that part of your program to fix the agriculture sector?

A: Yes, that is an important legislation that this Congress must come up [with]. The Land Use Act is very important, so that we may know how much we still have, if we can afford a certain amount of hectareage [for that purpose] and whether or not we can still be a sustainable [economy] by consuming what we plant, although [that] is a long shot right now, I would say.

Q: The war on drugs has been central to your government policy since the outset, and perhaps we can assume that it will continue. Looking back, what have you accomplished, and looking ahead, what changes will be made to that campaign to make it more effective?

A: No changes.

(The rest of the reply is contained in a second story published by the Times under the headline "No letup in Duterte's drug war" on July 15.)

Q: What is your long-term strategy on China and how do you pursue an independent foreign policy that's also independent of the US with regard to China and the West Philippine Sea issue?

A: Let's start with the United States. Historically, wherever there is trouble, *tayo talaga ang* (we are the real) allies — whether it is in the Middle East, or we are asked to contribute [support]. The driving force behind that is really not the United Nations...

Q: Philippine relations with China have somewhat stabilized through your foreign policy initiative...

A: Yes, because I have been frank enough [to say that] we cannot win a war with China. The moment I order my Marines to launch their barge going to the Spratlys, *hindi aabot ng isang kilometro yan tatamaan yan ng* (it won't go as far as 1 kilometer before it is hit by a) cruise missile. You know their [Chinese] fastest [missile] there can reach Manila in 7 minutes. You want a war with China? *Kung gusto nila* (if they want), I can put China on advice, I'll be waiting [for] word from the United States that they are willing to go to war. There is an argument there — which I will talk about [in my SONA].

Q: How do you protect the reforms you've achieved so far? Sabi nyo maraming problema (You said there were many problems) but you've made some gains. So, looking forward, how do you protect the progress you've made? For instance, are you in favor of, maybe, your daughter Sara running for President after you?

A: No. I'll give it to you straight. I have told my daughter not to run because *walang maibigay sa yo* personally *sa pagkatao mo* (you have nothing to gain from it personally).

Q: If you could choose your successor, would you have names in mind?

A: *Ayaw ko kasi mandamay kasi dumaan ako dito* (I don't want to drag any names into it because I've been there). *Ako 74 [years old], ano bang gusto mo dito? Pera? Pabaunan kita ng isang truck* (I'm 74, what do you want from this office? Money? I'll give you a truck-load). [I'm] 74, [then] 75, [then] 76, *eh lahat ng sakit andyan na sa kin* (I can have all kinds



of ailments). You name it, cancer of the lungs, cancer of the liver, pancreas, cancer of the kidney, *andyan na sakin lahat* (I have them all) just to emphasize *ano bang makuha mo dito* (what can one gain from this)?

Magtanong ka dito, magtanong ka sa (ask around, ask the) Budget [department]. I never signed anything more than 200[K] for my salary. Remember I have two families. Tig-100[k] (100k each). *Kaya ako wala buti na lang libre pagkain, libre opisina, pag-uwi* (I got nothing left, good thing the food, the office is free), then as President you get to [be insulted by] the likes of [Sen. Antonio] Trillanes.

It's not a good occupation to be President. *Maaawa ako sa anak ko* (I would feel so bad for her in that situation). She would have to bear it all. And sometimes one of the struggles *kasi presidente ka* (as President is) you have to give. *Sabi ko 'wag ka muna dito*. (I told her, it's not a good time to be in this place). Wait for a better time, if it ever comes in your lifetime.

Q: So you have this effect of confusing people with your words sometimes. Your critics have very harsh things to say about you. You call them scoundrels, for instance, and yet your satisfaction rating is very high. What are the biggest misconceptions about you, and against that, what are you really like?

A: Nothing sir. The only problem is, I broke the [traditional mold of] mayorship and went into the presidency. Add to that, *yung ugali ko* (my attitude) — I never sorted out the bad things I could say or couldn't say [just] because I'm the President. *Pero yung tao, alam nila na galit ako at ganon ako pagka mayor* (even when I was mayor. I just [uttered certain] things because I was angry) so I have this universal identity. I cannot get out of the Rodrigo Duterte that I was and I am. *Bahala na sila itong mga* (It's up to them - those) elite 400 of society.

Q: I heard you work late at nights. We started tonight's discussion about the coco levy, about corruption, drugs and China. If you could name one issue, what would it be that literally keeps you awake at night?

A: *Yung tao. Yung mahirap* (The people. The poor). You can ask any Cabinet member. It does not end in feeding [the poor]. *Ang gauge kasi ng pag-angat ng bayan* (the gauge to the nation's progress) is [how] you were able to build a strong middle class. That's an economic riddle here, but I guess making the Philippines peaceful will attract more investors [as long as] *wala lang* (no) corruption and [you] give all the incentives.

At this stage we are not interested so much in the income and taxes but we should be more concerned about how many people have something to eat, [are] employed and [how much] they can bring home.

Q: Looking forward, how do you want people or history to look back at your presidency? What kind of legacy do you want to leave behind, given the three years left in your term?

A: Do you know that I do not accept awards? That's maybe because I never had any awards during my student days. So nobody but nobody really cared to mention my name even then. I [still] do not accept awards [as I say], I am a worker of government and I serve the people. Period." I'm done with this accolades. It's not [that I don't] appreciate [them] but [awards] don't give me added [motivation].

Q: How do you want to be remembered?

A: Just remember [me] as a worker that did my best but my best wasn't good enough. *Wala akong magawa [kung] yan ang kaya ko* (I can't do anything more than my best."

(His answers to these last two questions were published into a story headlined Duterte on Legacy: "I am a worker, I serve the people" on July 16.



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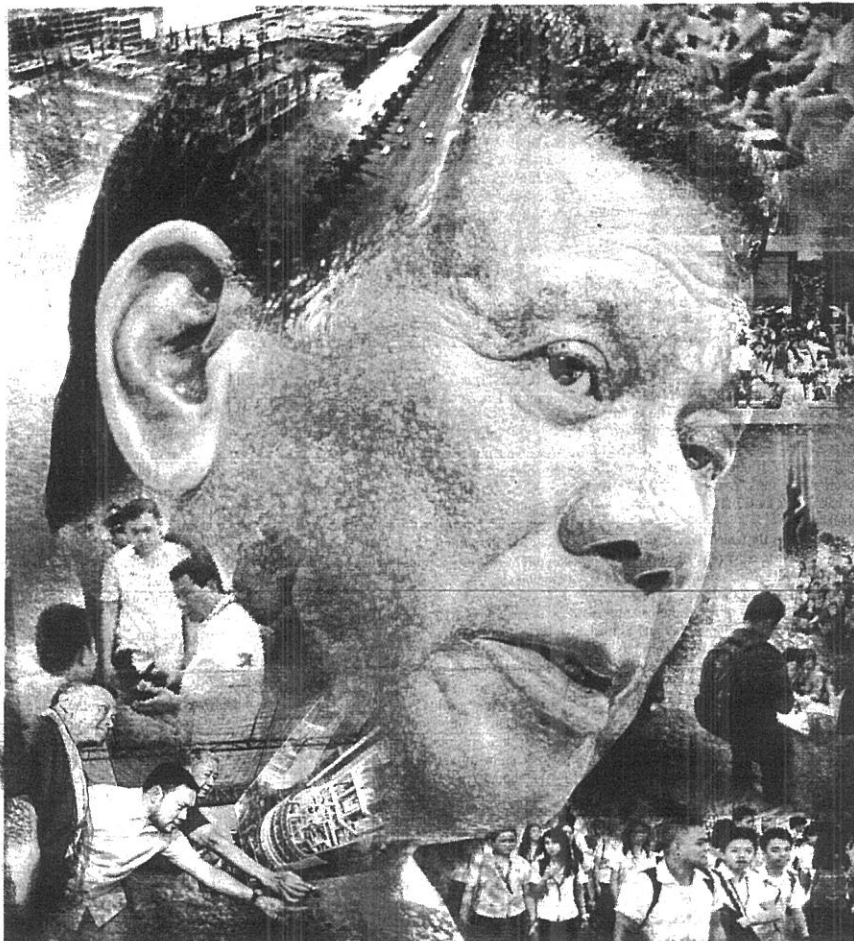
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Top rank The achievements in the first three years make the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte among the most productive thus far among the country's leaders, past and current.

Promises delivered

The passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that paved the way for the creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

By Kristina Maralit

Already halfway through his six-year term, President Rodrigo Duterte today faces the nation anew to report on his administration's accomplishments over the past year in his fourth State of the Nation Address (SoNA).

While he has been on point and had hits on much of his promises from last year's SoNA, the President still has

some deliverables in the pipeline.

The President gets plus points for delivering his end of the deal on matters regarding the country's peace and order situation, social and health services, economic stability, infrastructure and transportation and foreign relations.

The passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that paved the way for the creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

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PROMISES DELIVERED

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The passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that paved the way for the creation of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

From page 1

(BARM), the purchase and delivery of new military armaments, pay raise of uniformed personnel, access to Universal Health Care (UHC), expanded maternity leave and rice tariffication are but a few of the milestones achieved over the course of the past 12 months.

Of course, there are still policies implemented and decisions made by the Chief Executive that produced roaring disapprovals from anti-Duterte watchers, most notable his continuing war on narcotics and his seemingly soft stance when it comes to the Philippines' territorial dispute with China.

The thousands of deaths which resulted from Mr. Duterte's unrelenting campaign against illegal drugs were flagged by local and foreign human rights advocates. So much is the concern over the human rights situation in the country that the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted a resolution that seeks to look into alleged state-sponsored killings.

While he successfully fostered friendlier ties with China, resulting in dozens upon dozens of business agreements and loan grants, many saw it as the kryptonite to the superpower that is a foreign independent policy the President is trying to build.

The Chief Executive have repeatedly said he cannot do anything about China's "bullying" in the disputed areas of the South China Sea. Doing so, according to him, would trigger a violent confrontation and, worse, an all-out war.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration's (PCA) decision favoring the Philippines and overturning China's nine-dash line claim in the strategic waterway, too, was put in the backburner as Malacañang claimed it was "unenforceable."

Still, the President laying down a solid strategy in asserting Philippine sovereignty is one subject many Filipinos want to hear in today's SoNA as shown in a recent Pulse Asia survey.

Higher wages and the lowering of prices of goods and basic commodities, meanwhile, are the other topics many are hoping Mr. Duterte would also talk about at length.

Before the country give its mark on the President's Year 3 report card, here is a rundown of his most notable promises in last year's SoNA and how he fared in delivering them:

Better Mindanao

President Rodrigo Duterte has repeatedly expressed hope to see the promise of Mindanao fulfilled, or at the very least, approaching fulfillment before the end of his term in 2022. Since then, his administration has taken great strides towards doing exactly that.

Perhaps the most notable accomplishment in the road to achieving long-lasting peace in the region is the signing of the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (OLBARM) or Republic Act 11054 on 26 July 2018, just three days after he delivered his third SoNA.

Mr. Duterte was expected to sign the OLBARM, often called the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), during his 2018 address, but it was stalled after the House of Representatives failed to ratify the BOL due to an unexpected change of leadership in the House of Representatives.

Infrastructure buildup

The Chief Executive promised enhanced connectivity and mobility for Filipinos through big ticket infrastructure projects under his administration's ambitious "Build, Build, Build" program and other initiatives.

The entry of a third telco player was also approved, as promised by the President, to finally break the duopoly of Globe Telecom and Smart Communications and hopefully give consumers a cheaper yet more reliable and faster Internet service.

Mislattel, now officially called Dito Communications, was awarded its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) early this month and is expected to initially roll out its services towards the end of the year.

Various road projects were either already completed or nearing completion, expected to dramatically lessen the number of vehicles traversing major thoroughfares around Metro Manila, particularly EDSA.

Among them are the Skyway Stage 3 linking Makati and Quezon City, NLEX Harbor Link, and the NLEX-SLEX Connector Road.

Railways maintenance

Existing roads are also getting facelifts through the joint initiatives of the Department of Transportation (DoTr), Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and various local government units by ridding streets of obstructions, such as illegally parked vehicles.

The breakdown prone MRT3 railway system is finally in the middle of its long overdue overhaul, while the construction of MRT-7 that will connect commuters from Quezon City to San Jose Del Monte in Bulacan is nearing halfway into completion.

The LRT-2 East Extension, meanwhile, will have two new additional stations in Marikina and Antipolo set for completion by the fourth quarter of 2020.

Now in the works is the Malolos-Clark Railway Project (MCRP) and Metro Manila Subway system, while in the pipeline are the PNR Bicol and Mindanao Railway Project.

Airports building, rehab

The DoTr, which has been in the forefront of ensuring the President's vision of enhanced connectivity and mobility for the country, was realized by the construction of new airports and upgrading and rehabilitating existing ones.

