

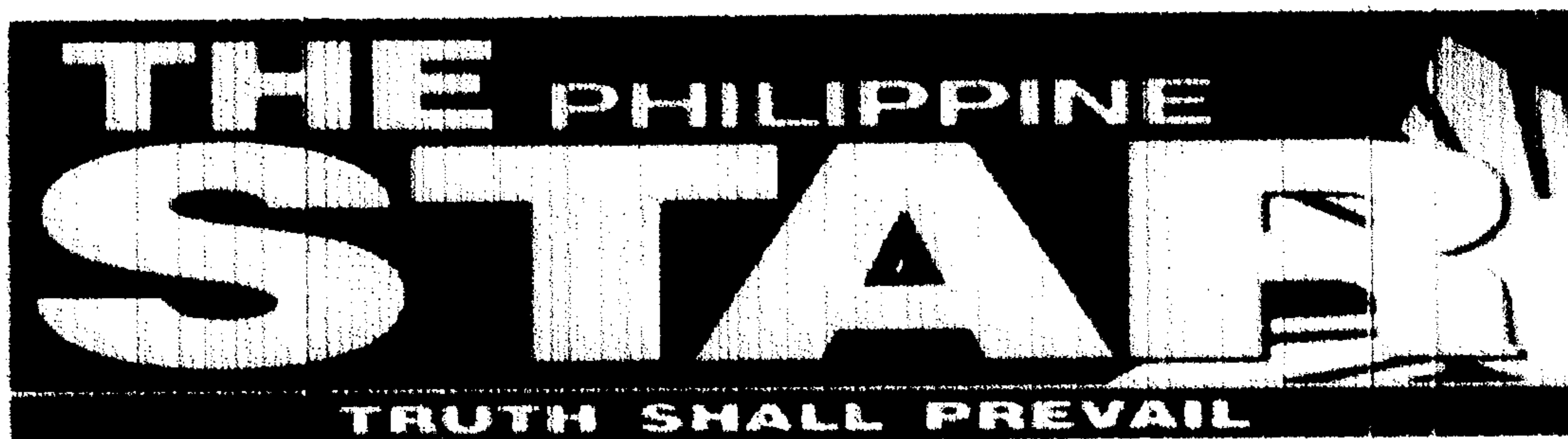
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 10 MAY 2016

DAY : Tuesday

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IN THE NEWS



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

NGOs favor management framework for Benham Rise

Non-government organizations (NGOs) continue to push for the protection of the 13-million hectare Benham Rise particularly the tuna nursery and deep sea corals in the area.

The undersea region east of Luzon is located off the provinces of Aurora and Isabela, and duly recognized by the United Nations in 2012 as the newest Philippine territory in compliance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

"With its wealth of marine resources, there is a need to craft a management framework for Benham Rise," UP Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea director Jay Batongbacal said.

Benham Bank, the shallowest portion of the unexplored seamount, is one of the traditional fishing grounds of coastal dwellers on the northeastern coast of Luzon.

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Based on oceanographic explorations, there are more than 50 species of fish and tiered plate corals in the Benham Bank.

The area is part of the spawning grounds of the highly valuable Pacific bluefin tuna which are known to swim to the US and Mexico, but came back to spawn in the western Pacific including the Benham Rise.

"There is a huge potential for ecosystems preservation in Benham Bank to protect commercially valuable fish species, noting that bigeye tuna is already overfished. This can be our contribution to the global economy," World Wildlife Fund Philippines fisheries expert Jose Ingles said.

Meanwhile, Oceana Philippines marine scientist Marianne Saniano said the area is blanketed with coral assemblages, sponges and algae and organisms can tolerate low

light penetrations.

"The underwater plateau serves as a refuge and nursery for many economically important fish," she added.

The Biodiversity Management Bureau has also announced plans to organize a workshop on management strategies for the sustainable use of resources in Benham Rise considering the need for complete baseline assessment of the region.

One of the options considered is to declare Benham Rise as a marine managed area, with Benham Bank as the core zone with protected status and the rest as exploration areas.

Furthermore, government initiatives and explorations are ongoing since 2013 as the Benham Rise plays a big role in the fisheries sector because the shallowest area has shown primary productivity.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Coordinating body for PH marine ecosystem pushed

A De La Salle University (DLSU) professor proposes the establishment of a coordinating body in the Philippines that will make sure coastal ecosystems in the country are healthy in order to help combat the effects of climate change.

