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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



Stronger Coral Triangle protection urged

By Kuhlín Caste Gacula

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday called for the stronger regional cooperation to protect the Coral Triangle and its marine resources from the devastating effects of climate change.

Cimatu underscored the importance of regional cooperation, citing immense challenges the Philippines and five other nations face from climate change, which is the single greatest threat to the coral-rich Asian region.

"This is the value of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI). I see this partnership as a long-term solution not only for our region but also for all of civilization mainly because of the fact that we are protecting the nursery and the center of marine biodiversity," Cimatu said.

The Coral Triangle is predicted to be one of the very first regions that would feel the impact of climate change.

The CTI on Coral Reefs Fisheries and Food Security (CFF) is a multilateral partnership of six countries working together to sustain extraordinary marine and coastal resources by addressing crucial issues, such as food security, climate change and marine biodiversity.

Formed in 2009, CTI-CFF members include the governments of the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

Cimatu noted that significant progress had been made in the last decade but CTI-CFF nations must not become complacent, especially in the face of climate change.

"We have made progress indeed but we are far from celebrating what is supposed to be a victory for our people — the sustainability of our coastal and marine resources," Cimatu said.

"A lot has yet to be done and we want nothing less for the future generation than for them to experience what we have enjoyed so far from our oceans," he added.

Although highly diverse and rich because of an abundance of coral reefs, tropical fishes, mangroves and seagrass, Cimatu said the Coral Triangle is predicted to be one of the very first regions that would feel the impact of climate change.

Cimatu noted that in the past 10 years, the region experienced unprecedented rates of droughts, extreme rainfall and weather, coral bleaching and ocean acidification due to changing climate.

He lamented that climate change had hampered not only the individual lives of the families living along the coastlines but also of the economy of our entire nations.

Cimatu urged CTI-CFF member-nations to continue supporting the "cause of empowering communities and providing them with options that will address their needs amidst the emerging impacts of climate change."





DENR hopes to make Manila Bay fit for swimming again

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is hoping to eventually make the Manila Bay safe for swimming again, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said yesterday.

"I hope and I pray that it will be swimmable again because this is really something that we have to hand over to the next generation," he said, but noted that it is difficult to set a timeline.

The DENR will set up four community environment and natural resources offices or CENROs along the coast in Manila, Navotas-Malabon, Pasay-Paranaque and Las Piñas to monitor the bay's cleanup early next year.

Cimatu said coliform levels in Manila Bay's waters have reached 350 million most probable number fecal coliform bacteria per 100 milliliter. He compared this to Boracay's waters where coliform levels reached about one million MPN per 100 ml at most.

"Definitely, this is much, much higher than the highest coliform level in Boracay when it was called a cesspool," Cimatu said.

He added that the DENR is fulfilling its part under a writ of continuing mandamus on the Manila Bay cleanup issued a decade ago.

In December 2008, the Supreme Court issued the mandamus to 13 government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and eventually preserve Manila Bay.

"I accept the challenge. This is a very difficult order but we will still be able to harness the capability of the government," Cimatu said.

He said he is determined to shut down all establishments violating environmental laws near the bay, specifically those who dispose of wastewater directly into the bay. — Catherine Talavera, Rhodina Villanueva