Two world-class gateways outside Manila were inaugurated heading into the Chief Executive's third year: the new Bohol-Panglao International Airport, touted as the country's first "eco-airport," and the Terminal 2 of the Mactan-Cebu International Airport, a "resort airport" in the heart of the Visayas.

Upgrades to airports in Tacloban, Tuguegarao, Virac and San Vicente have been completed, while expansion works are ongoing for the Clark International Airport, Vigan Airport and Sangley.

New airports, meanwhile, are slated to be built in Bicol, Bukidnon and Bulacan.

Economic takeoff

Mr. Duterte in his last SoNA did not really make any assessment for the Philippine economy. Instead, he took it as a chance to urge Congress to pass key legislative measures that will help further stabilize the economic growth.

In the past 12 months, some of the key milestones include:

Rice tariffication, which was resorted to after the country hit its highest inflation rate to date and affordably priced supplies of rice scarce.

The President signed into law Republic Act (RA) 11203 or the Rice Liberalization Act last February.

The government's economic managers expected the new charter would help stabilize the food supply and eventually pull down the prices of the food staple as it paves the way for imported rice to pour into the market.

Two other notable legislations enacted into law are RA 11211, or the New Central Bank Act, and RA 11213, also known as the Tax Amnesty Act.

Signed in February, RA 11211 introduced reforms that will further align the operations of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) with global best practices, improve the BSP's corporate viability, and enhance its capacity for crafting proactive policies amid rising interlinkages in the financial markets and the broader economy.

No opening for TRABAH

First is the second tranche of the CTRP, or the Tax Reform for Attracting Better and High-Quality Opportunities (TRABAH) bill, which was not passed after it failed to reach the bicameral conference committee level of Congress.

While the House of Representatives passed

its version of the measure, which would have lowered corporate income taxes and modernized incentives given to businesses to be able to attract more investors, the Senate's version remained with the Ways and Means Committee until the 17th Congress adjourned.

The next all-important bill that did not get signed was the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Bill.

Mr. Duterte exercised his veto power on the proposed law as he deemed it lacking in "vital safeguards to avoid the repetition of painful mistakes committed in the past."

While he successfully fostered friendlier ties with China, resulting in dozens upon dozens of business agreements and loan grants, many saw it as the kryptonite to the superpower that is a foreign independent policy the President is trying to build.

According to him, he does not see the end goal of the measure reflective of the "ultimate goal of accelerating the full utilization of coco levy assets and funds for the benefit of marginalized coconut farmers and the coconut industry."

The Chief Executive likewise vetoed its partner legislation, a proposal to reconstitute the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), a bill which he earlier certified as top priority.

Mr. Duterte did not enact the measure because of the provision granting added farmer representation to the PCA board as opposed to the number of government representatives.

Had it been enacted, the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Bill would have ordered the revamped PCA to manage the P100 billion in coco levy funds and help boost the country's coconut industry.

Environment protection

The President touched on the need for government to step up its efforts in protecting and preserving the environment in his last SoNA.

A couple of months earlier, he ordered the closure of the then "cesspool" that is Boracay for half a year for a full-blown restoration and rehabilitation.

Shortly after the famed island's reopening in October last year, other rehabilitation efforts in other tourist destinations, such as El Nido and Coron in Palawan, followed suit.

Mr. Duterte also directed the cleanup of the heavily polluted Manila Bay and formed an inter-agency task force to oversee its rehabilitation, as well as lead the coordination with the different local government units surrounding the body of water.

Ban on open-pit mining

Upon the Chief Executive's directive, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued an order delimiting area that may be mined, while its 2017 ban on open-pit mining on select minerals is still in place.

The President also warned of additional "restrictive policies" following tragedies which occurred in areas known to be mining communities — Ilogon, Benguet and Naga, Cebu.

Mr. Duterte's appeal for Congress to pass a measure creating a department of disaster management, however, is yet to be answered.

Stamping out narcotics, crime

Although controversial and often harshly criticized, the President said there will be no let up in his efforts to attain law and order, especially when it comes to his campaign against narcotics.

While he admitted that he "failed" in delivering his promise of solving the problem of illegal drugs in the country "within three to six months" since assuming office, Mr. Duterte vowed that his war against the menace would only be "more dangerous" and "bloodier" for the remainder of his term.

Independent foreign policy

Last year, the President pledged to "continue to assert and pursue an independent policy" and he did just that by strengthening ties with existing allies and ruffling the feathers of others.



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Duterte to flaunt achievements, discuss PH path in 4th SONA

By Nat Mariano

ALL eyes and ears will once again be on President Rodrigo Duterte as he "updates" the Filipinos about the country's situation in his fourth State of the Nation Address on July 22.

Just like in his previous SONAs, the President, who will speak in front of the lawmakers at the Plenary Hall of the Batasang Pambansa Complex in Quezon City, is expected to brag about his administration's achievements for the past three years.

As preparations are already underway, from the arrangements inside the session hall to management of traffic situations, the anticipation on what the President will say or refuse to talk about builds every minute.

WHAT TO EXPECT

In the previous years, over 3,000 guests, donning business attires and Filipiniana, flocked to the Batasang Pambansa to personally hear Duterte's pronouncements.

House acting secretary-general Roberto Maling said the invited guests include lawmakers, Cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, members of the diplomatic corps, former presidents, and other special guests.

Former President Benigno Aquino III has already announced he will skip the SONA for the 4th year in a row. Vice President Leni Robredo, on the other hand, said she will attend the event.

Meanwhile, Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio and Davao City Vice Mayor Baste Duterte, who were present last year, confirmed they will not attend their father's special day. Sara said she remains on a medical leave, while Baste bared he was occupied with a regular session of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Davao.

Aside from the attendees, the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra will also perform at the event, reportedly playing the national anthem "Lupang Hinirang," as well as "Ikaw" by Freddie Aguilar, one of Duterte's favorite songs.

Moreover, award-winning television and movie director Joyce Bernal will direct anew the President's 4th SONA for the second time, bringing some "creative surprises" this time around.

For his part, Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Martin Andanar said Duterte's 4th SONA would highlight the legacy of the current administration and its path for the next three years.

Andanar said the President will likely discuss the government's efforts to reduce poverty, implement mega infrastructure projects, and bring peace and order programs.

"Number one, poverty alleviation, bringing poverty rate down from 21 to 14 and making the economy upper middle class by the end of his term. Second would be the infrastructure projects," he said.

"And thirdly, there's the peace and order highlighting the national task force to end local communist armed conflict, because you can never have progress without peace and order. And I think those three topics would be the focus of the President [in his speech]," he added.

Beyond the flaunting of the so-called "Duterte Legacy" and introducing the legislative agenda of the administration the next three years, the President will also "educate" the public on the constitutionality of the verbal fishing agreement he entered into with Chinese President Xi Jinping in October 2016.



Duterte to present achievements, discuss PH path in 14th Sona

p-2

Also, one of the most anticipated turn of events on Monday is the decision on who will be the next House Speaker of the incoming 18th Congress.

Duterte already gave his endorsement, saying that Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano will share the term with Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco.

Leyte 1st District Rep. Martin Romualdez, also a top contender for the post, was recommended by Duterte to become House majority leader.

Davao City 1st District Rep. Paolo Duterte floated rumors that one of his father's three bets for speakership is

"planning a coup d'état on July 22." The President then quickly shot down his own son's claim, viewing it as a "wishful thinking."

The Chief Executive, however, bared that he would not take offense if his allies in the supermajority will refuse to heed his "formula" on speakership.

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo then said the decision on who will be the next leader of the lower chamber still depends on the members of the House of Representatives.

Meanwhile, asked about the duration of the SONA, Andanar told the public that they can expect Duterte's SONA to be at least 45 minutes long to one hour.

Panelo also said Duterte will deliver a "short" SONA as his alter egos in the Cabinet have already reported some of the gains of his administration to the public through the Pre-SONA.

"The President will be discussing the achievements of his administration on a particular year, and since the pre-SONAs are already doing that, I don't think he will have to repeat that," Panelo noted.

PRE-SONA FORUM

The Palace had earlier announced that the fora, dubbed as "Tatak ng Pagbabago 2019," was a pre-SONA campaign allowing the six Cabinet clusters to inform the Filipinos on the long-run effects of the administration's implementation of its respective packages of policies and programs, as well as triumphs in pursuing genuine and lasting change.

The three-part fora were a collaborative effort from six Cabinet clusters namely the Economic Development Cluster, the Infrastructure Cluster, the Participatory Governance Cluster, the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster, the Climate Change, Adaptation, Mitigation Disaster Reduction Cluster, and the Security, Justice, and Peace Cluster.

Over the past weeks, the six Cabinet clusters, which were divided into three groups, toured the country's major cities to speak about the Duterte administration's achievements.

The first forum, called "Patuloy na Pag-unlad" by the Economic

Development and Infrastructure Cluster was held last July 1 in Manila.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said the Philippines remains on track to hit its 7 percent economic target in three years with the acceleration of the infrastructure program 'Build, Build, Build,' the reform of the tax system, and other economic reforms.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia also said that the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) has been fast-tracking the "flawless" implementation of the national ID system.

On July 10, the Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cluster, with the Participatory Governance Cluster, held their "Patuloy na Malasakit at Pagkakaisa" forum in Cebu City.

Social Welfare Secretary Rolando Bautista reported the significant drop of poverty incidence in the first half of 2018 by 6.1 percent as compared to the same period in 2015.

According to the DSWD chief, more Filipino families were able to meet their basic food needs as subsistence

incidence decreased also to 6.2 percent in the first half of 2018.

The 2nd leg of the fora also focused on the administration's policies in providing every Filipino people broader access to education, employment, healthcare and government services.

Meanwhile, the last forum, tagged as "Patuloy na Katatagan," was organized by the Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction Cluster and Security, Justice and Peace Cluster last July 17 at Davao City.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said that P10 billion will be invested to certain provinces which are vulnerable to climate change, hoping to provide investments for the development of agricultural and fisheries, environmental protection and management, and social welfare and livelihood, among others.

On the other hand, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana stressed the importance of pursuing modernization and enhancement programs to increase the capabilities of the country's police and military forces.

As Duterte's alter egos presented the gains of the Cabinet clusters to the people, Cabinet Secretary Karl Nograles hoped the fora will provide Filipinos with a clear picture of the Duterte administration's efforts.

"Collectively, these Pre-SONA briefings represent an extended version of the President's SONA, a means by which our people can take a closer look at the details of the programs being implemented by a government that recognizes its duty to inform the public about everything the President and his administration are doing for and on their behalf to improve their lives," Nograles said.

He then vowed that they will make a "greater impact" during the remaining three years of the Duterte presidency.

"We all work together in our respective departments and we will come up with something that would have a great impact on the people," he added.

Duterte's 4th SONA came on the heels of the controversial Recto Bank incident and the passage of the Iceland-backed resolution before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Despite the criticisms hurled at his administration, the President still continues to enjoy high approval and trust ratings from majority of Filipinos. He even acquired his highest satisfaction rating so far in June.



Soldiers, cops to guard govt officials at Sona

p.1

BY RENE ACOSTA

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@joveemarie

AUTHORITIES said about 14,000 policemen and a brigade-size military unit are tasked to protect government officials attending the fourth State of the Nation Address (Sona) of President Duterte and the Opening of the First Regular Session of the 18th Congress.

"In regards to preparation, it's already 100 percent," Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar D. Albayalde said. "Even in the regions, we have forces that are on standby in case we will need reinforcements coming from the different regions."

According to Maj. General Guillermo Lorenzo T. Eleazar, he ordered 14,000 policemen under the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) to be on alert. About 8,000 of them would secure areas within and around the Batasang Pambansa. Plainclothes policemen will double up the perimeter security and would also be deployed in areas where there would be rallies, he said.

Military public affairs office chief Col. Noel Detoyato said that the Joint Task Force (JTF) NCR, a brigade-size military unit, will support the PNP and the NCRPO.

"All troops of the [JTF] NCR are already committed in support

of the PNP while troops assigned at the general headquarters are on standby alert," Detoyato said. "Other troops on standby will be placed under [JTF] NCR if ever they will be deployed."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is also now on red alert status to support the Philippine National Police.

House of Representatives Sergeant-at-Arms MGen. (Ret.) Romeo Prestoza said on Sunday there have been no perceived substantial threats to the Monday's event.

Prestoza said that despite an absence of perceived threats, the House has "a very good coordination" with relevant intelligence units to evaluate any risks to the House or President Duterte during the Sona.

He said the Presidential Security Group (PSG) would direct signal jammers for the Sona.

Final details

HOUSE Acting Secretary-General Dante Roberto P. Maling, chairman of the Steering Committee of Task Force Sona 2019, said the House is ready for its hosting job for the Sona.

"We have ensured that all details have been considered," Maling said.