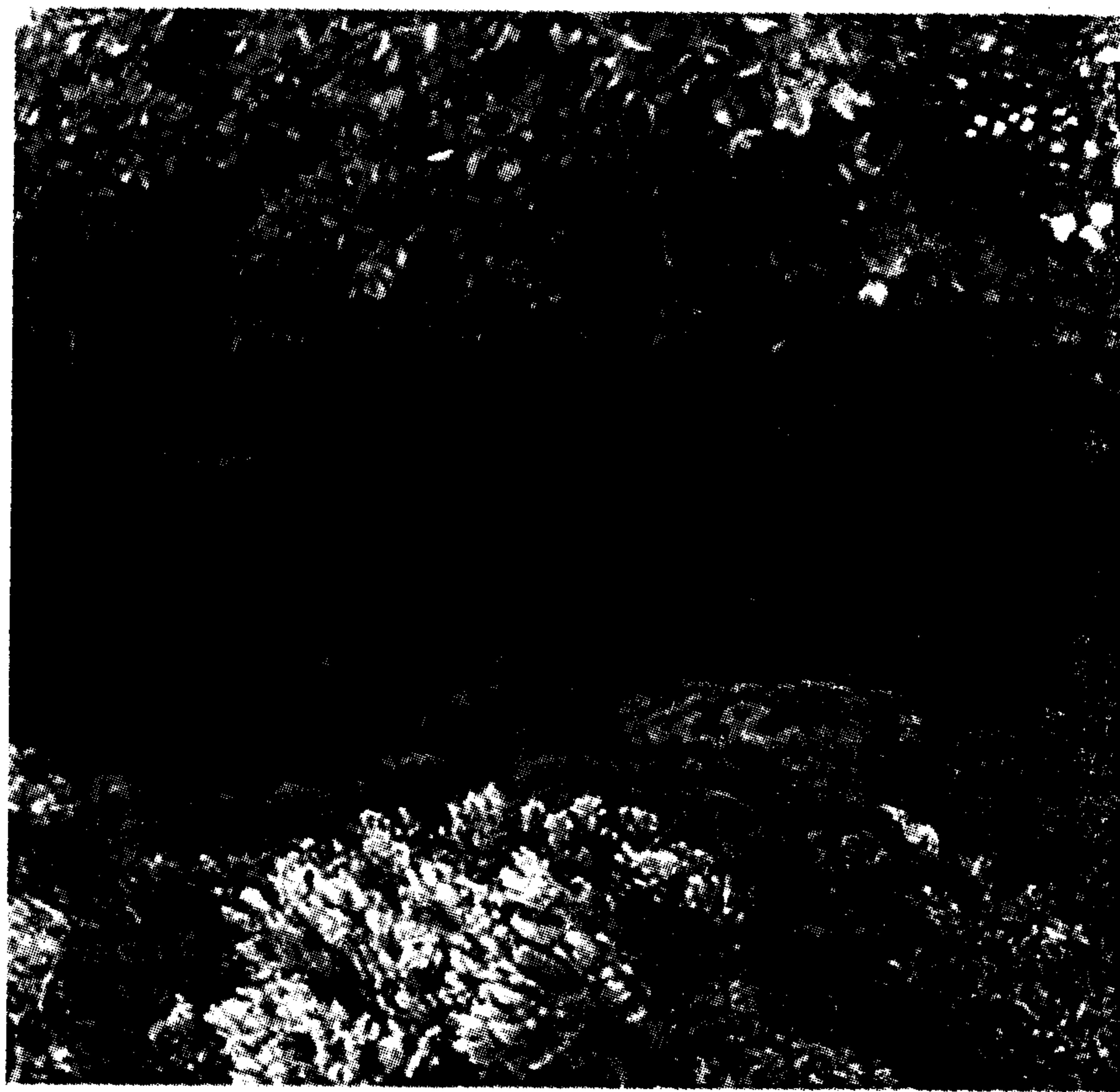
Dr. Wilfredo Roehl Licuanan of DLSU's College of Science stated at a recent Policy Forum by the Department of Science and Technology-National Academy of Science and Technology (DOST-NAST) that coordinated action on the country's coastal and marine resources is better than having one agency managing fisheries, another agency managing the environment, and yet a third one handling tourism separately.

Giving an overview of Philippine coastal and marine resources at the forum titled "Research Findings on the Effects of Climate Change on the Philippine Marine Resources" held at Hotel Jen Manila in April, Licuanan said that a coral reef is made up of different parts. These parts cannot exist on their own for very long, and instead are dependent on each other. These are the mangroves, seagrasses, seaweeds, and the corals.