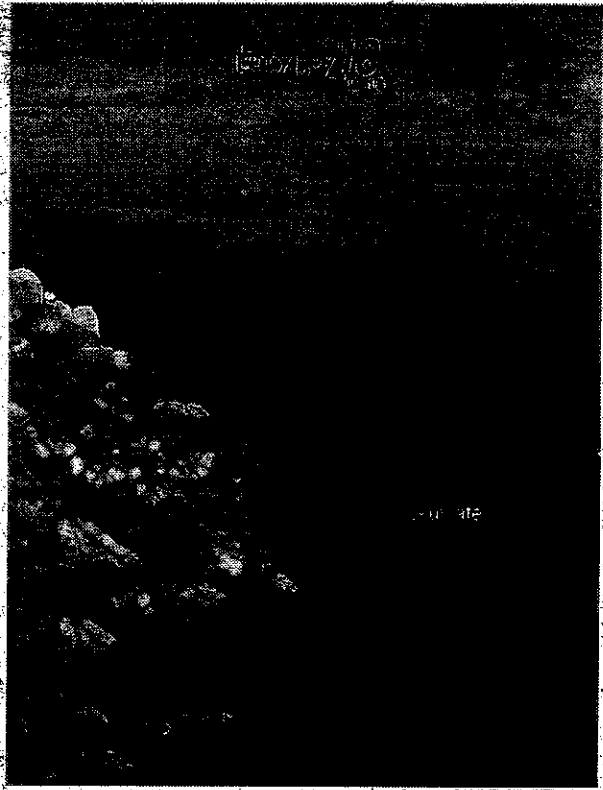
Editorial

Basurahan ang Manila Bay

NAPAKARUMI ng Manila Bay. Puwede na rin itong tawaging "cesspool" gaya nang sinabi ni President Duterte sa Boracay. Mas maganda kung ito naman ang pagtutuunan ng galit ng Presidente. Kapag nagalit siya, biglang nagiging malinis ang marumi gaya ng Boracay. Kailangan din naman ang "bangis" ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu para maging malinis ang Manila Bay.

Maraming basura sa Manila Bay at mga informal settlers ang nagtatapon nito. Dahil sila ang nakatira sa mga pampang ng ilog at estero, tapon na lang sila nang tapon. Hindi na sila lalayo pa para magtapon ng kanilang basura. Kaya hindi na nakapagtataka kung bakit hindi maubus-ubos ang mga nakalutang na basura sa dagat at sa mga estero.

Lahat nang mga basura na itinatapon nila sa mga estero, Pasig River at iba pang water ways, tatangayin lahat sa Manila Bay. Namumutikik ang



basura at aanurin ito patingo sa baybayin ng Roxas Boulevard. Makikita ang mga basurang ito ng mga namamasyal sa Luneta at maski ng mga nakatira sa condo. Makikitang sobra nang polluted ang Manila Bay at naaamoy pa ang karumihan nito.

Sinabi mismo ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu na ang mga informal settlers sa Maynila at iba pang lungsod at bayan na nasa paligid ng Manila Bay ang dapat sisihin kung sobra na itong polluted. Lahat umano ng basura ng mga nakatira sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay at mga pampang ng estero ay humahantong sa dagat. Pinag-iisipan na umano ng kanyang tanggapan kung paano ire-relocate ang mga squatters. Makikipag-meeting umano siya sa local governments at iba pang ahensiya sa posibleng paglilikas ng mga squatters. Hindi raw simple ang gagawing pag-relocate pero sisikaping magawa ito. Makikipag-usap umano sila sa mga pamilyang nakatira sa mga baybayin ng Manila Bay at mga estero.

Matagal nang problema ito. Marami nang pina-ngako ang bawat administration na ilipat ang mga squatters. Pero lahat ay pawang sa salita lamang. Dahil sa ningas-cogon na ugaling ito ng mga namumuno, lalo pang dumami ang mga squatters at ang resulta, dumami pang lalo ang basura at naging polluted ang Manila Bay. Kailangan na ang pagkilos ng DENR sa problemang ito.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

11 Central Visayas rivers due for clean-up

BY MINERVAC NEWMAN

CEBU CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Central Visayas will prioritize 11 rivers for cleanup and development.

DENR Regional Executive Director Gilbert Gonzalez has directed all provincial environment and natural resources officers to finalize profiling of river bodies

in their areas, work closely with the local government units and stakeholders and proceed immediately with the clean-up of Class C water bodies.

Class C water bodies are those that are identified “safe for propagation of fish, recreation and for post-treatment manufacturing processes.” In Central Visayas, there are 11 Class C rivers, according to the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

There are three Class C rivers in Bohol: the Abatan River-Cortes Bohol (Kamayaan down to its outlet at Poblacion, Cortes, Bohol), the Inabanga River-Inabanga, Bohol (Cawayan, Inabanga and downstream) and the Manaba River-Garcia Hernandez, Bohol (downstream of Calma).