"These include the necessary internal and external security measures and requirements, protocol arrangements, parking restrictions, media coverage, other physical arrangements, prescribed

and required attire, and final reminders to guests particularly with regard to their invitations, seat cards and car passes, among others" he added.

Detoyato said the military is hoping for a "safe, peaceful and successful conduct" of the Sona.

"While the AFP has not monitored any threat from local terrorist groups, its forces will continue to be on a proactive stance against all threats of violence and will exert every effort to preserve the peace, particularly in the National Capital Region [NCR] where the seat of the government is in," he said.

The PNP earlier called on the rallyists to refrain from wearing jackets and carrying backpacks as precautionary measures following the suicide bombing on a military camp in Sulu more than three weeks ago.

Authorities said the police will conduct random inspections during the Sona.

House rules

IN his latest advisory, Maling laid down the guidelines to ensure the safe and orderly conduct of Monday's events.

For the entry and exit from the House Complex, the "No Car Pass, No Entry" policy shall be in effect from 4 a.m. on Sona day. The Main/South Gate is for the exclusive entrance of vehicles of House Members, Senators,

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Soldiers, cops to guard gov't officials at Sona'

Congressional Spouses and their backup, VIP guests, and House and Senate secretariat officials.

The North Gate shall serve as the entrance gate of vehicles of invited guests, OB vans and generator sets, emergency vehicles (i.e., fire trucks, ambulances and military vehicles), House shuttle buses and vehicles with "Drop-Off" passes.

Only accredited members of media institutions wearing the official Sona 2019 Media IDs, together with their agency IDs, will be allowed entry to the House Complex.

The Main Gate, North Gate or Gate 2 (beside President Corazon C. Aquino Elementary school) would be closed at 4 p.m. These will be used as exit gates of vehicles after the Sona.

No Grab, Angkas

ALSO, motorcycles, taxicabs and transport network vehicle services are barred from entry to the House Complex, according to documents provided by Maling's office.

All parking spaces within the House Complex will be strictly for vehicles bearing color-coded carpasses on a "First Come, First Serve" basis based on the parking plan.

Secretariat employees and congressional staff who wish to bring their vehicles may avail themselves of the parking spaces at the Civil Service Commission and the Batasan

National High School.

In the morning of Sona day, countersigns (special stickers) will be issued to the following for access to restricted areas: House officials, employees, congressional staff, usherettes assigned at restricted areas, and close-in photographers of the President, Senate President and House Speaker.

Live coverage, interviews and photo shoots by media personnel are allowed at the North and South Wing lobbies up to 3 p.m. only.

For the Joint Session of Congress in the afternoon, the Advisory highlights that there will be a 1-kilometer "No fly zone" over the area of the House Complex from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

At 1 p.m., the South Wing Lobby will be closed to all Secretariat employees, Congressional staff and visitors. Only Protocol Officers, in-House media personnel, authorized media and security personnel deployed at the lobby will be allowed to stay to welcome guests.

Reserved seating

ARRIVING House Members, Senators, Congressional Spouses, VIPs and members of the Diplomatic Corps shall enter through the South Wing lobby or the North Wing lobby. All other guests, media personnel and visitors shall pass through the North Wing lobby.

Entry to the Plenary Hall will be

strictly prohibited from 12 noon to 1 p.m. for final security inspection and clearing, except for RTVM personnel who will install the teleprompters and florists who will do the flower arrangements after the end of the Opening of the First Regular Session.

The Plenary Hall will be opened to guests/visitors of the Joint Session at 2 p.m. The sliding doors at the Main Entrance of the Plenary Hall will be closed 15 minutes before the President and his party enter the session hall.

Entrance doors at all three galleries will be closed at 3.30 p.m. Everyone in the Plenary Hall must be seated at 3.30 p.m.

Senators, House Members, and guests arriving after the President has begun his Sona will be escorted to the North Lounge.

The "No Invitation, No Seat Pass: No Entry" policy shall be enforced, according to documents provided by Maling. Reserved seating shall be strictly observed at the Middle, first and second galleries of the Plenary Hall. "Free Seating" is allowed only at the third gallery of the Plenary Hall.

Cell phones, radio transceivers and other similar gadgets must be turned off while inside the Plenary Hall.

Meanwhile, the "No Cocktail Pass, No Entry" policy will be strictly enforced at the South Wing lobby where a cocktail reception will be held.



Sona wish list:

Changes to

Insurance Code

By REA Cu [@ReaCuBM](#)

A MENDMENTS to the country's Insurance Code should be billed as a priority measure for the 18th Congress in President Duterte's State of the Nation Address (Sona), if the Insurance Commission were to have its way.

Insurance Commissioner Dennis B. Funa said the IC also submitted its proposed legislative measures to the Department of Finance in line with the directive

of the DOF secretary, for possible inclusion in the President's Sona.

"One of the proposed legislative measures is the proposed amendments to the Insurance Code [Re-

public Act 10607] to broaden the scope of insurance to include non-indemnity-based products such as parametric insurance products," Funa told the BUSINESSMIRROR through electronic mail.

Non-indemnity insurance products are those that provide coverage for persons or things that have no real replacement value, while indemnity insurance products give policyholders a specific amount of compensation for a loss tied to a replacement.

"Parametric insurance shall be included in the Insurance Code as an alternative to the standard indemnity-based insurance.

Parametric insurance will simplify loss determination using new technology and methodology, speed up payment of claims, and provide immediate assistance in case of calamity," he added.

Parametric insurance is explained to be an insurance product that provides the policyholder a set amount of compensation based on the magnitude of a natural catastrophe like earthquakes, among others.

"The proposed measure will also give the Insurance Commission the power to adopt the risk-based supervision [RBS] framework in the Philippines," he said.

According to the IC, RBS is a comprehensive, formally structured system that assesses risks within the financial system, giving priority to the resolution of those risks.

"The goal of the RBS is to identify the risk profile of the regulated entities, including the risk that the insurer will be facing in the future and to immediately address it," he added.

The proposed legislative measure will also provide additional protection to the insuring public through a provision on unclaimed settlement benefits, allowable investment limits and the increase in the security fund,

according to the IC.

Last week, insurance industry stakeholders also provided their wish list of the measures that they think President Duterte should include in his Sona on July 22.

The umbrella organizations for the life and nonlife insurance sectors of the country said that they wished the President will touch on the promotion of insurance as mitigation tools in government's disaster risk reduction, as well as keeping the minimum paid-up capital requirement for insurance players at P900 million, with no further increases.



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What the people hope to hear today

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THE nation will tune today to hear what President Duterte has to say in his annual State of the Nation Address (SONA). It is officially an address to the two chambers of Congress – the Senate and the House of Representatives – sitting in joint session at the start of the new 18th Congress. But the President will actually be talking to the nation at large in this age of modern communications.

The President will report on what the government has accomplished this last year, the state of the nation as it is today after three years of his administration, and what he plans to accomplish not just in the coming year but in the second half of his six-year administration. There are some who believe he should look forward a little further in to the future and speak of what he believes the country can and should do in the next decade – a ten-year program – with ideas that the next administration can build on.

The President could do all these – surely he has ideas for the future of the country which he has discussed with his cabinet members and other officials of his administration. He has done so much in the first three years of his administration, most especially in economic development, in infrastructure, and transportation. So that he recently named the Cabinet men in charge of these areas as the top achievers of his administration.

But the SONA must be more than a report on achievements, on the state of the nation as a whole. It must connect to the people the President serves. It must respond to their views on what still need to be done and to their appeals for help and for action on problems touching their lives.

An opinion survey conducted last week by Pulse Asia Research gave their top three main

concerns – workers' salaries, prices of basic commodities, and job opportunities. They are all economic issues, all intimately touching the lives of most people in the country.

They may not be as headline-grabbing as our disputes with other countries in the South China Sea, or the just concluded mid-term elections, or the unexpectedly difficult war on drugs, or the continuing fight on corruption in many government offices. And they are not as urgent as water shortages, typhoon warnings, and damage from floods and earthquakes. But they are at the core of the everyday lives of most Filipinos.

The respondents in the survey said they would want the President to speak on these three matters – salaries, prices, and jobs. After these three were the issues of our relations with China, illegal drugs, the need to improve Philippine agriculture, poverty, corruption, infrastructure development, and human rights.

The President has much to be proud of and the nation will be ready to congratulate him and the many officials and employees of his administration who have made the Philippines one of the fastest developing countries in the world today. There is today such great hope for peace in Mindanao with the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region. He must speak of these advances which should inspire us all.

But after all these accomplishments, the people would like to hear the President speak on their own little problems – their salaries, the prices of commodities, and job opportunities for so many in their community. More than any other issues, the people hope the President will speak on his thoughts and his plans on them when he stands up in Congress today to deliver his State of the Nation Address.



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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2019



EDITORIAL

A member of the



The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Halfway mark

TODAY'S State of the Nation Address (SONA) marks the first half of President Duterte's six-year term, and the event is doubly significant. The much-awaited speech before the Congress of the Philippines will serve as a summing up of everything that the nation experienced under Duterte – good and bad. It should also chart the course of the nation in the next three years, the last half of Duterte's watch.

To some sectors, there are palpable and relevant accomplishments which were part of his campaign promises in 2016 that the President was able to deliver. This include the doubling of salaries of soldiers, policemen and other uniformed personnel in government, the scrapping of irrigation fees for farmers, the serious fight against official corruption and illegal drugs, better public transportation infrastructure and policies, and a stable national economy.

'So long as Duterte's objective is for the good of all Filipinos, he can take anything from his detractors and the people will continue to give their full support to him, as the surveys confirmed lately.'

The Chief Executive may also cite the passage of several laws, such as the Universal Health Law and the free college education program, aside from the ongoing "Build, Build, Build" initiative that should change the landscape of our bustling metropolitan areas in all three major islands.

On the other hand, the market price of rice is still high despite Duterte's legislative intervention, smuggling and graft are still endemic at Customs, teachers and other workers are waiting for salary increases, and the labor sector is still demanding strong measures to end "endo."

The Chief Executives gives emphasis on one of the most significant economic activities for the nation: the joint oil and gas exploration with the Chinese government in the South China Sea which could start this November. They will look for oil and gas in a 720,000-hectare area in Calamian, west of Palawan.

Duterte's pivot to China has ramped up our trade with this giant neighbor, including Hong Kong which is basically China too, to \$417 billion as of May. This makes China the nation's top trading partner.

Our "Build, Build, Build" program is also anchored on China's cooperation and support, with the two donated bridges across the Pasig River being built; the P175 billion South Rail project in the pipeline, the P500 million Metro Manila flood control project now on its second year, and funding assured for the P18.7 billion Kaliwa Dam that should end the water troubles of the National Capital Region.

President Duterte will be pilloried again by the left-wing and Yellow camp protesters for his foreign policy regarding China, the United States, and the European Union, but he is expected not to budge in this SONA. The President is not a pushover and will not be bullied by the worn-out tactics of the usual critics who see nothing good in all his official acts.

So long as Duterte's objective is for the good of all Filipinos, he can take anything from his detractors and the people will continue to give their full support to him, as the surveys confirmed lately.



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Sona: Then and now

TODAY, President Duterte will deliver his fourth State of the Nation Address (Sona). A formal report of the chief executive to the legislature and to the people has its foundation in the United States Constitution. Monarchs did not have to report anything.

This practice is unique to a very few countries, all with a presidential system, from the Philippines to South Africa and Ghana and on to Russia. In a parliamentary system, the head of government is also a member of the legislature. Only the Prime Minister of Luxembourg does a Sona.

The US constitution actually called for a written report to be delivered to Congress. However, on January 8, 1790, President George Washington delivered the first Annual Message to a Joint Session of Congress now known as the State of the Union address. Then as now, it is a political speech.

George Washington started his speech with "Fellow Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives: I embrace with great satisfaction the opportunity which now presents itself, of congratulating you on the present favorable prospects of our public affairs." That sounds familiar doesn't it?

In fact, if you read the text of Washington's "Sona," it could have been delivered in 2019. "To be prepared for War is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace." "The terms on which foreigners may be admitted to the rights of Citizens should be speedily ascertained by a uniform rule of naturalization."

"You will agree with me, that there is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of Science and Literature." "The advancement of Agriculture, Commerce and Manufactures, will not I trust need recommendation. But I cannot forbear intimating to you the expediency of giving effectual encouragement as well to the introduction of new and useful inventions from abroad, as to the exertions of skill and genius in producing them at home."

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

While President Duterte is always an unknown when speaking before an audience, today's Sona should follow the expected pattern. This is what the administration has done successfully. This is what we need to do.

Will the dispute with China be addressed? Will the President's high approval rating be a part of the speech? Will the sedition charges against 35 people including senators, church leaders, lawyers and Vice President "Leni" Robredo come up?

