

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 17 MAY 2016

DAY : Tuesday

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IN THE NEWS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Environmentalists caution on 'token appointments'

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

REACTING to presumptive President-elect Rodrigo Duterte's pronouncement offering the environment portfolio to the communists, environmental advocates said Duterte must go beyond "token appointments."

"While the offer is apparently being made in pursuit of peace, the President-elect must ensure that people with proven experience and of high caliber and integrity are appointed to these critical posts," said former Greenpeace campaigner Von Hernandez.

"It would be tragic if environmental protection or social welfare were bartered for political accommodation without due regard for competence, proficiency or expertise," he added.

"We expect President Duterte to appoint a person of integrity and probity who will serve as the country's No. 1 champion for

zero waste, chemical safety and environmental protection regardless of his ideological or party affiliation," said EcoWaste Coalition president Sonia Mendoza.

Sanlakas secretary general Aaron Pedrosa said the offer appeared to be "an attempt to show that Duterte is willing to work with anyone."

He stressed that "mere cosmetic approaches such as token appointments in government" will be superficial unless policies improve the lot of the people.

Clemente Bautista, national coordinator of the militant Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, said: "We are more than willing to help the Duterte administration in running these agencies... particularly in ensuring the protection and rehabilitation of our environment and wise utilization of our natural resources."

"But if Duterte wants our help to implement the same old pro-corporate and pro-foreign policies of the previous administrations like the Philippine Mining Act, Epira and Forestry Code, then no, thank you. We will continue our fight in the streets," he said.

Bautista said he had personally witnessed Duterte support environmental activists in their cause against large-scale mining, toxic aerial spraying and land-grabbing of ancestral lands.

However, he said Duterte has also supported the Aboitiz-owned coal-fired power plant project in Davao City and favored establishing of vast tracts of agri-industrial plantations.

"There is already much anxiety and doubt among environmentalists upon learning who are closest in Duterte's circle of power," he said, naming Tom Alcantara, Paul Dominguez and Carlos Dominguez.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

REDS IN THE CABINET

*Rody to give DAR, DENR, DoLE, DSWD
to communists*

1 By John Paolo Bencito
PRESIDENT-IN-WAITING
Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte said Monday he would be willing to give four key Cabinet posts to the Communist Party of the Philippines if it decides to join his government.

In a press briefing in Davao City, Duterte said if the communists joined his administration, they would be given control of the departments of Agrarian Reform, Environment and Natural Resources, Labor and Employment and Social Welfare and Development.

"Labor is the one they are saying [is] the most oppressed, and some of them [communists] are the most vigilant... about labor, so they will get it. And DWSD. But those are the only departments I can concede to them. That's four—it's good already," Duterte said.

On Sunday night, Duterte said he expected his former university professor, Jose Maria Sison, the founder of the CPP, to return from his exile in The Netherlands, to help end the longest-running communist insurgency in the region.

"He is welcome. I am happy with the statement that he is coming home," Duterte said of Sison. "I would very much want to talk to him about resolving the insurgency."

Sison, now 77, fled to Europe soon after peace talks with the administration of then President Corazon Aquino failed in 1987.

The communists armed wing, the New People's Army, is believed to have fewer than 4,000 soldiers, down from a peak of 26,000 in the 1980s, according to the military, but retains support among the deeply poor in rural areas.

Communists killed three soldiers in the central Philippines on Saturday, according to the military, in the first outbreak of deadly violence between the two sides since Duterte's election win.

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Reds...

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Duterte is due to be sworn into office on June 30.

President Benigno Aquino III revived peace talks soon after taking office in 2010 but shelved them in 2013, accusing the rebels of insincerity.

The talks bogged down after the communists demanded the release of scores of their jailed comrades whom they described as "political prisoners," which the Aquino government rejected.

Duterte, who was Sison's student at a Manila university in the 1960s, said Sunday he was open to releasing communist prisoners.

Duterte on Monday said government positions are open to communists as long as they are qualified for the job.

In the same press briefing, Duterte announced that lawyers Salvador Medialdea will be his executive secretary and Salvador Panelo as his press secretary.

Medialdea, a Davao-based lawyer who is part of Duterte's five-man transition committee, filed Duterte's last-minute Certificate of Candidacy last year.

Panelo, Duterte's long-time confidante and known ally of former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, was the one who faced the media defending him over Senator Antonio Trillanes IV's accusation of Duterte's alleged ill-gotten wealth while Davao Mayor.

Panelo, a criminal lawyer, was spotted partying in Arroyo's birthday celebration in her La Vista home in Quezon City, where the former president was seen without a neck brace.