In Cebu, the prioritized Class C rivers are Bulacao River-Talisay and Cebu (source Bulacao river); Guindarohan-Minglanilla Cebu (Cantso-an, Naga and

downstream); Guadalupe River-Cebu City (downstream of Sandayong Bridge); Luyang River-Carmen Cebu (segment within Cogon, Carmen and below Sapangdaku River and its tributaries; and Toledo City, Cebu (downstream of Cantabaco, Toledo City).

In Negros Oriental the Class C rivers are the Banica River-Negros Oriental with exit in Dumaguete City (Jawa, Valencia, Taclobo Dgte down to its exit point at

Calindangan, Dumaguete); Panamangan River-Bais City, Negros Oriental (entire stretch from its exit point to South Bais bay going upstream) and Sicopong River-Negros Oriental (entire river system).

Gonzales welcomed the support and participation that DENR is getting from partner local government units and other stakeholders in cleaning the rivers. He specifically mentioned the Cebu City government.

133 businesses in Siargao have no ECCs – DENR

BUTUAN CITY — The regional director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) here disclosed that 133 business establishments in Siargao Island reportedly did not possess Environment Compliance Certificates (ECCs).

At the yearend media briefing here, DENR Region 13 head Felix S. Alicer said that the agency will be forming an environment-tourism task force to look into reports that 133 businesses in the famous tourism hub did not have ECCs.

He said some of these establishments were resorts that were non-compliant even with simple government policies, including environmental requirements.

Alicer added that his office, along with officials of the provincial government, have pledged to join hands in addressing the initial findings of the DENR 13 Environment Management

Bureau (EMB) on these erring establishments.

An initial finding by the DENR-EMB disclosed that some business establishments in the acknowledged "Paradise Island" of Siargao, particularly in the country's surfing capital of General Luna town, were non-compliant with government laws, rules and regulations, Alicer pointed out.

He also said that Surigao del Norte Governor Sol Matugas has shown concern for the preservation and protection of environment in the island, and is closely coordinating with the agency for the protection of Siargao.

Alicer said the agency has already sent notices of violation to 133 tourism-related establishments in the island, particularly in General Luna town.

In General Luna town alone, only about 10 business establishments have been accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT), DOT Region 13 Director Ma. Ana T. Nuguid said.



ANONG mangyayari kung hindi natin mababaw, san at matatanggal ang basura? Maaari bang sumobra ang basura at kulangin ang mga lugar na pagtatapunan nito?

Tila wala nang magtatapunan ng basura kaya nagpasya ang mayayamang bansa na maghanap ng mahihirap na bansa na papayag at magpapabayad para tanggapin ang kanilang mga basura.

Tulad ng ginawa ng Japan, Canada at South Korea na nagtambak ng kanilang basura sa ating bansa. Mabuti na lang at mayroong kinonsensiyang mga kawani ng Bureau of Customs kaya nabunyag ang pagpasok ng toneladang basura mula sa South Korea. Paulit-ulit na lang ang problema ng basurang galing sa ibang bansa — "imported, stateside trash".

Sa mababang antas ng Barangay Pinyahan, nagsimula na ang

kampanyang magkasamang harapin ng barangay at Simbahan ang problema ng basura. Sa Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City hindi "harap mo, linis mo" ang ating motto kundi "harap mo, linis ko, tulong at makilisa na sa sama-samang pagharap at pakikipagtulungan sa problema ng basura."

Salamat sa Eco-Waste Coalition, kalipunan ng iba't ibang Luntiang Samahan, nababantayan at natutugunan ang problema ng basura-lokal man o imported.

Ito ang dahilan ng ating munting pagkilos noong nakaraang Huwebes sa South Korean Embassy sa McKinley. Nagsagawa ang munting grupo ng kakaibang pamamasko o pag-awit ng mga Christmas carol. Ito ang ilang mga Christmas carol na kinanta ng grupo sa harap ng South Korean Embassy.