However, this is an opportunity at the midpoint in his term of office for the President to lessen the acrimony and outright hostility between the administration and the vocal minority. This would be better for the nation. There are too many critical issues that need to be solved. While the President has a high approval rating and therefore much political capital, the divisions are deep and wide even within the public's support. It is time for statesmanship.



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A broader look at today's business

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Asean leaders promote partnership for conservation, peace, econ growth

By ROLANDO A. INCIONG
Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

THE heads of governments of the 10 Asean member-states have agreed to promote cooperation and partnerships within the region and with external partners in order to achieve sustainability, conservation, peace, economic growth and other dimensions of Asean Community-building.

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TREKKERS on Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary. EDEN JHAN G. LICAYAN



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The agreement was expressed in the Asean leaders' vision statement on partnership for sustainability, which was adopted during the recent 34th Asean Summit held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Among many other regional concerns, the Asean leaders—of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—agreed to continue promoting biodiversity conservation and management, and to endeavor to mainstream biodiversity into the various development processes in Asean.

It will be done through the concerted efforts of member-states, and with the support of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

The ACB was established in 2005 as the Asean's response to the challenge of biodiversity loss. It facilitates cooperation among Asean member-states, and with national, regional and international bodies from across sectors on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of such biodiversity in the region.

Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim, executive director of the ACB, noted that the leaders acknowledge that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

is an intergenerational responsibility that is entrusted to the present generation.

She lauded the support they expressed to the continuing conservation and sustainable use of Asean's coastal and marine environment, and ensuring food security, improving nutrition, and promoting benefits for the people.

Moreover, the vision statement recognizes that the diversity of life provides a multitude of opportunities for livelihood and economic development; contributes to poverty alleviation and development of technology and innovation; and serves as an effective adaptation and mitigation measure against climate-change impacts and natural disasters in the region.

The Asean leaders also agreed to promote partnership for sustainability in maintaining the region as an area of peace, freedom and security, where differences and disputes are resolved by peaceful means; where states remain free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction; and where maritime cooperation is enhanced in accordance with internationally accepted treaties and principles, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Other areas cited by the vision statement include enhancing dialogue and promoting cooperation on regional defense and security



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issues on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping operations, maritime security and cyber security.

The vision statement also covers reaffirming the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea.

It also involves cooperating effectively with partners within and beyond the region to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; strengthening cooperation on border management in accordance with domestic laws and policies to better safeguard the increasingly interconnected and integrated Asean Community by having its relevant sectoral bodies discuss common concerns, such as transnational crimes, human trafficking, illegal wildlife trade, illicit drug trafficking and cross-border challenges, including pandemics.

Another is that on committing to progressing negotiations on the Asean Extradition Treaty to strengthen the region's resilience and capacity to combat transnational crimes.

The leaders also call for promoting dynamic, sustainable, equitable and inclusive economic growth in Asean; improving connectivity through sustainable infrastructure; achieving inclusivity through narrowing the development gaps within and between member-states; and promoting a green economy.

The Asean leaders are looking forward to enhancing sustainable development cooperation by promoting complementarities between the Asean Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the launching of the Asean Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue in Thailand in 2019 and its role in helping promote sustainable development cooperation in the region.

Other regional concerns covered by the vision statement on sustainability and partnerships include narrowing of development gaps, promoting smart and sustainable cities, cooperation on sustainable fisheries and management, promoting inclusive human capital development and public-

private partnership initiatives.

It also involves strengthening capacity of Asean to address the challenge of natural disasters and climate change, strengthening the preparedness of the region to deal with the trends of an aging society, and supporting efforts to intensify convergence among the member-states on technical-vocational education and training, and work force development.

The latest Asean vision statement demonstrates the full support of the 10 Asean member-states to Thailand's chairmanship of the Asean, with the theme of "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability."

It further strengthens the Bangkok Declaration of 1967, wherein the Asean declared to promote regional cooperation in the spirit of equality and partnership, and to secure for its peoples and for posterity the blessings of peace, freedom and prosperity, and Asean's pledge to its peoples in the Asean Community Vision 2025, to realize a rules-based, people-oriented and people-centred Asean of One Vision, One Identity, One Community.



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Environmental protection underscored at

SarBay Fest



A YOUTH volunteer receives free Smart load after disposing of plastic bottles into the #PlanetSmart bin.

PLDT wireless unit Smart Communications piloted its #PlanetSmart initiative at the recent SarBay Festival, a summer beach festival held every year in Sarangani Province as part of its efforts to support environmental protection.

#PlanetSmart encouraged Smart subscribers who attended the beach festival to collect and properly dispose of their recyclables.

During the four-day SarBay Festival celebration, customized containers, shaped like the marine animals found along the protected area of Sarangani Bay, were set up in the main event area.

The bins were connected to electronic sensors that sent out SMS each time plastic bottles and empty cans were put in the containers. The text messages informed the festivalgoer that he/she has received free Smart load.

The collected recyclables would be sold, with the proceeds to be given to public-school beneficiaries in the province.

"One thing that Sarangani is known for is its dedication to the environment. This commitment is clearly reflected in the SarBay Festival and it's what makes this annual event unique," said Nova Concepcion, Smart community partnerships senior manager, at

the sidelines of the festival.

The recycling bin prototype is the winning concept from last year's MVP Geek Olympics, the PLDT Group's annual employee-centric innovation competition. The event is a brainchild of PLDT Innolab, the group's incubator for start-ups and developer communities that want to scale extensible partnerships.

Following its win at MVP Geek

Olympics, the prototype was further refined and enhanced by technology specialists from Innolab, allowing it more features and capabilities, ultimately staying true to their vision of uplifting the local condition through technology. "PLDT Innolab has always aimed to support the country's development by creating solutions that promote inclusivity and sustainability. We look for-

ward to using our resources to further drive greener and more sustainable initiatives for our country," said First Vice President and Enterprise Core Business Solutions head Jojo Gendrano.

For the #PlanetSmart initiative, Smart partnered with members of youth group Sulong Kabataan, who collected recyclables and encouraged fellow festivalgoers to drop off their trash in the designated #PlanetSmart bins.

Smart also teamed up with Sulong Tribu, an organization that mounted an urban gardening exhibit using recycled plastic bottles and old Smart tarpaulins. The group held an exhibit displaying upcycled tarp bags and donated these to public schools within Sarangani.

Smart brand TNT and parent company PLDT provided connectivity support and featured exciting events during the festival, such as Pinta sa Baybayon Showcase, Bay Bodies 2019, DJ Battle, TNT Foam Party headlined by This Band and Kat DJ, and sporting competitions such as volleyball, jet ski and mountain-bike challenges, among other activities.

More than 150,000 people attended the three-day festival, according to the Sarangani provincial government.



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Early retirement seen to curb bloated bureaucracy

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

Offering early retirement to qualified government employees could save the country's coffers at least P1 trillion and right-size the bureaucracy, whose maintenance and other operating expenses amount to 65 percent of the annual national budget.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III said the savings could help fund the construction of hospitals, schools and other infrastructure programs.

"I want the Senate to prioritize right-sizing in the government sector because the bureaucracy is bloated. We can accommodate new departments afterward," Sotto said in English and Filipino in an interview

over *dzBB*.

Of the P3.757-trillion budget for this year, Sotto said, 65 percent would go to maintenance and other operating expenses while the remaining 35 percent will be used for programs and projects as well as cover debt servicing measures.

"I have pushed for right-sizing measures. The government should aim for the early retirement program where those who would retire can get lump sums, which they can use for their own business," he said.

President Duterte mentioned in his State of the Nation Address last year that right-sizing measures would eliminate redundant, duplicate and overlapping functions in offices and improve public service delivery.



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RIGHTS OF NATURE BILL, MAHALAGA SA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT NG FILIPINAS

LUMALAKAS ang isang kilusan sa ating bansa para sa sustainable development sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng proteksiyon sa kalikasan sa pangunguna ng Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc. (PMPI).

Nagkakampanya ang PMPI sa pagtataguyod ng mga batas para sa makakalikasang pagkilos tulad ng "Rights of Nature" bill na nakapadron sa ginawa sa mga bansang Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia, India, New Zealand, at Australia.

Isang halimbawa ang ginawa ng Ecuador at Bolivia na pagbabawal sa single-use plastic at paggamit ng mga natutunaw na bagay tulad ng mga dahon at papel na kayang gawin ng mga Filipino.

"Dapat na talagang ipagbawal na ang paggamit na plastik sa ating bansa lalo ang straw at sisidlan ng mga softdrinks dahil daantaon bago ito matunaw lalo kapag nasadlak sa ating mga karagatan," ayon kay Jerico Catalla, information chief ng PMPI na nagsusulong sa People's Congress on the Rights of Nature sa 18th Congress.

"If corporations were given rights by our legal system, why not give rights to the ecosystem? Corporations did not exist naturally; they were created by humans. Unlike corporations, environment and human persons are of

the same stature, both human and nature came from the same source. They exist and co-exist to fulfill their roles in the whole web of life. It is just but fitting to accord rights to nature too, just like humans," sabi naman ni PMPI national coordinator Yolanda R. Esguerra.

Sa nasabing panukalang batas, magkakaroon ng bagong proteksiyon sa kasalukuyang ecosystems sa ating bansa tulad ng karagatan, kagubatan, kabundukan, at mga ilog na sinasamantala ng malalaking korporasyon at ng sangkatauhan.

"The recognition of the Rights of Nature is at the core of the call for ecological conversion, as Pope Francis emphasized in his speech at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. There he suggested that a true 'right of the environment' does exist because we human beings are part of the environment. We live in communion with it, since the environment itself entails ethical limits which human activity must acknowledge and respect. Any harm done to the environment, therefore, is harm done to humanity," sabi naman ng matinding social justice advocate na si Archbishop Antonio Ledesma ng Cagayan de Oro City.

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DILG says new law to improve governance

By **EMMANUEL TUPAS**

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said it was expecting improvement in the delivery of services in local government units (LGUs) with the signing of Republic Act 11292

or the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) Act.

"The DILG is grateful that the SGLG program, which is only in its fifth year, is now part of the law of the land. It is an affirmation of the effectiveness of the program in propelling good governance of LGUs," Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said in a state-

ment.

President Duterte signed the SGLG Act into law on April 12 but it was only released on Tuesday. The law, derived from the SGLG program, offers incentives for LGUs that have demonstrated good governance.

Under the new law, the performance of provinces, cities and municipalities will

be reviewed in the key areas of good fiscal or financial administration or financial sustainability.

These were disaster preparedness, health compliance and responsiveness; social protection and sensitivity program; programs for sustainable education; business friendliness and competitiveness; safety, peace and order; tourism, heritage development, culture and arts; environmental management, and youth development.

"With the enactment of this law, the SGLG program is now institutionalized and is assured of continuous fund-

ing from the government," Año said.

Under the bill, the SGLG Fund shall be created as a special account under the General Appropriations Act. It shall only be utilized to pay out the incentives granted to LGUs that qualify for the SGLG.

In 2018, 17 provinces, 39 cities and 207 municipalities that bagged the award were each conferred P7 million, P5.1 million and P3.2 million respectively as performance challenge funds (PCF) for local development projects.

The measure institutionalizes the SGLG program through the creation of a Council of Good Local Governance—composed of nine government agencies and representatives from basic sectors, with the

DILG acting as chair.

The members of the council include the Department of Budget and Management, Department of Finance, Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Education, Department of Tourism, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, National Economic and Development Authority, Office of Civil Defense.

"The establishment of the council demonstrates the whole-of-government approach in ensuring that the national government works hand in hand with the local governments and members of civil society in practicing good governance on the local level," Año said.



S. No. 1843
H. No. 8719

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines

Metro Manila

Seventeenth Congress

Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-third day of July, two thousand eighteen.

[**REPUBLIC ACT No. 11292**]

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING THE SEAL OF GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, AND ALLOCATING FOR THIS PURPOSE THE SEAL OF GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE FUND

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as “The Seal of Good Local Governance Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize the good performance of local government units (LGUs) in transparency and accountability in the use of public funds, preparedness for challenges posed by disasters, sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society, implementation of health programs, investment and employment promotion, protection of constituency from threats to life and damage to property, and safeguarding the integrity of the environment. In such recognition, the State hopes to encourage all LGUs to take on greater challenges, encourage outcome-based performance and to reward local governments for their effort in pursuing the general welfare of their constituency and in enforcing existing laws.

SEC. 3. *The Seal of Good Local Governance.* – The Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) is an award, incentive, honor and recognition-based program for all LGUs and is a continuing commitment for LGUs to continually progress and improve their performance in the following areas by:

- (a) Upholding the practice of transparency and accountability in the use of public funds;
- (b) Preparing for challenges brought about by unpredictable natural calamities;
- (c) Demonstrating the readiness to help and sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society;
- (d) Setting-up, implementing and sustaining health policies and programs that would strengthen and promote the well-being, healthy lifestyle and safety of the public, ensuring that all individuals especially the vulnerable have fair opportunities for better health;
- (e) Instituting education reforms and programs to improve the quality of education in the country;
- (f) Encouraging pro-competitive policies and government interventions that promote market efficiency and consumer welfare;
- (g) Protecting constituents from threats to life and damage to property;
- (h) Safeguarding and preserving the integrity of the environment through adaptive social responsibility; and
- (i) Conserving local culture and heritage and fostering their value and significance for tourism opportunity.