Coral reefs are important for biodiversity and fisheries, he added. They also provide protection against waves and storm surges, and help boost tourism. Licuanan noted that what comes out of some fishes' anus are ground up corals which make up the white sand in beaches that tourists love.

Hence, coral reefs, and the entire coastal ecosystems in general, should be saved and kept intact.

Climate change, however, causes the rising and warming of seas, which lead to coral bleaching. This refers to the process wherein a coral turns completely white. This happens when the water is too



■ Coral reefs are important for biodiversity and fisheries

warm, causing the coral to eject the algae in its tissues. Algae loss causes the onset of coral bleaching. When this situation is prolonged, the coral may die.

Climate change also causes extreme weather events such as stronger storms which also further damage coral reefs and other marine resources.

All in all, coral reef degradation means mass coral bleaching incidents, fewer, smaller or dead corals, absence of fishes, and others.

"I think one of the reasons why we have so many problems in the coastal areas is because we treat each one of them as commodities, as sectors," Licuanan stressed. "We lose track of the big picture. We lose the coastal ecosystem because of mangrove planting, coral rehabilitation."

Hence, the DLSU professor suggests the establishment of a body that will pay attention to the coastal ecosystem in its entirety and keep it healthy and intact, instead of having different

agencies handling different components of the ecosystem.

The problem is urgent what with coral bleaching now taking place in Negros, said Licuanan and so for the meantime, what we can do is cope.

To help the Philippines cope with the situation, DLSU's Br. Alfred Shields FSC Ocean Research Center is implementing NACRE (National Assessment of Coral Reef Environment), which is funded by DOST.

NACRE aims to survey around 200 reefs around the country to provide the understanding and information necessary to make healthy coral ecosystems possible.

The forum aimed to review recorded impacts of climate change on marine resources and make necessary recommendations for their sustainable utilization and management. The other speakers at the Policy Forum were Dr. Vincent Hilomen of DENR and Dr. Laura David, UP Diliman-Marine Science Institute professor.

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

AS DOE, BEMAC RECEIVE AWARD

Alternate fuel advocates will support a green president

THE Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines has declared that its member companies will support a green President to sit at the Malacanang Palace after the May 9 elections when the whole country will decide on who will occupy the highest position in the land.

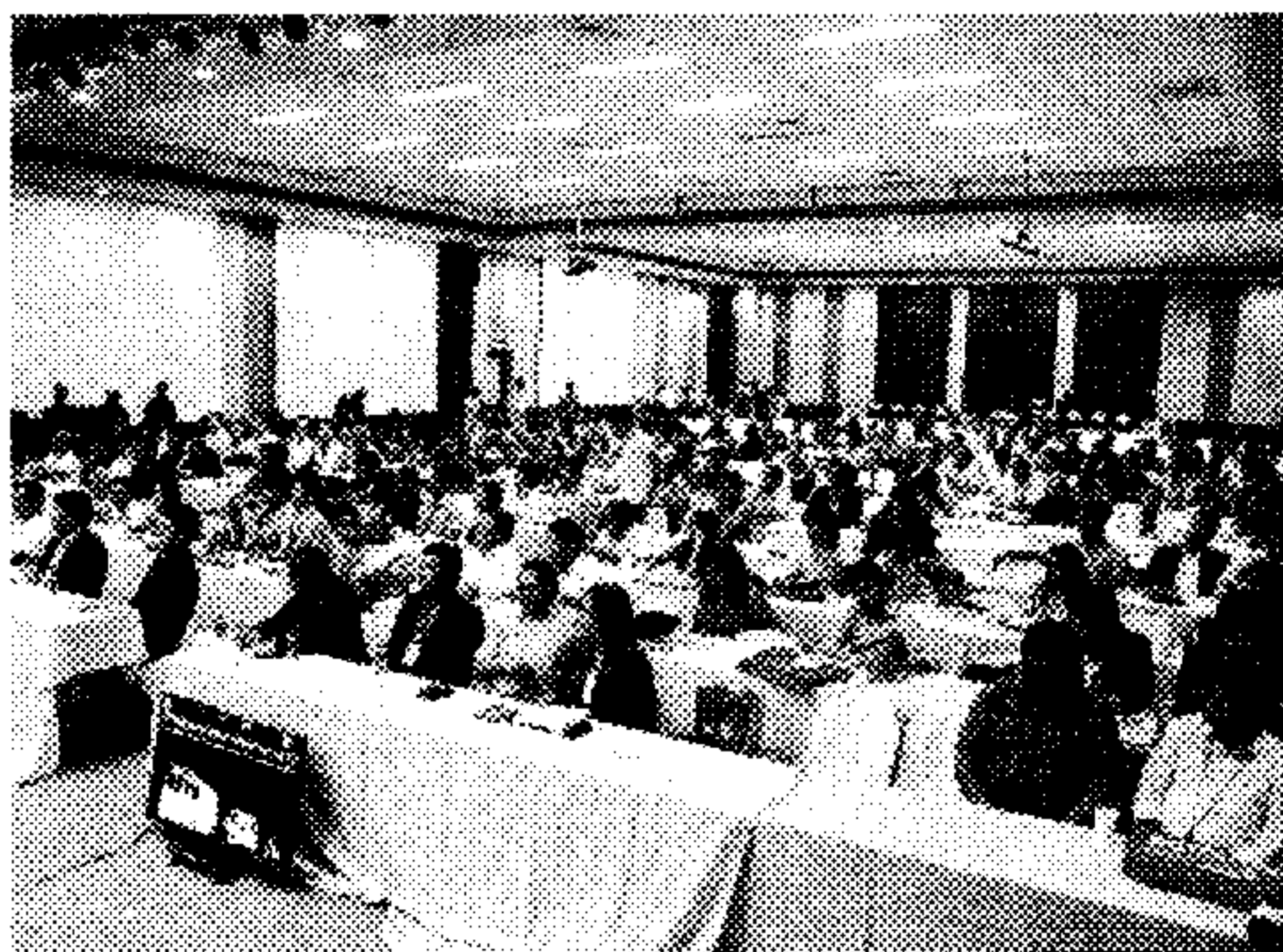
In a statement it issued last May 6, EVAP President Rommel Juan said that although individually the EVAP Board and its members may have different Presidential candidates in mind, collectively it has not decided yet who it will support publicly as a group. "However, we all share the same entiment: we will support a green President to sit in Malacanang".