"O magsaya at magdiwang, pagkat ibabalik na basura ng



Pagpapabalik ng "imported trash" sa South Korea, maagang pamasko sa madla

Korea basura ng Korea at ating bantayan at ating bantayan

at para hindi tayo malinlang

Pasko na naman o kay tulin ng araw

Paskong nagdaan tila ba kung kailan lang Ngayon ay Pasko dapat pasalamat tayo ay mag-awitan (Koro)

Pasko! Pasko! Pasko na namang muli.

Basura ng Korea kailan ibabalik?

Pasko na namang muli.

Ang basura ay isoli (now na!)

Sana, huwag nang patagalin ng South Korea ang isyu ng kailang basura tulad ng Canada. Napakaganang regalo ng South

Korea sa ating bansa ang mabilis na pagpapabalik ng kanilang basura sa pinanggalingan nito. Sana, magkaroon ng mabilis na imbestigasyon para sa grupo at korporasyong sangkot sa pag-angkat ng basurang galing South Korea.

Hindi lang ang lupa, tubig at hangin ang nalalason ng basura. Madaling maging basura ang mga tao, lalo na ang mga kawani ng pamahalaan. Salamat sa EcoWaste Coalition sa inyong adbokasiya. Gayundin, mga tapat at mapagmalasakit na mga empleyado ng BOC dahil malaki ang pag-asa nating magkaroon ng malinis at luntiang kinabukasan at kasalukuyan.



Waste Management Law

THERE are many places in the country where the Ecological Solid Waste Management Law (ESWM) Law (RA 9003) is not being followed by LGUs nationwide. The Law was authored by Senator Loren Legarda. As the Senator said: "For 15 years now, we have the Ecological Social Waste Management Law, RA 9003"... "The measure aims to create a clean and healthy environment using system of solid waste management that starts with segregation of garbage at its source, segregated transportation, processing, treatment and proper disposal of solid waste. I emphasize on recycling so that less garbage is actually brought to the sanitary landfill and those brought to the final disposal site are effectively maintained," said Legarda.

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), as of 2015, "only 36 percent of LGUs have complied with all aspects of this legislation," meaning to say that the problem originated from the past administration.

President Rodrigo Duterte made a pronouncement "to look into the local government units' (LGUs) discretionary funds and how they are using it to manage garbage in their respective communities."

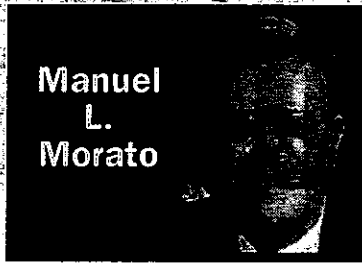
According to Senator Legarda... "that there was no reason for LGUs not to effectively manage solid waste in their localities because aside from having discretionary funds, the ecological management of solid waste is mandated by law."

The Senator lamented that majority of LGUs have yet to comply with the provisions of RA 9003.

According to informations gathered, the Ombudsman recently "filed cases against non-compliant LGUs..."

"In the 2016 national budget, 500 million was allocated under the

UNCENSORED



Manuel L. Morato

DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) for capacity building programs for LGUs for the implementation of the ESWM."

"What we really need is for local leaders to have the political will to implement the law at full speed, "according to Senator Legarda; and I agree, for if we want to have a healthy and epidemic-free society, the LGUs must fully comply with Republic Act 9003. For example, the Monterrazas Village in Barangay Tuding, Itogon, Benguet has been suffering from for years.

The government departments and agencies lack proper information dissemination to inform the public and the Local Government officials to take the Republic Acts seriously for those must be followed by everybody...

For one, my family suffered from a partnership with politicians with my youngest brother, Jose L. Morato, who together demolished the ancestral house of my parents built by my father in the 1950s in violation of Republic Act 10066. It was the house where my parents lived in with the family; and where my late father died in 1965 and my late mother died in 2002. You can never imagine the pain and sadness we, five siblings who had no knowledge at all, are suffering from. The ancestral home was in the center of our family compound at 99 Scout Gandia

Street, Quezon City, a residential area where the Belmontes together with Jose L. Morato are putting up a 21 storey condo/hotel, given a "Special Permit" by the Quezon City Council headed by Vice Mayor Belmonte.