SEC. 4. *The Council of Good Local Governance.* – There is hereby established a Council of Good Local Governance (the “Council”), which shall be composed of the following:

- (a) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- (b) Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
- (c) Department of Finance (DOF);
- (d) Department of Health (DOH);
- (e) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
- (f) Department of Education (DepEd);
- (g) Department of Tourism (DOT);
- (h) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- (i) National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA);
- (j) Office of Civil Defense; and
- (k) One (1) representative from the basic sectors to be nominated by the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

The Secretary of the DILG shall act as Chairperson of the Council. The appropriate office of the DILG, as the latter may designate, shall serve as the Secretariat of the Council.

SEC. 5. *Powers and Functions of the Council.* – The Council shall act as policy-making and advisory body to ensure the proper implementation of the SGLG. It shall perform the following powers and functions:

- (a) Develop and promulgate the performance indicators that shall serve as standards for evaluating the LGUs' compliance and/or satisfaction of each of the criteria prescribed above: *Provided*, That the Council shall designate each Council member to lead the development of performance indicators in his/her area of jurisdiction or expertise and recommend the approval of such performance indicators by the Council: *Provided, further*, That in the development and approval of the performance indicators, the Council shall take into consideration that LGUs may not be similarly situated and that one (1) or more indicators may be peculiarly inapplicable or extremely difficult to meet given the inherent limitations or circumstances of the LGUs;
- (b) Review and/or revise the performance indicators consistent with the long-term development plans of the National Government. The development of indicators should reflect outcomes that are performance-based, encouraging outputs that reflect concrete benefits to the community in terms of policy, rules, regulations, behavior, skill competencies, knowledge, or attitude;
- (c) Conduct an evaluation of the impact of this act on the performance of the LGUs for purposes of determining the need for enhancing or continuing the SGLG, rolling out the SGLG in barangays, and recommending any amendatory legislation. For this purpose, the Council shall institute an effective feedback mechanism where the concerns of LGUs and other stakeholders on the implementation of the SGLG are appropriately considered;
- (d) Create technical working groups, upon the recommendation of the Council member concerned, composed of experts from government agencies, representatives from the leagues of provinces, cities and municipalities, and other sectors, to assist the Council members in the performance of their respective functions as provided for in paragraph (a) of this section;
- (e) Submit to the President of the Philippines, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, on an annual basis, copies of the performance



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indicators approved by the Council together with the performance indicators developed and recommended by the lead Council member, and the result of the impact assessment conducted pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section; and

(f) Perform such other functions as are necessary or incidental to properly carry out the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 6. Implementing Agency. – The DILG shall be the implementing agency of this Act. It shall, through its relevant bureaus and offices, and in consultation and coordination with partner agencies or sectors, be responsible for the assessment and evaluation of each LGU relative to its compliance with the criteria, and recommend to the Council whether an LGU qualifies to be conferred or awarded the SGLG.

The DILG shall call on any other concerned agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), or sectors, as it may deem necessary, to assist in carrying out its responsibilities under this Act.

SEC. 7. Criteria. – For the purpose of this Act, the areas in the criteria shall be understood and interpreted as follows:

(a) **Good Fiscal or Financial Administration or Financial Sustainability** – This refers to the condition where an LGU demonstrates positive and stable economic performance, and maintains, preserves and mandatorily upholds the practice of fiscal discipline, accountability and transparency by adhering to budgetary rules, public financial management, generally accepted and recognized accounting and auditing standards and full disclosure policy. Indicators shall include: (1) the issuance of an unqualified or qualified opinion on the financial statements of an LGU by the Commission on Audit (COA) in the immediately preceding year; (2) full, strict, and exacting compliance with the Full Disclosure Policy (FDP) of local budget and finances, bids and public offerings; and (3) posting of financial documents required to be posted in the FDP portal in the local government's website.

(b) **Disaster Preparedness** – This refers to an LGU's preparedness for any disaster or natural or man-made calamity, by adopting relevant plans, taking proactive actions, and building its capacity to respond effectively to emergencies when needed. Indicators shall include: (1) having structures, plans and systems in place for disaster preparedness; (2) availability of a Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plan/Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Plan, Contingency Plan, and Local Climate Change Action Plan; (3) availability of working early warning and evacuation alert systems, evacuation centers, standard operating procedures in the event of disaster or calamity, emergency transportation facilities, relief operation equipment and tools, medical services, registration and security; and (4) being an awardee of the National Gawad KALASAG for Best Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

(c) **Social Protection and Sensitivity Program** – This refers to an LGU's sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of its constituents, recognizing and upholding the rights and privileges particularly those belonging to the vulnerable or disadvantaged sectors, such as, but not limited to, women, children, indigenous people, elderly, persons with disability (PWD), and informal settlers. Indicators shall include: (1) providing access to justice, particularly in cases of violence against women and children; (2) providing access for PWDs, senior citizens and pregnant women in frontline services; (3) enhancing mobility for PWDs in public infrastructure like local government center and hospitals in accordance with the Accessibility Law; (4) mandatory representation of indigenous people in compliance with the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997; (5) compliance with the mandatory representation in the sanggunian with representative accorded with regular privileges and emoluments of a sanggunian member; (6) presence of at least one (1) accredited LGU-managed residential care facility for the vulnerable sectors; and (7) representation from NGOs in the local development council and other special bodies consistent with the pertinent provisions of the Local Government Code.

(d) **Health Compliance and Responsiveness** – This refers to the LGU's capability to effectively implement and deliver health services and information systems as well as pursue evidenced-based health promotion and protection policies scientifically proven and accepted to advance population health and individual well-being, reduce the prevalence of non-communicable diseases and its risk factors, lower the incidence of new infectious diseases, address mental health issues and improve health status throughout the life course. Indicators shall include: (1) ensuring access to nutritious, safe and affordable food; (2) regularly conducting physical activities in communities and schools; (3) strict enforcement of laws and ordinances that regulate tobacco sale and use, harmful alcohol consumption, and use of illicit drugs; (4) providing access to safe water and sanitation; (5) implementing immunization programs; (6) ensuring access to primary health care including prevention programs for hypertension, diabetes and cancer; and (7) establishing local surveillance and epidemiology systems to monitor health service delivery.

(e) **Programs for Sustainable Education** – This refers to the initiatives of an LGU to institute education reforms and programs, provide equal access to quality education, promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, foster sports development and instill leadership and patriotism among the youth, as demonstrated by positive changes in the behavior and performance of individual citizens and the community as a whole. Indicators shall include positive results produced by Local School Board Policies and Programs, such as: (1) increased participation rate of students; (2) decreased number of drop-outs as well as out-of-school youths; (3) increase in cohort survival rates; (4) increase in achievement scores as measured by the national tests or assessment tools; and (5) establishment of child development centers, support to special education and the alternative learning system and parent effectiveness service program.

(f) **Business Friendliness and Competitiveness** – This refers to an LGU's unconventional initiative in encouraging local investment, together with local business enterprises and the working sector, through the adoption of policies, programs, systems, structures and/or local legislation that attract and create investment opportunities, and promote a business climate conducive to sustainable business growth. Indicators shall include: (1) adoption of simplified business processing and licensing system; (2) tracking of economic data of the locality and the sharing of the same with investors; (3) designation of a local economic investment promotion officer or its equivalent; (4) existence of an updated Citizen's Charter; (5) adoption and maintenance of an updated Local Investment Incentive Code; and (6) good performance in business promotion as shown by the result of Business Friendliness or Competitiveness Assessment by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry or the National Competitiveness Council.

(g) **Safety, Peace and Order** – This refers to a condition where an LGU establishes good and respectable performance in terms of maintaining peace and order in the community as demonstrated by reduced crime rate, effective anti-illegal drugs campaign, and efficient traffic management, among others, through the implementation of activities, programs and policies, and the appropriate provision of support mechanisms to ensure the safety and protection of its constituencies from injuries and unnecessary threats to life, security and property. Indicators shall include: (1) adopting a Local Anti-Criminality Action Plan or Peace and Order and Public Safety Plan; (2) providing logistical or financial support to the local police; (3) convening regularly the local Peace and Order Council; (4) establishing a functional local Anti-Drug Abuse Council; and (5) establishing and implementing a community-oriented policing mechanism.

(h) **Environmental Management** – This refers to an LGU's initiative to institute policies and programs that consistently and significantly preserves and protects the integrity of the environment with primary focus on solid waste management and ecological balance, as well as mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Indicators shall include: (1) advancing local policy and programs of action on Environmental Impact Assessment; (2) promoting social awareness and social responsibility programs; (3) managing and maintaining ecological balance within their territorial jurisdiction; (4) complying with at least the minimum



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standards set by the provisions of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000; (5) establishing a material recovery facility or an existing partnership with an entity with facilities that may be used for such purpose; (6) having access to a sanitary landfill or alternative technology; (7) maintaining an organized local Solid Waste Management Board; and (8) instituting policies, programs, systems, structures and/or local legislation in order to support and promote environmental protection in all levels of human transaction.

(i) **Tourism, Heritage Development, Culture and Arts** – This refers to an LGU's ability to promote and protect Philippine identity through local heritage and culture, or local legacy, in terms of preserving the cultural, historical and indigenous significance of the community, marketing the characteristics which the LGU is known or recognized for, and attracting foreign and local visitors and tourists to the locality. Indicators shall include: (1) the presence of a Local Tourism Officer or designated officer; (2) the establishment of a Tourist Information and Assistance Center; (3) the establishment of a tracking system of tourism data; (4) the presence of a local council for the promotion of culture and the arts; (5) the approval and implementation of a budget appropriated for the conservation and preservation of cultural property; and (6) existence of an updated cultural property inventory in the LGU.

(j) **Youth Development** – This refers to an LGU's ability to promote and establish adequate, effective, responsive and enabling mechanisms and support systems that will ensure the meaningful participation of the youth in local governance and nation-building. Indicators shall include: (1) adopting a local youth development program; (2) establishing a local youth development council; (3) providing a youth development office which shall be headed by a youth development officer; and (4) instituting policies, programs and systems in order to support and promote the vital role of youth in local governance.

The foregoing criteria may be expanded by the Council to align with the thrusts of the National Government and attune them with the changing times.

¹⁰ **SEC. 8. Requisites to Qualify for SGLG.** – An LGU, which, according to the assessment of the DILG, complies, qualifies, and passes all assessment criteria as provided in Section 7 of this Act, shall be conferred and awarded the SGLG and granted the corresponding incentive as provided under Section 11 of this Act.

SEC. 9. Rules of Interpretation. – In order to ensure and preserve the prestige of the SGLG, in the interpretation of the provisions of this Act, all definitions of the criteria and all rules and regulations issued pursuant to this Act shall be strictly construed against the LGUs. It shall be the burden of an LGU to show that it qualifies for the SGLG.

SEC. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Council shall formulate and promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from the effectivity thereof.

SEC. 11. The SGLG Incentive Fund. – There is hereby created a special account under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) called the "SGLG Fund". The Fund shall be utilized only to pay out the incentives granted to LGUs which qualify for the SGLG.

The Council established under Section 4 of this Act shall have the authority to determine the monetary incentives for LGUs based on the number of awardees. It shall also have the authority to re-evaluate and increase the amount of SGLG incentive to be awarded to LGUs: *Provided*, That, the increase shall be subject to the sufficiency of the Fund at the time the increment is implemented.

SEC. 12. Utilization and Limitations on Expenditures of the Incentives Under the SGLG Fund. – The use of the incentives paid out of the SGLG Fund shall be governed by the policies governing the utilization of the twenty percent (20%) of the annual Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) for local development projects, the Annual Investment Program (AIP) and the Local Development Investment Program (LDIP).

¹¹ The incentives paid out of the SGLG Fund shall not be used for any of the following:

- (a) Financing micro credits and loans;
- (b) Travel expenses, whether domestic or foreign, except when the purpose is in furtherance of the purposes of this Act;
- (c) Administrative expenses of the LGU including, but not limited to, cash gifts, bonuses, food allowances, staff uniforms, communication bills, utilities, transportation costs and the like;
- (d) Purchase, maintenance or repair of any motor vehicles or motorcycles not directly used for the SGLG undertaking;

(e) Salaries, wages, emoluments, *per diems* or overtime pay of employees;

(f) Construction, repair, or refurbishing of administrative offices; and

(g) Loan guarantee.