The Philippines has a commitment in the Paris COP 21 Agreement to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2020. Juan says that is a tall order that can only be addressed by the modernization of our public transport system and the promotion of alternative fuelled vehicles. "And a President who is strong-willed and shares our advocacies of pushing for a greener environment will get our nod".

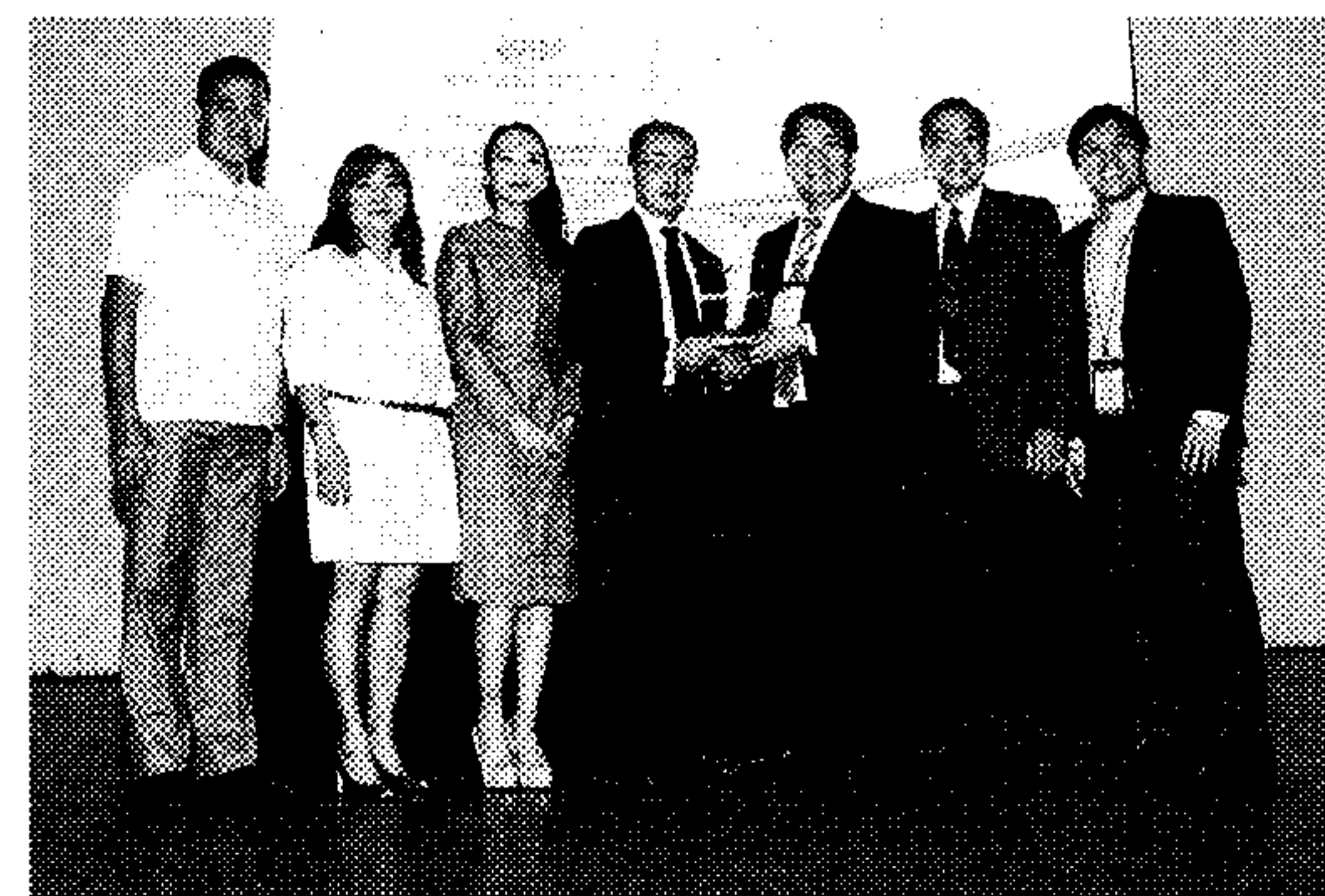
He adds that the EV industry also needs the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Incentives Bill to be passed into law to make manufacturing of electric vehicles more affordable and to effectively lower the selling prices of electric vehicles to boost this sunrise industry.