We had to go to court for Jose L. Morato evidently sold the entire property to the Belmontes as if he owned it alone. We had to take him to court for the documents presented in court were falsified.

We filed a civil case in the RTC Branch 215, Quezon City Hall of Justice; and a case of Syndicated Estafa against 10 of those involved. But unfortunately, the Assistant City Prosecutor handling the case, Nerissa Rhona V. Zamora-Amoroso gave birth. It was raffled to another, Assistant City Prosecutor Roderick P. Robledo.

There are 10 respondents and Assistant City Prosecutor Amoroso understood it well. She gave us time to explain. But when it was re-raffled, we were no longer given a chance to be heard and dismissed the case; including the dummy used who acted as the owner of my mother's properties, including the ancestral house and "sold" said properties to Jose L. Morato and the Belmontes as if he alone (I will not mention the name) owned our closed family corporation.

We are sad about the decision for even a 4th grader injected with Dengvaxia vaccine would understand and not allow such a glaring estafa pass-by.

I have, however, one question I would like to ask: How come, despite the ongoing case at RTC Branch 215, the excavation already 10 to 15 meters deep, continues and have not stopped at all? The decision on the Syndicated Estafa our lawyers are answering shortly.

For comments and suggestions email at mlmorato@yahoo.com



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'2 trees for each child' bill moves on

THE House of Representatives on Friday approved on second reading House Bill 8727, which seeks to require parents to plant two trees for every child born to them.

The proposed "Family Tree Planting Act," principally authored by Rep. Mark Go of Baguio City, declares it is the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

Under the measure, these trees shall be planted within the premises of their own home or in an area to be designated by the Barangay Council, where they reside, with the approval of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Maricel V. Cruz



UNDERSECRETARY Nora K. Terrado (second from left) of the Department of Trade and Industry's Trade and Investments Promotions Group (TIPG) turned over the 2018 Philippine Export Guidebook (PEG) Special Edition for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to DTI-ROG Undersecretary Zenaida Cuison-Maglaya (fourth from left) during the National Export Congress 2018 on December 7 at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City. They are joined by Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez (center), DTI Export Management Director Senen M. Perlada, and DTI-ROG Director and Program Manager-Negosyo Center Program Management Unit Emma C. Asusano (right).

DTI-EMB launches PHL Export Guidebook 2018 for MSMEs

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)-Export Marketing Bureau (EMB) launched the Philippine Export Guidebook (PEG) special edition for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), during the National Export Congress held on December 7 at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City.

Printed copies of the guidebook will be provided to all 1000 plus Negosyo Centers nationwide, partner commodity agencies and government agencies that regulate export and exporters organizations, among others.

Present during the ceremonial turnover of the PEG 2018 for the Negosyo Centers, were Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez, Undersecretary Nora K. Terrado of the Trade and Investments Promotions Group, Undersecretary Zenaida C. Maglaya of the Regional Operations Group, and Director Emma C. Asusano, program manager of the Negosyo Center Program Management Unit. The DTI-EMB was represented by Director Senen M. Perlada and Assistant Directors Agnes

Perpetua R. Legaspi and Anthony B. Rivera.

The PEG 2018 is a simplified and updated reference on export business. It covers business basics from setting up companies to actual exporting. It contained export-related law and issuances, as well as procedures, documentation requirements and processes of government agencies regulating export.

In 2015 the DTI-EMB launched the first ever PEG, a general guide on exporting from the Philippines. This year, in support to the government's commitment of helping MSMEs, the PEG was updated and rewritten for members of said sector, which are currently into export business and to all those that may be interested to venture into exporting.

The public can also access and download an electronic copy of the Philippine Export Guidebook (PEG) 2018 edition at www.dti.gov.ph and www.tradelinephilippines.dti.gov.ph, an interactive online platform for exporters and foreign buyers alike.



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Facing 'extinction,' PH, vulnerable nations lament pace of climate talks

By **Jheset O. Enano**
@JhesetEnanoINO

KATOWICE, POLAND—Dozens of nations threatened with catastrophe from unchecked climate change warned on Thursday they "face extinction" without immediate action to rein in mankind's emissions, as UN climate talks limped toward their conclusion.