SEC. 13. Technical Assistance for Capacity-Building. – The DILG shall release the governance assessment report which shall, in part, identify the local governance gaps to the respective LGUs. The national government agencies concerned shall provide technical assistance for capacity-building on identified gaps of LGUs which have not qualified for the SGLG award.

SEC. 14. Management and Administration of the SGLG Fund. – The SGLG Fund established under Section 11 of this Act shall be managed and administered by the DILG with the supervision of the Council. Appropriation to replenish the amount paid out from the Fund during the year and/or to augment the Fund shall be proposed by and included in the budget of the DILG under the GAA.

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SEC. 15. Guarantee of Local Government Autonomy. – The autonomy of LGUs shall be respected at all times. Nothing in this Act shall be interpreted as limiting the autonomy of LGUs to establish policies and pursue programs and projects designed not only to qualify for the SGLG award but also to ensure the enjoyment of their constituency the right to life, liberty, property, health, education, balanced and healthful ecology, among others, in the exercise of their power under the general welfare clause.

SEC. 16. SGLG Operating Fund. – The activities and operational expenses, other than the incentive payouts, related to the implementation of this Act shall be initially funded from the DILG's Performance Challenge Fund. Thereafter, the DILG shall include in its annual budget to be incorporated in the GAA, the item for the SGLG operating fund in the amount equivalent to two percent (2%) of the SGLG Fund.

SEC. 17. Separability Clause. – Should any part or provision of this Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, all other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 18. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 19. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation whichever is earlier.

Approved,

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
Speaker of the House of Representatives

VICENTE C. SOTTO III
President of the Senate

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This Act which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 1843 and House Bill No. 8719 was passed by the Senate of the Philippines and the House of Representatives on February 4, 2019 and February 6, 2019, respectively.

DANTE ROBERTO P. MALING
Acting Secretary General House of Representatives

MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: APR 1 2 2019

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
President of the Philippines





S. No. 1355
H. No. 8715

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila

Seventeenth Congress

Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-third day of July, two thousand eighteen.

[**REPUBLIC ACT No. 11293**]

AN ACT ADOPTING INNOVATION AS VITAL COMPONENT OF THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TO DRIVE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTE THE GROWTH AND NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Innovation Act".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to foster innovation as a vital component of national development and sustainable economic growth. Pursuant to Section 10, Article XIV of the Constitution that recognizes science and technology as "essential for national development and progress" and gives priority to "research and

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development, invention, innovation and their utilization", the State hereby adopts the following policies:

(a) The State shall place innovation at the center of its development policies, guided by a clear and long-term set of goals that will take into consideration the key advantages of the country and the opportunities in the regional and global economic arena. As such, it shall harness innovation efforts to help the poor and the marginalized and to enable micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to be a part of the domestic and global supply chain;

(b) The State shall promote a culture of strategic planning and innovation and ensure that knowledge is created, acquired, disseminated, and used more effectively by individuals, enterprises, organizations, and communities to promote sustainable economic and social development;

(c) Investments in education, science, technology and innovation shall be guided by a strategic direction towards strengthening the country's knowledge-based economic development that benefits all. Innovation starts with a robust pool of skilled, talented and creative people. Educational institutions, private organizations, government agencies and local government units (LGUs) are key drivers of programs that stimulate innovation literacy and skills development for the Filipino workforce and entrepreneurs, including women and the youth;

(d) The State recognizes the importance of an effective and efficient innovation ecosystem that addresses and delivers action in various policy areas, including MSME development, education, trade, investment, finance, and agriculture, sustainable energy, climate change, among others. This requires the various departments and agencies of government to implement a "whole of government" approach that will ensure policy coherence, alignment of priorities, and effective coordination in program delivery. This ecosystem should facilitate and support innovation efforts:

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(e) The State recognizes the indispensable role of governance in enabling and maximizing the benefits from the country's innovation policy. As such, it shall put efficient institutions in place, with the necessary authority to remove regulatory, informal, and other obstacles to the innovative undertaking;

(f) The business sector, academe, scientific community and research institutions play a crucial role in driving economic growth through innovation. As such, the government will work and cooperate with these sectors and encourage the innovative efforts of businesses, MSMEs, academe, and the scientific community. Public sector innovation plays a key economic role whereby an efficient public sector can drive more private sector growth. To this end, the State shall promote, integrate and strengthen policies that engage with innovative businesses and entrepreneurs on collaboration efforts to improve productivity, good governance and efficient delivery of public services; and

(g) The State recognizes the value of sources of innovation that are unique to the country, such as traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and genetic resources, and shall strive to promote their potentials for innovation while protecting them from misappropriation.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act:

(a) *Blue economy* refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, while preserving the ocean ecosystem;

(b) *Business incubators* refer to facilities where startups are hosted and business development services are provided;

(c) *Cluster policies* refer to policies which aim to support geographic concentrations of interconnected firms and related actors, such as specialized service providers, academic or educational institutions, MSMEs, businesses, among others;

(d) *Genetic resources* refer to genetic material, which are any material of plant, animal, microbial or other origin containing functional units of heredity, of actual or potential value;

(e) *Inclusive innovation* refers to the creation of new ideas that results in the development of new products, processes and services, that help improve the welfare of lower-income and marginalized groups;

(f) *Innovation* refers to the creation of new ideas that results in the development of new or improved policies, products, processes, or services which are then spread or transferred across the market;

(g) *Innovation alliance* refers to a coalition of research and development-based technology companies, academic or educational institutions, and/or research institutions, MSMEs and other relevant organizations, that have come together to support innovative efforts and enterprises;

(h) *Innovation centers* refer to centers of competence and innovation activities, either housed in academic, educational, or non-academic facility that supports collaborative research, development and extension (RD&E) initiatives and innovation-related activities between and among academic or educational institutions, RD&E centers, and business;

(i) *Innovation governance* refers to the institutional setup of the various elements of the national innovation ecosystem, including the institutional structures and the processes governing policymaking and implementation, such as program delivery and monitoring, as well as the process of coordination and collaboration across public institutions and with relevant stakeholders;

(j) *Innovation networks* refer to the interconnected system of companies and organizations in the knowledge infrastructure that is mainly focused on innovation;

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(k) *Innovative goods and services* refer to new or significantly improved products, services, processes, technical specifications or components, methods, and tools that enhance the government's ability to deliver services;

(l) *Marketing innovation* refers to significant changes in product design or packaging, placement, promotion or pricing;

(m) *Multi-stage process* refers to the various stages of product or solution development, from feasibility study, designing, prototyping, testing, and commercialization of products or services;

(n) *Organizational innovation* refers to the development and/or introduction of new or significantly improved methods in business practices, workplace organization or external relations;

(o) *Policy innovation* refers to the introduction of new or significantly different solutions to policy problems;

(p) *Pre-commercial procurement* refers to the procurement of RD&E services for services, solutions, or products that do not yet exist, which may involve contracting by development phase from the conduct of feasibility study, designing, prototyping, testing, and commercialization of products or services;

(q) *Process innovation* refers to the development and/or introduction of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method;

(r) *Product innovation* refers to the introduction of a good or service that is new or significantly improved with respect to its features, applications, characteristics or intended uses;

(s) *Project-based competition* refers to a process whereby contractors bid for contracts for a specific project with the proponent being given the flexibility to submit particulars detailing the unique scope and features of its proposal. The

contracting agency shall award the contract to the proponent deemed to have submitted the best innovation solution or product;

(t) *Social innovation* refers to the process of identifying and delivering new services that improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, including through employment, consumption and/or participation;

(u) *Technology diffusion procurement* refers to public procurement that is undertaken on behalf of end-users with the view to accelerating the diffusion of innovative solutions or technologies that offer the greatest advantage to users;

(v) *Technology platforms* refer to self-organized programs or arrangements that allow a wide range of stakeholders to collaborate in identifying common needs and to assemble a portfolio of funding sourced from government or industrial sources or a mix thereof to address those needs;

(w) *Technology programs* refer to programs that link industrial, academic or educational RD&E efforts towards building national capacities in developing industrially important technologies;

(x) *Traditional cultural expressions* refer to forms in which traditional culture is expressed and passed from generation to generation, which then become part of the identity and heritage of a traditional or indigenous community; and

(y) *Traditional knowledge* refers to a body of knowledge, innovations, systems, and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities developed, sustained and passed from generation to generation within a community, and often forming part of the community's cultural heritage or spiritual identity.

SEC. 4. Objective. - The objective of this Act is to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education, training, research and development towards promoting innovation and internationalization activities of MSMEs as driver of sustainable and inclusive growth.

The specific objectives of this Act are as follows:

(a) Promote a culture of strategic planning and innovation to encourage creative thinking and knowledge creation and dissemination towards expanding and maintaining economic competitiveness;

(b) Improve innovation governance in the country and compel the adoption of a long-term vision and focused priorities for innovation;

(c) Ensure effective coordination and eliminate fragmentation of innovation policies and programs at all levels;

(d) Strengthen the position of MSMEs in the innovation system;

(e) Remove obstacles to innovation by suppressing bureaucratic hurdles, and adapting the regulatory framework to support the creation of and diffusion of new knowledge, products, and processes;

(f) Encourage entrepreneurial attitude in order to stimulate growth ambitions in businesses, especially among MSMEs;

(g) Explore, promote and protect the potentials for innovation of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions and genetic resources; and

(h) Strengthen and deepen interactions and partnerships among different actors from the public and private sector, academe, MSMEs, research and development institutions and communities towards promoting inclusive growth and improving the quality of life through innovation.

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SEC. 5. Innovation Scope. - The government shall adopt a broader view in developing its innovation goals and strategies covering all potential types and sources of innovation, including product innovation; process innovation; organizational innovation; social innovation; marketing innovation; academic or educational innovation; or policy innovation. While the country's innovation goals shall be directed at developing new technologies, it shall likewise seek to harness global knowledge and technology that will aid in developing new processes or services for increasing productivity and for promoting overall public welfare.

SEC. 6. The National Innovation Council. - The National Innovation Council, hereinafter referred to as the NIC, is hereby established to develop the country's innovation goals, priorities, and long-term national strategy. The NIC shall be composed of the following:

(a) President of the Philippines - Chairperson;

(b) Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) - Vice Chairperson;

(c) Secretary of Science and Technology - Member;

(d) Secretary of Trade and Industry - Member;

(e) Secretary of Agriculture - Member;

(f) Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources - Member;

(g) Secretary of Health - Member;

(h) Secretary of Transportation - Member;

(i) Secretary of Energy - Member;

(j) Secretary of National Defense - Member;

(k) Secretary of Information and Communications Technology - Member;

(l) Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education - Member;

(m) Secretary of Budget and Management - Member;

(n) Secretary of Education - Member;

(o) Secretary of the Interior and Local Government - Member;

(p) Secretary of Foreign Affairs - Member;

(q) Secretary of Labor and Employment - Member;

(r) Director General of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines - Member; and

(s) Seven (7) Executive Members to be appointed by the President.

The Executive Members shall be appointed from the ranks of business, entrepreneurs, academe, and the scientific community, at least one (1) of whom shall be a woman.

There shall be at least one (1) representative from the MSME sector, and at least one (1) from the business sector. The representatives of business and the MSME shall be recommended by a legally established and reputable business organization. Those to be appointed from the academe and the scientific community shall have at least seven (7) years of experience in the field of science and technology, research and development, or innovation.

The President may designate the Executive Secretary to attend on his behalf and preside over the meetings of the NIC. The Department Secretaries and other members may not designate alternate representatives other than their respective undersecretaries to the meetings of the NIC.



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10. Majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

SEC. 7. *Functions of the National Innovation Council.* - The NIC shall have the following functions:

- (a) Develop the country's strategic vision for innovation and long-term innovation goals and priorities;
- (b) Develop the country's innovation strategies to ensure coherent strategic direction and programs by government agencies;
- (c) Serve as a source of strategic intelligence for national research and innovation policymaking;
- (d) Engage technological expertise in strategic and innovation policymaking;
- (e) Coordinate with various sectors and agencies to promote policy and program coherence;
- (f) Monitor and assess the country's strategic and innovation programs;
- (g) Regularly review and update the country's strategic and innovation policies;
- (h) Guided by the legal mandates of the agencies and LGUs concerned, identify and task government agencies and LGUs that will be tasked to implement specific strategies under the National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document (NIASD), to be developed under Section 9 of this Act;
- (i) Communicate the country's innovation policies, priorities, and agenda to local and international publics;
- (j) Establish and administer the Innovation Fund established in Section 21 of this Act;
- (k) Identify and approve programs that may qualify for funding from the Innovation Fund;

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- (l) Develop metrics and monitor the progress of strategic innovation programs, including publicly-funded RD&E projects;
- (m) Implement an action agenda for the development of the country's capacity for, and success in, innovation as measured by the Global Innovation Index and other indices and measures that it may deem appropriate in measuring the growth and development of innovation in the country, or among countries;

- (n) Submit annual reports to the Congress of the Philippines on the progress of implementation of this Act; and
- (o) Perform other functions as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Secretariat to the NIC.* - A Secretariat to the NIC shall be established within the NEDA, to be headed by an Executive Director III (Salary Grade 28) who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines. The Secretariat shall be under the control and supervision of the NEDA Director General. The Executive Director III shall have at least seven (7) years of experience and practice in the fields of science and technology, research and development, MSME, innovation, finance, or business management to qualify for appointment. The Executive Director III shall be nominated by the NIC.