"We therefore invite all of the Presidential aspirants to present their Green Agenda to us so we can find out who will be the Green President that will take us to the greener future that will benefit our children and our children's children", Juan concludes.

In a related development, Japanese electric tricycle maker Bemac Electric Transportation Philippines Inc. and the Department of Energy were the very first recipients of the eMobility Awards be-



(Left) Members of the Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines in session at the 2016 Electric Vehicle Summit. (Right) Representatives of Japanese EV maker BEMAC and the Department of Energy (DOE) receive the eMobility Award from the Electric Vehicle Alliance (EVA)



stowed by the Electric Vehicle Alliance or EVA. They were cited for the successful bidding of an initial 3,000 ETrikes intended for the different LGUs around the country with the DOE as the project implementor and Bemac as the successful bidder.

EVA is composed of the Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines, Meralco and the Partnership for Clean Air, lead organizers of the Philippine Electric Vehicle Summit. The award was given in the recently concluded 5th Philippine Electric Vehicle Summit held at the Meralco multipurpose hall in Ortigas. Bemac president Takahiro Innami received the award while Mr. Ricardo Lopez received it in behalf of the DOE.

Bemac is a Japanese company which has set up production facilities in the country and has invested heavily into local EV production. The DOE spearheaded the ETrike Program together with Asian Development Bank which provided most of the \$504M project funding. The project goal is to acquire 100,000 ETrikes to replace the old, polluting regular tricycles all over the country.

Juan explains that the very first eMobility Awards lauded Bemac and the DOE for their contribution to the development of sustainable and environment friendly transportation for the Philippines through the development, manufacture and promotion of electric vehicles.

Bemac VP Yvonne Castro says that Bemac is happy that EVA has recognized their efforts in eMobility. "We have worked hard to come up with the highest quality electric tricycles with our 68VM ETrike model which was specifically designed for the local terrain and market. We at Bemac will continue to work harder to make electric tricycles a mainstream transport vehicle for the Philippines and the rest of the Asean region".

Juan adds that EVAP acknowledges that the DOE ETrike Program is the catalyst the EV Industry needs to sustain its gains. "We wish to again congratulate Bemac and the DOE for their ETrike Project. We recognize that through their efforts, the electric vehicle industry has been catalyzed and has become more vibrant. This is truly in line with our EV roadmap and will ensure our target of being the EV hub of Asia".