In the same press briefing, Duterte said that he wanted to give the Defense post to former Arroyo Defense chief

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Duterte also said he wanted former Agriculture secretary Carlos Dominguez to join his Cabinet as Finance secretary.

"Sonny Dominguez has many misgivings [about] my offer. I hope he would consider," he said.

Duterte said he would also offer Foreign Affairs to his losing running mate, Senator Alan Peter Cayetano, if he chooses not to serve out his term as senator.

"If he doesn't want it, Perfecto Yasay can take his place," Duterte said, referring to the former chief of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Duterte also announced that his San Beda Law classmate Arthur Tugade would hold the Transportation and Communications portfolio while Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas and Laguna Campuses president Peter P. Laurel will be the new Education secretary.

The Palace on Monday said they have yet to hear from Duterte's transition team.

"We are prepared to meet and work with then. We are awaiting word on when they would like to meet," said Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr.

Aquino's transition committee met on Friday to ensure the smooth transition to the incoming administration.

In its first meeting, the Presidential Transition Committee focused on ensuring that the transition reports of all departments, agencies, bureaus, government-owned and -controlled corporations and other instrumentalities under the executive branch are submitted and consolidated by end-May, said Coloma.

This will give the incoming administration ample time to review these reports before assuming office, Coloma added. **With Rio N. Araja, Sandy Araneta, AFP**

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Key posts reserved for rebels

DAVAO CITY – Communist chieftain Jose Ma. Sison is welcome to return to the country, and incoming president Rodrigo Duterte is reserving Cabinet posts for members of rebel groups.

Duterte yesterday said he is keeping the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Environment and Natural

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Key posts From Page 1

Resources (DENR), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and even the Department of Social Welfare and Development open to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), Moro Islamic Liberation Front and other rebel groups.

"I have kept open DAR, DENR, and DOLE (for them) because they said they are the most oppressed. Those are the only departments I can concede to them, provided they are qualified educationally," Duterte said at a press conference here.

At the same time, Duterte said Sison, founding chairman of the CPP, will be welcome to return home after nearly three decades in exile and participate in peace talks.

Sison wrote in a Facebook post last week that he hoped to come home following the landslide victory of Duterte, with whom he has maintained ties while living in the Netherlands.

"I do not begrudge the NPAs (New People's Army) in looking for firearms. But when I reach my oath-taking... they must realize I am the government and I am the enemy but I offer my hand in peace and we can talk," he said.

Duterte on Sunday said Sison's return to the Philippines would be important in helping to end the rebellion.

The insurgency is one of Asia's longest and has claimed an estimated 30,000 lives since

the 1960s.

"Yes, he is welcome. I am happy with the statement that he is coming home. I would very much want to talk to him about resolving the insurgency problem," Duterte told reporters in Davao where he has served as mayor for most of the past two decades.

Sison, now 77, fled to Europe soon after peace talks failed in 1987.

The communists' armed wing, the NPA, is believed to have fewer than 4,000 soldiers, down from a peak of 26,000 in the 1980s, according to the military.

However, it retains support among the deeply poor in the country.

Last Saturday, communists killed three soldiers in central Luzon, according to the military, in the first outbreak of deadly violence between the two sides since Duterte's election win.

Duterte is due to be sworn into office on June 30.

Incumbent President Aquino revived peace talks soon after taking office in 2010 but shelved them in 2013, accusing the rebels of insincerity in efforts to achieve a political settlement.

The talks got bogged down after the communists demanded the release of scores of their jailed comrades whom they described as "political prisoners," which the Aquino government rejected.

Duterte, who was Sison's

student at a Manila university in the 1960s, said he was even willing to comply with the communists' demand to release their captured members.

"If I am satisfied we are dealing in good faith, I will consider releasing all political prisoners," he said.

CPP growth seen

Meanwhile, the CPP executive committee released a document yesterday claiming to see the growth of communist insurgency under the incoming administration as the rebels raised the possibility of forging an alliance with Duterte's government "within a framework of national unity, peace and development."

The rebel document titled "Prospects under a Duterte presidency" dated May 10 said Duterte's mettle is about to be tested.

"If Duterte fails or refuses to heed the people's clamor, he is bound to end up a mere historical anomaly and suffer the same fate as the Estrada regime," the CPP document said, referring to ousted president Joseph Estrada.

"The Filipino people are ever ready to intensify the people's war to advance the revolution and mass struggle to amplify their democratic demands," the CPP said.