The initial staffing structure and complement of the Secretariat shall be submitted by the NEDA to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for funding. Pending the creation of the appropriate plantilla positions, the NEDA shall constitute an interim Secretariat within one (1) month from the effectivity of this Act, through the temporary detail of personnel from its member agencies.

The Secretariat shall have the following functions:

- (a) Provide Secretariat support to the NIC, including the preparation of draft strategies, priorities, and other outputs to be adopted by the NIC;
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- (b) Consult with experts who can offer insights on innovation policymaking and priority setting;
 - (c) Coordinate with various agencies of the government, the private sector, academe, scientific community, and other sector stakeholders towards achieving policy and program coherence;
 - (d) Design and implement an innovative startup development program aimed to support entities and individual entrepreneurs developing an innovative product, process or business model;
 - (e) Gather strategic intelligence and information to support the NIC in its policymaking, as well as in goal and strategy setting;
 - (f) Build strategic intelligence on human capital development;

(g) Assess the effectiveness of existing science and technology, and innovation grant programs and scholarships, and submit recommendations to the NIC on these programs, according to the NIASD framework in accordance with Section 9 of this Act;

(h) Draft a set of "relevance criteria" which shall be used by the NIC to evaluate RD&E proposals for public funding through the Innovation Fund;

(i) Develop and administer metrics for monitoring and evaluation of the country's innovation programs;

(j) Develop recommendations for consideration by the NIC; and

(k) Perform other functions as may be directed by the NIC.

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SEC. 9. *National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document.* - The NIC shall develop a National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document, hereinafter referred to as the NIASD, that shall establish the country's vision and long-term goals for innovation and provide a road map and the strategies for improving innovation governance through clear-cut delineation and complementation of innovation efforts across agencies; deepening and accelerating innovation efforts, including inclusive innovation programs that are targeting the poorest of the poor; and integrating and fostering public-private partnerships, including those with large businesses, MSMEs, academe, and RD&E institutions.

In developing the NIASD, the NIC shall identify strategies to stimulate regional capacity for development that can contribute to differentiated innovation strategy across regions in the medium term. Such differentiated strategies shall take into consideration the competitive advantages and strengths of each province, region and community.

The NIASD shall also include the innovation priority areas, the strategies to be used to realize these priorities, and for which resources and budget will be provided. Agenda and strategies shall have a minimum of ten (10)-year horizon, subject to the periodic review by the NIC. All agencies shall strictly comply with the NIASD and shall pursue this as a collective, national effort. The agencies concerned shall incorporate pertinent programs in their respective work programs and action plans, guided by the NIASD.

The NIASD shall be developed in consultation with government agencies, Regional Development Councils (RDCs), LGUs, and other stakeholders, and shall be completed within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 10. *Considerations in Setting Priority Areas for Innovation.* - In identifying the priority areas for innovation, the NIC shall, in consultation with the sectors concerned, consider the issues and challenges in the following areas:

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- (a) Food security and sustainable agriculture;
- (b) The blue economy;
- (c) Education and the academe;
- (d) Health;
- (e) Secure, clean and reliable energy;
- (f) Climate change and disaster resilience;
- (g) Resource efficiencies;
- (h) National and community-based comparative advantages in the context of global value chains;
 - (i) Comparative strengths and advantages of sectors and communities;
 - (j) Potentials for innovation of traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and genetic resources;
- (k) Infrastructure needs;
- (l) Governance;
- (m) Development of human capital;
- (n) Digital economy; and
- (o) Transportation services; among others.

SEC. 11. *Inclusive Innovation.* - The NIC shall develop strategies to promote the creation of new ideas that will be developed into new and quality products, processes, and services aimed at improving the welfare of low-income and marginalized groups, as well as create livelihood opportunities for these sectors.



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The NIC shall likewise integrate policies to promote women's participation and skills development in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, including information and communications technologies.

Further, the NIC shall develop strategies for promoting social innovation as a tool for delivering new services that will improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, as well as enable the participation of communities in meeting their needs. Such strategies shall be incorporated in the NIASD.

SEC. 12. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Innovation. – The NIC shall develop strategies towards promoting MSME internationalization and participation in the local and global value chains. A comprehensive support program, from incorporation to internationalization, shall be developed by the NIC and implemented by the agencies concerned. These programs shall include coaching and mentoring in the areas of design; technology extension services; standard business practices in contracting, accounting and project management; quality control; standard-setting; business services such as commercialization and management; patents; among others.

Through a startup MSME innovation development program, the government shall mobilize its various agencies to work hand in hand with private organizations to provide technical and/or financial support programs for the development training of entrepreneurs.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall look for high productivity innovative businesses to help them identify and exploit opportunities in overseas markets.

The NIC shall also develop metrics for purposes of assessing the progress of work in these areas.

SEC. 13. Innovation Centers and Business Incubators. – The government, through the NIC, shall encourage and

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support the establishment of innovation centers and business incubators, in partnership with the private sector, the academe, and research and development institutions towards fostering skills and technology transfer, collaboration on innovation initiatives between small and big businesses, supplier development, access to finance, and creating marketing opportunities.

The DTI and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall collaborate in ensuring complementation of and coherence in programs that provide innovation-related services to MSMEs and innovators.

These programs shall build links between tertiary institutions, research institutions, and industry towards creating avenues for knowledge diffusion and capacity building. Government-Academic-Business research collaborations shall be pursued to foster future innovations.

SEC. 14. Regional Innovation and Cluster Policy. – The NIC shall integrate in the NIASD strategies to promote regional innovation that will harness the competitive advantages, as well as existing and potential strengths of regions and provinces. Such strategies shall promote regional development through sound science, technology and innovation programs. For this purpose, the RDCs shall help coordinate and monitor the implementation of the NIASDs in their respective regions.

The NIC shall adopt cluster policies or strategies as significant components of the country's innovation policy mix. In determining the feasibility and effectiveness of cluster policies in pursuit of innovation goals, other policy streams, such as regional economic development policy, industrial/enterprise policy, higher education policy, among others, shall be considered.

The cluster policies shall be adopted to focus on regional hubs or provinces or sectors such as MSMEs, large firms, spinoffs and startups, academic or educational institutions and

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research centers, or combinations of these. For this purpose, the NIC shall establish a Cluster Development Program. Funding for this purpose shall be incorporated in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Cluster strategies and programs shall be implemented through the agencies concerned through a well-coordinated system facilitated by the NIC.

SEC. 15. Strategic Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Programs. – The NIC, guided by the country's innovation agenda and development goals, shall develop RD&E themes. These themes shall be adopted in the RD&E programs of concerned agencies which will ensure that a higher level of mission orientation in publicly funded research is observed.

For this purpose, the NIC shall develop a "relevance criteria" that will be administered by the agencies concerned in the selection of RD&E programs or projects for funding. It shall likewise prepare an inventory of academic or educational and RD&E institutions, together with their resources and capacities to undertake these programs and projects which will provide the strategic intelligence for the generation of public funding and grants for these purposes.

The NIC shall also monitor the implementation of these projects and ensure that they comply with the criteria established for the purpose and meet the objectives for which they were funded. A system for "peer review" may be established for this purpose.

As part of the strategies to address the multi-dimensional nature of certain research requirements, the NIC shall:

(a) Establish centers of research excellence, to bring together multi-sector/stakeholder teams to address multi-disciplinary research agenda;

(b) Establish centers of collaborative research activity between academic and business; and

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(c) Mandate pertinent agencies to work with academic or educational and research institutions to provide research infrastructure to support key research areas.

The NIC shall recommend to Congress of the Philippines the annual proposed level of Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) based on the NIASD. This recommendation shall be submitted at the beginning of each annual budget cycle.

SEC. 16. Innovation Instruments. – The government shall employ a range of instruments to achieve the objectives of this Act. These instruments shall include:

(a) Technology programs;

(b) Innovation centers;

(c) Innovation networks;

(d) Technology platforms;

(e) Cluster policies; and

(f) Human capacity building programs.

For this purpose, the NIC shall develop strategies by which government agencies concerned may harness these instruments to more efficiently deliver programs and promote greater collaboration among stakeholders. These agencies, enumerated in Section 17 of this Act, shall submit their respective action plans, guided by the strategies that will be imposed by the NIC.

The establishment of innovation centers shall be undertaken in coordination with the private sector, academic or educational institutions, and other sectors to maximize opportunities for collaboration and joint initiatives.

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SEC. 17. Whole of Government Approach. – In order to effectively drive innovation across all areas of government policy – spanning education, training, health, energy, communication, industry, science and technology, defense, among others – a “whole of government approach” shall be adopted. This approach shall facilitate engagement with business, the RD&E sector, MSMEs, and the broader community towards ensuring the full and effective implementation of the country’s innovation agenda.

All government agencies concerned, including the following, shall be responsible for implementing the country’s innovation strategies and, as such, shall observe the “whole of government approach” provided herein:

- (a) National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA);
- (b) Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (c) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- (d) Department of Agriculture (DA);
- ✓(e) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- (f) Department of Health (DOH);
- (g) Department of Energy (DOE);
- (h) Department of Transportation (DOTr);
- (i) Department of National Defense (DND);
- (j) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- (k) Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
- (l) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- 20 (m) Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA);
- (n) Department of Education (DepEd);
- (o) Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- (p) Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); and
- (q) Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL).

Government agencies shall make available for public access, a joint web portal, that will bear information pertinent to innovation policies, strategies, programs, including services, grants, and financial assistance for related trainings. The agencies shall likewise ensure that beneficiaries are guided on services that are available. The web portal shall also include a database of all ongoing and completed innovation projects implemented under the NIASD.

It shall have interactive features that will allow the public to access services or file applications for scholarships or other services and programs online. Inquiries shall be addressed within three (3) days from receipt thereof. Processing of applications for scholarships and other services shall be streamlined in accordance with the guidelines to be established by the NIC. Reforms to this effect shall be reported to the NIC within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

The online facility shall provide an acknowledgement receipt and reference number for each transaction for monitoring purposes.

Government agencies concerned shall submit periodic progress reports to the NIC on the status of innovation strategies and projects. Reportorial requirements prescribed under this Act shall take into consideration reports required under other laws related to innovation, with the view to harmonizing and achieving efficiencies in the preparation of these reports. Reporting guidelines shall be prepared by the NIC for this purpose.

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The enumeration of agencies provided herein is without prejudice to other agencies that the NIC may mandate.

SEC. 18. Diaspora for Innovation and Development. – A Diaspora for Innovation and Development Program is hereby established to enable the country to mobilize and tap the high level expertise of the Filipino diaspora in pursuit of innovation and development efforts.

The NIC, in coordination with the DOLE, the Bureau of Immigration, the Bureau of Customs, the DFA, among other agencies, shall establish the necessary mechanisms to facilitate the participation of qualified members of the Filipino diaspora in the country’s innovation drive.

The NIC shall develop an inventory of skills and talent requirements, and the institutions or programs needing them as basis for inviting Filipinos in the diaspora to participate in the program. The NIC shall develop the guidelines for this purpose, in coordination with the DOST and other agencies that have existing programs and funding for purposes of mobilizing overseas Filipino talents for innovation and science and technology efforts.

SEC. 19. Intellectual Property System and Management. – Republic Act No. 8293, otherwise known as the “Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines”, as amended, and related laws on intellectual property such as the “Philippine Plant Variety Protection Act”, “E-Commerce Act”, and “Technology Transfer Act”, shall be enforced to protect and secure the exclusive rights of scientists, inventors and innovators to their intellectual property and creations. The pertinent agencies of the government shall promote the diffusion of knowledge and information for the promotion of national development.

The IPOPHL shall promote the registration of patents, trademarks, copyrights, industrial designs and geographical indications among scientists, inventors and innovators to ensure protection of innovation against misappropriation.

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It shall streamline and rationalize administrative and registration procedures and undertake programs to assist MSMEs in the registration of patents, trademarks, copyrights, industrial designs and geographical indications. Reforms to this effect shall be reported to the NIC within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, and every year thereafter.

SEC. 20. Advocacy and Community Education. – The NIC, in cooperation with the various agencies concerned, shall undertake an information and community education program to rally everyone around the country’s innovation agenda and priorities, and to generate public support for these initiatives. Such program shall aim to inform the public on available programs, services, grants, and financial assistance for related trainings, among others, to widen the base of participation in the conduct of the country’s innovation agenda.