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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No 'Canadian solution' from 'evolving' Canadian govt'

APROPOS THE letter titled "Where is Trudeau's 'Canadian solution'?" (Opinion, 2/12/16) by Aileen Lucero and others, I wish to extend my heartfelt support for their initiatives and strongly condemn the use of their beautiful country as a dumping site for Canada's waste. I want to extend my support to their cause and join the chorus of protest against the dumping of unwanted waste by developed countries in developing and underdeveloped nations.

The Canadian government has been good for truckloads of false promises made on various issues—not only to Canadians but also other peoples across the world. The long-standing humanitarian, supportive, responsible and committed nature of our national government has been changing over the past couple of decades, with no comprehensive and consistent solution—that could be called a Canadian solution—provided for any national or international issues.

It is extremely unfortunate and unacceptable that successive Canadian administrations have not taken any appropriate action with respect to the waste dumped in the Philippines; furthermore, no technical or financial package has been yet provided in disposing of the waste and protecting the local environment.

Once again, on this unfortunate issue, I voice my strong concern and extend my support to the people in the Philippines. I sincerely believe



JULY 2015—hazardous trash: from Canada to Capas, Tarlac

METRO CLARK WASTE MANAGEMENT CORP.

that every nation should be treated equally, and Canada and the Philippines should work in close coordination in dealing with waste management to protect the local ecosystems and the environment from degradation. Thanks to the INQUIRER

for highlighting this important issue and informing us all about the waste dumping, as very few in Canada are aware of this.

—SAIKAT KUMAR BASU,
Apt 6-409, 43 Street South,
Lethbridge AB Canada
T1J 4B3

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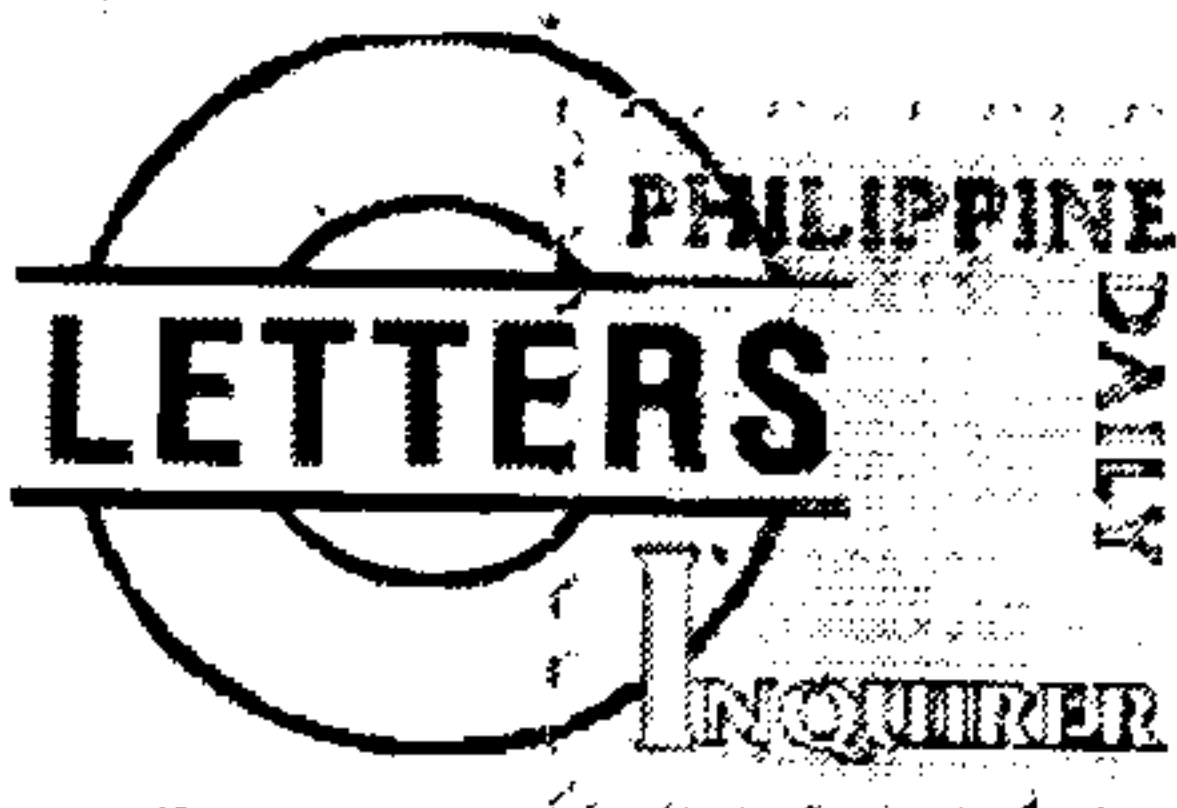
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No cause for worry over manganese presence in drinking water—Maynilad

WE WRITE in response to the letter of Bernie V. Lopez titled “High manganese level in water supply” (Opinion, 5/6/16). We are issuing this clarification so that the public may be properly informed of the issue that Lopez raised pertaining to the presence of manganese in Laguna Lake, which caused temporary discoloration in the water supply of our customers in the south last April 25.