Representatives from nearly 200 nations are locked in negotiations in Poland over how to make good on the promises they made in the landmark 2015 Paris agreement aimed at limiting global temperature rises.

The talks aimed at averting catastrophic climate change are expected to spill over the weekend after two weeks of heated disputes between rich and poor nations that saw countries most at risk plead for action.

Ministers must agree on a common rule book to make

good on promises made by countries in the landmark 2015 Paris accord, which vowed to limit global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Talks have, however, hit a wall over a host of disputes ranging from adopting the newest environmental data to how the fight against climate change will be financed in the future.

'We're not prepared to die'

But with Earth already experiencing widespread droughts, flooding and megastorms made worse as our planet heats up, many nations simply cannot wait for action.

"We are bearing the torch for those vulnerable to climate change," Hilda Heine, president of the Marshall Islands, told delegates at the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24). "We represent a number of nations, like my own, that face extinction. Species of all

kinds also face existential risk."

A group of 48 nations representing more than 1 billion people urged developed countries responsible for the lion's share of planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions to pay up to help the worst affected.

"We are not prepared to die," said Mohamed Nasheed, former president of Maldives, an archipelago in the Indian Ocean threatened by rising sea levels. "We are not going to be the first victims of the climate crisis. Instead, we are going to do everything to keep our heads above water."

Pace of talks dismays PH exec

For small island states like Maldives and the Marshall Islands and vulnerable nations like the Philippines and Nepal, a robust rule book for the landmark Paris climate deal can determine their continued existence amid extreme weather events, such as



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droughts and flooding.

Emmanuel de Guzman, vice chair of the Philippine Climate Change Commission, said the pace of the talks had been unacceptable.

"We are in Poland in the name of the children of tomorrow, whose interests we must secure, compelled by science and duty," said De Guzman, the Philippines lead negotiator.

"We find the ambivalence of countries in these negotiations unacceptable. We are discussing here not trivial text or punctuation marks but our very survival." A major sticking point at the talks remains how nations use the findings of a landmark UN report released in October.

'Jememmej'

"There is no excuse for inaction from the world's most powerful nations," he said. "The decades of apathy and procrastination must end here in Katowice."

Nations belonging to the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) on Thursday called for "jememmej," or vigilance in Marshallese language.

On the sidelines of the COP24 summit to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 48-member CVF demanded governments to step up in their commitments to respond to climate change. They also called for the rapid and effective delivery of climate finance to developing countries, which remained a bone of contention in the climate talks.

Heine, who is also current CVF chair, said that all nations should unite against any "mediocre outcome" from COP24. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlighted the need for greenhouse gas emissions to be nearly halved by 2030 and for fossil

fuel use to be slashed in order to achieve the Paris goal of limiting temperature rises to 1.5 C.

Four nations—the United States, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait—blocked a proposal for nations to "welcome" the IPCC report as a basis for future climate action.

Talks are dogged by competing interests, and even if the Paris pledges were realized, Earth is on the path toward 3 C warming enough to tear at the fabric of society.

Nasheed said even after 24 years of climate talks, nothing much seemed to have changed.

"We are still using a dinosaur language, still using the same old words and tedious points," Nasheed said. "It is time to tell ourselves some hard truths: Carbon emissions are rising, rising, rising, and all we seem to do is talking, talking, talking." —WITH A REPORT FROM AFP

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UN conference on climate set for tense final after disputes

KATOWICE, Poland—The UN talks aimed at averting catastrophic climate change are set to wrap up in Poland Friday after two weeks of heated disputes between rich and poor nations that saw countries most at risk plead for action.

Sources close to the COP24 talks told AFP that delegates from nearly 200 nations were still far apart on several issues—from adopting the latest environmental science to how future climate action is funded.