The document said the NPAs must continue to carry out the tasks set forth by the central committee to intensify the people's war by launching more frequent tactical offensives and seizing more arms from the enemy. — Edith Igalado, Artemio Dumlaog, A



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ISSN 1908-1189
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Isabela farmers to benefit from agroforestry project

FARMERS in Isabela province now enjoy freshwater through the Abuan Integrated Watershed Management Project, through which five concrete spring-box water systems were constructed to distribute potable water to upland farming communities.

The project, coimplemented by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-Philippines), Sun Life Foundation and with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is expected to provide clean, drinking water even during El Niño.

Aside from water spring boxes made of concrete financed by USAID, 15,169 mango, citrus and cacao seedlings covering were distributed 69.45 hectares of once-barren grassland since 2012, courtesy of Sun Life Foundation.

The agroforestry drive help increase farmers' income. According to WWF-Philippines, agroforestry increases the land productivity, improve water charge and

minimizes erosion.

"This is a unique approach to reforestation—allowing the balanced intercropping of trees, shrubs and crops to create more productive, profitable and sustainable plots," WWF-Philippines said in a statement.

Since 2009 WWF and its allies have helped 466 Isabela farmers plant 70,786 fruit-bearing trees, which were chosen to provide farmers economic incentives to nurture saplings to maturity.

The move aims to reforest Isabela's Abuan Watershed—a once-verdant forest which has since been converted to endless sprawls of corn and rice.

Shielding the eastern face of Luzon for 340 kilometers and spanning 359,486 hectares, the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park is both the Philippines's longest mountain range and its largest protected area.

Over 150 endemic animal species—from the iconic Philippine eagle to the critically

endangered Philippine crocodile—slither, scuttle or soar above its vigorously vegetated ridges. In turn, its forests provide water for 35,570 hectares of ricefields and corn plots in the city of Ilagan in Isabela.

"We are proud to be WWF-Philippines' partner and we will continue to support projects that will offer a brighter life to Filipino for generations to come," Sun Life Foundation Chairman of the Board Riza Mantaring said. For its part, USAID said it is working with local stakeholders to improve the adaptability of watersheds, farmlands and other economic sectors in the Abuan Watershed to climate-change threats.

The Abuan Integrated Watershed Management Project pilots the Department of Science and Technology's smarter agriculture program by enhancing the capacity of farmers to adapt to climate change.

To date, this USAID-supported grant increased the capacity of nearly 7,000 stakeholders to adapt to impacts of climate variability and change. **Jonathan L. Mayuga**

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SAVE OUR SEAS (SOS)

A call to protect La Union's seas and 'pawikan'

BY CHRISTINA ALPAD LIFESTYLE AND ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

Tina Antonio of La Union Soul Movement joined "SOS: Save the Seas Coastival"—dubbed the green alternative to the famous "LaBoracay" Labor Day weekend in Boracay—but she was not there for the sea breeze, fresh seafood and the surfing waves of San Juan town.

She was there as the harbinger of alarming news: That La Union's once healthy sea is about to vanish in the next two years.

"I am sorry but I have to break this to you—in the next two years, there's a high probability that you won't be enjoying the surf, the beach or the fresh seafood we have here because in a couple of years, there

will be a boom of commercial development in the area," Antonio told the Coastival guests, mostly from Metro Manila.

She was referring to a huge company plan to develop 20 hectares of La Union's coastline.

"This serenity that you are experiencing right now may be your last time to enjoy it. We'll probably be very similar to Boracay, so we'll have party places here. We'll

probably say goodbye to the corals and the sea turtles, or *pawikan*," the advocate further warned, noting that the commercial property will rise right in the middle of the *pawikan*'s nesting ground.

The Philippines' rich ocean is a favorite among sea turtles, so much so that five out of their existing seven species can be found in the Philippines. Among them are the Green Sea, Hawksbill, Leath-



■ Environment advocates in group photo, from left, Maye Padilla of World Wide Fund for Nature, Tina Antonio of La Union Soul Movement, Anna Meloto-Wilk of Human Nature, and Anna Oposa of Save Philippine Seas

The Manila Times

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A call to protect La
Union's Seas
and Pawikan



■ The 180-meter Save Our Seas Sand Art created by muralist and climate justice advocate AG Saño with the help of 'coastival' guests at San Juan, La Union PHOTOS FROM SOS COASTIVAL

erback, Loggerhead, and Olive Ridley—the last having a huge population in La Union.

According to Antonio, sea turtles' diet includes jellyfish, algae, and sea grass. Thus, the specie is key in maintaining the balance in the ocean. She noted, "Technically, they are one of the reasons why we have less jelly fish—they control jellyfish population."