It is true that the dry spell brought on by El Niño has resulted in a sharp decline in the level of water in Laguna Lake, and this caused more sediments such as manganese and other mineral deposits at the bottom of the lake to mix with the raw water entering our treatment facility.

We have advised our affected customers of the actions that we have taken to resolve the issue—i.e., adjustments in our operations at the treatment facility and flushing of our pipelines, particularly in areas where there have been reports of water discoloration. Through these measures, we were able to resolve the water discoloration incident in less than 48 hours.

In the letter that we sent to our affected customers, we clearly stated that except for the discoloration, our water supply is still within the parameters set by the Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water (PNSDW).

Lopez’s reference to the possibility of manganese poisoning is therefore needlessly alarming.

According to the World Health

Organization’s 2011 guidelines for drinking-water quality, it would require exposure to high levels of manganese over a long period before man-ganism develops.

Manganese forms naturally in the air, soil and water and is an essential trace element necessary for humans, plants and animals. Increased levels of manganese may affect the water’s turbidity, taste and odor but, health-wise, is not a cause for alarm. Note that under the PNSDW, manganese is classified **not under** “Inorganic Chemicals with Health Significance” **but** under “Physical and Chemical Quality for Acceptability Aspect”—because when mixed with chlorine, it may make the water yellowish.

At a level of 0.02 mg/L, manganese will form coatings inside the pipelines that may slough off as black sediments; hence, we have cautioned our customers to cover their faucets with a clean cloth. Under the PNSDW, the permissible level of manganese in drinking water is 0.4 mg/L.

At any rate, we very much regret the inconvenience that the temporary water discoloration has caused our customers in the south. We wish to assure them that we are constantly monitoring the characteristics of the water in Laguna Lake, and we have the necessary technologies in place to continue producing water that meets the PNSDW.

—JENNIFER C. RUFO, head,
Stakeholder Communications,
Corporate Communications,
Maynilad

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Crafting of El Niño strategies pushed

By Ronnel W. Domingo

UNITED Nations agencies are calling for the crafting of long-term development strategies to address El Niño, a recurring weather phenomenon with devastating effects that are felt across wide areas of the world.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) said the international community must boost efforts to build capacity for disaster risk management and readiness to prevent El Niño weather extremes from causing humanitarian crises in affected countries and impeding their development.

"We must remember that El Niño is not a one-off event but recurring global phenomena that we must address for future generations," Ecosoc president Oh Joon said in a statement.

"All partners—the United Nations, international and regional organizations, civil society,

the private sector and the scientific community—need to take coordinated and fortified action to tackle El Niño risks," Oh said.

He said extreme weather conditions had become more frequent with climate change, bringing droughts, fire, destruction of agricultural production, poor health and diseases, and displacement of people all over the world.

"These conditions also affect commodity prices and the prospects for sustainable development," he added.

Also, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said that while the scientific understanding of El Niño had increased greatly in recent years, the current El Niño and future events are entering "uncharted territories."

"This naturally occurring El Niño event and human induced climate change may interact and modify each other in ways, which we have never before experienced," said Elena Manenkova, WMO assistant secretary general.

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Lead clean-up of your campaign trash, bets urged

A WASTE and pollution watchdog yesterday challenged candidates to take the lead in tearing down their campaign materials posted in public places and saving those that could be reused or recycled.

"Candidates must show their sense of environmental responsibility and sportsmanship by taking the initiative of clearing the streets of campaign materials regardless of the poll results," EcoWaste Coalition coordinator Aileen Lucero said.

"We appeal to all the candidates and their supporters to dedicate May 10 to the much-needed post-campaign cleanup," she said.

EcoWaste will lead other environmental groups in a post-election cleanup at Project 6 Elementary School in Project 6, Quezon City, this morning.

Lucero said that after taking down campaign materials, the group would demonstrate how to repurpose tarpaulin posters to reduce trash.