The government shall undertake its advocacy and community education program, in partnership with the business sector and business associations, MSMEs, incubation centers and networks, Negosyo Centers, and academic or educational institutions.

LGUs are also hereby mandated to create innovation programs through collaboration with other government agencies, nongovernment organizations, academic institutions and private companies. LGUs may provide incentives for the implementation of various innovation instruments, including the provisions of Section 16 of this Act.

The NIC shall develop a communication plan for this purpose.

SEC. 21. Innovation Fund. – An Innovation Fund to strengthen entrepreneurship and enterprises engaged in developing innovative solutions benefiting the poorest of the poor is hereby established. This Fund, from which grants will be issued, shall be administered by the NIC which shall screen and approve qualified proposals.

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Subject to availability of funds, a revolving fund in the initial amount of One billion pesos (P1,000,000,000.00), is hereby allocated for the initial year’s implementation of this Act, and such funds necessary for its continuous and effective implementation shall thereafter be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Further, the NIC, in coordination with the agencies concerned, shall explore the possibility of accessing a growing range of bilateral and multilateral funds in order to be able to assist in the funding of RD&E and other innovation efforts. Public-private partnerships shall also be encouraged in the development and implementation of innovation initiatives in the sphere of RD&E, education, product development and testing, among others.

SEC. 22. Innovation Development Credit and Financing. – An innovation development credit and financing program shall be developed to generate and scale up innovation in accordance with the NIASD. Innovation development credit, as used herein, shall consist of loans and other financing activities for purposes of including the development of new technologies, product innovation, process innovation, organizational innovation, and marketing innovation.

The NIC, in coordination with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and other relevant agencies, shall involve the private sector in developing such credit and financing program.

SEC. 23. Credit Quota. – All banking institutions, whether government or private, shall set aside at least four percent (4%) of their total loanable funds for innovation development credit: *Provided, however,* That the loanable funds as used in this section shall refer to funds generated from the date of effectivity of this Act: *Provided, further,* That innovation development loans benefitting agricultural sector workers and businesses shall be considered as part of the compliance with the credit quota requirement of Republic Act No. 10000, otherwise known as “The Agri-Agra Reform Credit Act of 2009”: *Provided, furthermore,* That the four percent (4%) credit quota is subject to a joint review by the NIC and



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the BSP after three (3) years of implementation to determine whether the law has been effective in accomplishing its goals. The findings shall be submitted to the Congress of the Philippines.

The NIC shall conduct an annual assessment on the compliance of these banking institutions with applicable regulations on credit quotas for innovation development, and submit its recommendations to the BSP.

The BSP shall impose administrative sanctions and other penalties on the lending institutions for noncompliance with the preceding paragraphs. Penalties on noncompliance/under-compliance shall be computed at one-half of one percent (0.5%) of the amount of noncompliance/under-compliance and shall be directed towards innovation development. Ninety percent (90%) of the penalties collected shall go to the Innovation Fund and the remaining ten percent (10%) shall be given to the BSP to cover administrative expenses.

The BSP and the NIC, in consultation with the concerned agencies and sectors, shall promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement Sections 22 and 23 of this Act within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act. Such rules and regulations shall, among others, provide for modes of alternative compliance to the credit quota allocation and take into account the varying scale and maturity of operation of the banks in the country. Such rules and regulations shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

SEC. 24. Removing Barriers to Innovation. – The NIC and its member government agencies shall eliminate regulatory barriers to innovation and cut red tape to boost innovation efforts. Towards this end, the NIC shall facilitate consultations with stakeholders to identify and cause the removal of barriers in accelerating innovation efforts, such as procurement rules and regulations, and to align efforts and enhance collaboration.

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Government agencies and all LGUs shall hereby improve efficiencies in addressing public transactions that impact on innovation, including reducing the number of days and costs of starting or expanding a business.

Government agencies and LGUs shall undertake reforms in their systems and processes to ensure that applications for starting a business and renewal of business licenses are processed within three (3) working days from the time the application is received. The processing of other government permits and clearances, as well as application for patents, shall likewise be streamlined towards ensuring business environment that fosters innovation.

For this purpose, the NIC shall develop and prescribe guidelines towards streamlining and improving the country's performance in key indicators that will facilitate and promote innovation. The NIC shall identify these indicators for purposes of issuing the guidelines and monitoring its strict implementation.

SEC. 25. Innovation Alliances. – The NIC shall establish the necessary conditions and framework that will promote the establishment of Innovation Alliances. Such framework should encourage companies to engage in collaborative research consortia among private sector entities and with academic or educational institutions. This framework shall also facilitate regional networking and alliances to promote knowledge and technology sharing as well as collaboration in innovation projects.

SEC. 26. Government Procurement. – Public procurement shall be conducted in accordance with Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR).

To help stimulate innovation in the country, the NIC shall coordinate with the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) and its technical support office for the development and issuance of public procurement guidelines, as

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authorized under Republic Act No. 9184 and its IRR, covering the following:

(a) Innovative Goods and Services – Requirements for innovative goods and services shall be identified, together with the clear output specifications, as well as functional or performance criteria. The guidelines shall also allow project-based competition to encourage participants to develop innovative solutions;

(b) Pre-Commercial Procurement – Government agencies are mandated to determine their long-term needs towards encouraging the development of innovative solutions in areas for which solutions are not currently available. Procurement contracts of this nature will involve a multi-stage process; and

(c) Technology Diffusion Procurement – The government may aggregate demand and initiate a technology procurement process to promote technology diffusion and market transformation.

The guidelines to be issued by the NIC, in coordination with the GPPB for this purpose, shall ensure efficiency, transparency, timeliness and relevance in the procurement process.

SEC. 27. Declaration of National Innovation Day. – To promote public awareness and national support for innovation and highlight milestones of government and private sector initiatives, April 21 of every year is hereby declared as a special working public holiday throughout the country, to be known as the "National Innovation Day".

The NIC, in close coordination with the DOST, DTI, DepEd, CHED, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), shall plan, design, and implement programs and activities in celebration of the National Innovation Day, that will involve the participation of other national government agencies, LGUs, the private sector, and schools.

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SEC. 28. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The NEDA, in coordination with the DOST and the DTI, shall formulate and promulgate the IRR and other issuances as may be necessary to ensure the effective implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from the effectivity thereof. The IRR issued pursuant to this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in any newspaper of general circulation.

SEC. 29. Penalty Provisions. – Failure to carry out any of the provisions of this Act will be ground for the filing of criminal or administrative cases, as may be warranted, under the Administrative Code of 1987; Republic Act No. 6770 (The Ombudsman Act of 1989); Republic Act No. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees); Republic Act No. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act); Republic Act No. 7160 (Local Government Code of 1991); and Act No. 3815, as amended (Revised Penal Code), and all other applicable general and special laws.

SEC. 30. Separability Clause. – Should any provision herein be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity or the legality of the other provisions not so declared.

SEC. 31. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed and modified accordingly.

SEC. 32. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
Speaker of the House of Representatives

VICENTE C. SOTTO III
President of the Senate

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This Act which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 1355 and House Bill No. 8715 was passed by the Senate of the Philippines and the House of Representatives on February 4, 2019.

DANTE ROBERTO B. MALING
Acting Secretary General House of Representatives

MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: APR 17 2019

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
President of the Philippines



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Feeding bottles mapanganib kay baby

BINUHAY ng EcoWaste Coalition ang apela nito sa gobyerno na ipagbawal ang paggamit ng bisphenol A (BPA) sa mga plastic feeding bottles at sippy cups dahil sa panganib na dala nito sa mga bata.

Ayon sa EcoWaste, ang BPA ay isang industrial chemical na matatagpuan sa polycarbonate plastics at epoxy resins na mayroong mapanganib na epekto sa kalusugan ng mga bata.

Iniuugnay sa BPA ang mga sakit gaya ng breast at prostate cancer, maagang puberty, autism, hyperactivity, at childhood obesity.

“Considering the number of baby feeding bottles and sippy cups in the market with BPA-free product labeling claim, it appears to us that manufacturers have already opted to self-regulate and to comply with the BPA ban under existing

regulations,” ani Thony Dizon, Chemical Safety Campaigner ng EcoWaste.

Sa Brazil, Canada, China, India, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Africa, Thailand, USA at 28 bansa na miyembro ng European Union, ay ipinagbabawal na ang BPA sa mga gamit ng mga bata.

“We think there is no industry resistance to BPA being banned or removed on plastic baby feeding bottles and sippy cups. We therefore reiterate our call on the government to take action now,” dagdag pa ni Dizon.

Ipinamamadali rin ng EcoWaste ang inihahandang Administrative Order ng Department of Health at Food and Drug Administration bilang regulasyon sa paggamit ng BPA sa mga gamit ng bata. —*Leifbilly Begas*



SURVEY REVEALS CRUCIAL NEED TO EMPOWER WOMEN TO LEAD CLIMATE-CHANGE ACTION

CHICAGO—A new survey funded by the Exelon Foundation found that even though nearly four out of five high-school girls believe action must be taken to address climate change, the majority don't feel equipped to take on this critical issue themselves.

And despite survey respondents' confidence that women have the talents needed to address climate change issues, only 50 percent foresee females leading these efforts.

Recognizing the need to empower girls to pursue career paths that address climate-change issues, the Exelon Foundation and United Nations Women HeForShe are hosting their second annual STEM Innovation Leadership Academy. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and math.

Taking place in Baltimore (July 14 to 19), Philadelphia (July 21 to 26) and Chicago (August 4 to 9), the 2019 Academy events are tailored to the increasing number of young women who express an interest in STEM careers. In fact, 60 percent report that they are likely to pursue a career that uses STEM, with nearly half attributing their interest in STEM to the pathways it provides to make a positive impact on the world.

"The global climate crisis is one of the most

urgent issues of our time. It's very encouraging to hear that most young women surveyed recognize the need to act, but we must arm them with the necessary tools and reinforce the confidence they need to tackle climate issues head-on," said Chris Crane, Exelon president and CEO and HeForShe Thematic Champion.

Designed to inspire and equip the next generation of climate leaders, the STEM Innovation Leadership Academy will provide a weeklong curriculum that incorporates a series of hands-on STEM activities centered on climate action, visits to noteworthy energy and environmental landmarks and discussions with prominent female STEM leaders.

Each of the three events will host approximately 60 young women and culminate with an Academy-wide Energy Innovation Challenge, encouraging participants to identify ways to increase energy efficiency on college campuses.

The second annual STEM Innovation Leadership Academy is a primary component of the Exelon Foundation's commitment to the UN Women's HeForShe initiative, which was created to foster a movement where men can become agents of change for gender equality. The second

annual Academy is part of Exelon's three-year, \$3-million investment to encourage and support the involvement of young women in STEM.

"HeForShe is committed to mobilizing people of every gender identity and expression as advocates for gender equality," said Elizabeth Nyamayaro, senior advisor to under secretary-general, executive director of UN Women and global head of the HeForShe Movement. "We're proud to partner with Exelon for their STEM Innovation Leadership Academy in an effort to educate and empower young people to become leaders in fields that can make a global impact."

"The Exelon STEM Innovation and Leadership Academy is a creative, comprehensive, and effective approach to exposing young people—especially girls—to science, technology, engineering and mathematics in practical and exciting ways that allow them to see a future in these fields," said Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan.

"This event goes hand in hand with my proposed expansion of Maryland's Pathways in Technology Early College High School program, which Exelon has supported from the very beginning. I applaud you and appreciate the ongoing partnership." *Business Wire/AP*



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TOYOTA river cleanup

Toyota takes care of the environment

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. (TMP) joined the celebration of Toyota Global Environment Month through a series of activities that further raise awareness of individuals about environmental conservation. It was aligned with the Toyota Environmental Challenge (TEC) 2050, an initiative which aims at achieving zero carbon footprint from new vehicles, life cycle and manufacturing operations, as well as create a net positive impact to society.

This year, activities focused on "Challenge 3: Plant Zero CO₂ Emissions" and "Challenge 4: Minimizing and Optimizing Water Usage."

Educational seminars about energy management, renewable-energy usage and water conservation were conducted to continuously encourage team members and other members of the value chain to take action in addressing current environmental concerns.

As part of the company's commitment under "Challenge 6: Establishing a Future Society in Harmony with Nature," TMP continues the "All-Toyota Green Wave Project," an initiative by all Toyota affiliates around the world, which aims to contribute to the restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystems.

TMP team members and representatives from the Toyota Suppliers Club planted 200 trees inside the 11-hectare Toyota Forest at the Toyota Special Economic Zone in Santa Rosa, Laguna.

Volunteers also participated in the river cleanup along the Silang-Santa Rosa River near the company's vicinity. By cleaning up the river, TMP hopes to prevent further pollution and improve the waterways.

The Silang-Santa Rosa River is connected to Laguna Lake, which is one of the primary water sources for livelihood of nearby communities.