Ministers must agree on a common rule book to make good on promises made by countries in the landmark 2015 Paris accord, which vowed to limit global temperature rises to below two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

But with the starkest warnings yet from scientists highlighting the need to drastically slash fossil fuel emissions within the coming decades in order to meet the safer cap of 1.5C warming, delegates were urged to act now or condemn at-risk nations to disaster.

“We are bearing the torch for those vulnerable to climate change,” Hilda Heine, president of the Marshall Islands, told the conference.

“We represent a number of nations, like my own, that face extinction. Species of all kinds also face existential risk.”

Dominating proceedings in the Silesian mining city of Katowice was debate around a major report by a UN body showing the clearest sign yet of the disaster awaiting mankind if politicians fail to act.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned there was no hope of meeting the Paris temperature goals unless greenhouse gas emissions were slashed to net zero by mid-century.

Despite the UN climate change convention obliging nations to negotiate on the basis of the “best available science”, four nations refused to “welcome” the IPCC findings at the talks.

Most nations want the IPCC science to inform the rule book and form the foundation of countries’ future ambitions on climate action.

But the US, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait were accused of playing for

time to boost their fossil fuel-dependent economies.

Host Poland has also come in for criticism from green campaigners for seeking permission to continue using coal for years in spite of overwhelming data that the opposite must happen.

“We do not have the comfort of time, but we have the will and we have power to achieve a compromise,” Poland’s COP24 president Michal Kurtyka told delegates late Thursday as the final draft decision text was still being tinkered with.

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The expectation is that talks will drag on until at least Saturday, with a number of key issues still unresolved.

"We are seeing deadlocks in certain areas," Xie Zhenhua, China's special envoy for climate, told reporters.

"We need to avoid straying from principles and spirit of the Paris agreement. We cannot accept any backsliding."

Mohamed Adow, International Climate Lead at Christian Aid, said there were some promising signs on the issue of funding.

Developing nations say richer countries should provide more money to help them adapt to the effects of climate change while still growing their economies.

"We need rich countries to commit to provide predictable climate finance," Adow told AFP.

"The IPCC is clear: real action is needed to halt climate chaos. Real action requires real money for real solutions."

With politicians locked in nitty-gritty debates over money, accountability and equity, it fell to 15-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg to deliver the most rousing call-to-arms.

"We have not come here to beg world leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past, and you will ignore us again," said Thunberg, who called for a global student strike Friday to raise awareness.

"We have run out of excuses, and we are running out of time." AFP



DoT gives up 2018 tourist target

THE Department of Tourism (DoT) on Thursday said it was not confident of reaching its 7.4 million tourist arrival target for the year, as the industry faced heavy losses over the Boracay Island shutdown in April.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo Puyat said the agency has instead settled for at least 7.2 million tourist arrivals before the year ends,

after almost 500,000 tourists either canceled their trips or were diverted to neighboring countries over the Boracay closure.

"I'm not confident. Though it has been increasing, we have to admit that the closure of Boracay, of course it's the top tourist destination," Puyat told reporters.

Puyat, however, said that this year's foreign visitor arrival target had already surpassed last year's by 7.43 percent.

Data from the DoT showed that from January to October 2018, foreign tourist arrivals reached 5,880,895, higher than last year's 5,474,310.

Tourism spokesman Benito Bengzon said the diversion of some tourists to alternative destinations such as Bohol, Cebu and Palawan helped the gradual increase of visits, but these were not enough to hit the 2018 target as some of the foreign visitors canceled altogether.

Bengzon said it should be understandable for the DoT to miss its target as Boracay generates the lion's share of the country's tourism revenue.

"I think people have to under-

stand that Boracay is such an important and popular destination, which generates 80,000 [tourists] per month. If you multiply it by 6 which is the number of months it was rehabilitated, then you're talking of approximately 500,000 that we lost. People have to understand the situation when we start talking whether or not we do not reach 7.4 [million]," he explained.

Boracay was closed last April for rehabilitation due to high counts of

coliform and numerous other environmental issues.

The DoT, together with the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources are also eyeing the rehabilitation of El Nido, Bohol and Siargao.

Puyat, however, assured that the islands would not be totally closed, saying only those that violated environmental laws and ordinances would be shut-down.