On Election Day, polling places were littered with sample ballots, cigarette butts, candy wrappers, food and beverage containers, and plastic bags.

EcoWaste lauded the organizers and supporters of presidential candidate Rodrigo Duterte for keeping the trash to a minimum at their massive *miting de avance* at the Luneta last Saturday.

"People voluntarily picking up litter was a sight to behold," Lucero said.

In contrast, EcoWaste said the *miting de avance* of Sen. Grace Poe in Plaza Miranda and administration candidate Mar Roxas at the Quezon Memorial Circle were blighted with trash.

Dona Z. Pazzibugan

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

WWF joins 'sea-tizens' in saving seas

TO promote the protection of our seas, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines joined Human Nature's SOS Save Our Seas Coastival, held on April 29 in La Union.

The daylong event highlighted the need to be mindful of the products we buy, the advocacies we champion, plus the lessons we teach our children. WWF's Environment Education (EE) unit taught kids about conserving dolphins, whale sharks and turtles, while reminding them of the need to rid our seas of trash.

"One of the joys of teaching is when kids realize that protecting the environment can be enjoyable. We hope their love for nature will translate to protecting our oceans, coasts and beaches," says WWF-Philippines Environmental Education Officer Maye Padilla.

WWF also helped renowned artist and WWF Hero of the En-

vironment AG Saño in etching a 180-meter long sand sculpture featuring a pawikan and the letters SOS—signifying a call for help and a pledge to save our oceans by leaving no trace when at sea.

"We encourage everyone to spend more time with nature—but to throw no trash and minimize their impacts at sea," adds Padilla.

Human Nature president Anna Meloto-Wilk reminds people that the smallest actions can make the biggest difference. "It's as simple as choosing products which do no harm to the environment."

"The sea is alive. It's a source of life. We're here to witness people coexisting with nature. We want to invite everyone to conserve nature by sharing solutions to Save Our Seas on social media," adds La Union Soul Movement's Tina Antonio.

WWF works with many allies to protect the world's oceans.

The Manila Times

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RWM observes Earth Month with eco-friendly efforts

AFTER the worldwide celebration of Earth Day on April 22, Resorts World Manila (RWM) delivered big wins for mother earth with activities that aim to promote and protect environmental sustainability.

RWM employees volunteered their free time to take part in the company's first corporate social responsibility (CSR) day dubbed "LOVE-tanim ay di biro." Participants went to the La Mesa Nature Reserve in Quezon City to take part in eco-awareness activities in cooperation with ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Inc.'s Bantay Kalikasan Program.

Through this, RWM supports the national government's campaign for tree-planting activities to address the country's dwindling urban forest. "Napaka-importanteng La Mesa Watershed sa buhay natin, particular para sa mga taga-

Maynila. At ang pagpuntang mga empleyadong Resorts World Manila dito ay napakalaking tulong para sa amin [The La Mesa Watershed is very important in our lives, particularly those living in Manila. That is why having Resorts World Manila employees here is a big help to us]," said Bantay Kalikasan Program project manager Dave Azurin.

Volunteer employees joined in on green activities including a 6-kilometer trek through the watershed, a lecture on local environmental efforts, and hands-on soil potting and germinant planting. The efforts produced 200 germinant plants of endemic species of trees which will be transferred later within the year during a tree planting activity on a hectare of land the company will adopt and help grow.

"Ang mga naitanim na germinants ay palalakin at itanim

pagdating ng tag-ulan ditto sa loob ng watershed. Kahit kalahati lang sa mga na itanim na ito ang mabuhay ay malaking bagay na [The germinants planted will be grown and transferred to an area within the watershed once the rainy season comes. Even if only half of those plants get to live, that's already a significant contribution]," Azurin adds.

The initiative is part of RWM's League of Volunteer Employees (LOVE) Program designed to create a culture of volunteerism aligned with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) thrusts of promoting Philippine Tourism and the Arts, Social Development, and Environmental Sustainability.

"It's our second time doing this activity here at the La Mesa Nature Reserve and we're thrilled to be part of such a significant initiative," said

Owen Cammayo, director for Corporate Communications, RWM. "Saving the environment is a big challenge but it only takes small steps to make a difference. That's why we encourage our employees by providing them with avenues to do their part and help preserve the environment through eco-friendly practices."

RWM continues its green initiatives with its monthly "Live and Love Green" recycling day activity in partnership with Tzu Chi Foundation Philippines.



■ RWM employees volunteered joined in on green activities like soil potting and germinant planting