To help her in her endeavor, Antonio tapped the help of the community, other environment conservation groups like Project Curma (Coastal Underwater Resource Management Actions) and the local government, among others, to build a community-driven eco-tourism movement.

For Project Curma, one unique feature of sea turtles is their loyalty—so to speak—to their birthplace.

"Mother turtles would lay their eggs where they are born; and where the turtles are eventually released is the place where the mother turtles would come back to lay their eggs again approximately 20 years," said Toby Tamayo, this time of the pawikan conservation and

protection group.

Unfortunately, only one percent of hatchlings can survive and return to their birthplace to mate and lay their eggs. Having disturbed hatchlings will also be deterrents.

"For many years the turtles have been coming here. They are attracted to the sand dunes, this is a perfect place to be nested. But, with the buildup of tourists who we have seen taking out their phones to take photos and selfies with the mother turtles about to lay their eggs and disturbing them, we also saw tracks of mother turtles coming in and then scampering back to the ocean," Tamayo detailed.

Project Curma warned that if in the next hatching season more mother turtles are disturbed by human activities in the nestling areas, the Philippine ocean might forever lose them. As a result, aside from the thriving of jellyfish, 40 percent of sea life would die.

"When the developers start their project—because we are not going to stop them since it's business—what we want to do is provide

them with an alternative means to co-exist with these creatures," Antonio said.

"Our goal is clear as crystal—it is to keep our oceans alive so that our kids, your grandkids, will experience the same experience that you are experiencing. But we want this to be a shared responsibility not just for the people to who live here, but for of everyone who eats seafood, who enjoys the beach, the wildlife, the water sports," she concluded.

To do so, the two conservation groups together with Save the Philippine Seas, World Wide Fund for Nature and pro-environment enterprise Human Nature launched the Save Our Seas Coastival.

By showing some of the things people can enjoy in the beach, spotlighting its tranquil environment, and giving space to a 180-meter-long sand art pioneered by by celebrated muralist and climate justice advocate AG Saño, Antonio and Tamayo hopes the May 1 weekend revelers truly heeded the call to save the seas.

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46 Miss PH Earth 2016 beauties vow to fight climate change

BY JOSE D. PATAO, JR.

FORTY-SIX of the country's loveliest environmentalists representing cities and municipalities from all over the country as well as Filipino communities overseas were presented to members of media in red, white and blue bikinis at the Diamond Hotel Manila poolside yesterday (May 16) all hoping to succeeding Angelia Gabrena Ong, the third Filipina to win the Miss Earth crown, and promising to combat climate change.

Ong won as Miss Earth 2015 in Vienna, Austria last December 5, 2015 and recently completed her Climate Reality Leadership Corps training under former United States vice president Al Gore, founder and chairman of the Climate Reality Project. "I have high hopes that my successor will be as dedicated and hard-working as all former titlists in using the 5Rs: Re-think, Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, Respect," Ong said.

"Miss Earth's presence in the Climate Reality Leadership Corps training signifies more than ever that the advocacy-driven pageant is an effective platform to create

environmental awareness especially on climate change," said Ramon Monzon, chairman and president of Carousel Productions which stages the Miss Philippines Earth and Miss Earth pageants.

"We are proud that Miss Earth, being a Philippine-based international pageant, is among the big-league pageants in the world," Carousel's executive vice president Lorraine Schuck added. "That makes the competition as relevant as ever in addressing global environmental issues."

The media voted for Liza Cancho of Anda, Pangasinan, who got a gold medal as "Darling of the Press." The silver medal went to Imelda Schweighart of Puerto Princesa City while the bronze went to Kiaragiel Gregorio representing the Filipino community of London, UK.

The 46 contestants are: (North Luzon) Eva Eunice Reinoso, Alaminos City; Liza Cacho, Anda, Pangasinan; Chissan Rae Balderas, Infanta, Pangasinan; Loren Mar Artajos, Laoag City; Anna Mae Cagurangan, Piat, Cagayan; Shannon Rebecca Bridgman, Rosales, Pangasinan; Korina Christiene

Reyes, City of San Fernando, Pampanga; Maybelle Pameroyan, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan; Carlette Marjean Agapito, Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija; Jovine Martin, Tuguegarao City; Kamille Alyssa Quiñola, Vigan City; (South Luzon) Princess Cecilio, Daet, Camarines Norte; Krissandra Marie Abel, Lobo, Batangas; Kattline Joy Eranes, Looc, Romblon; Rachelle Quiñonez, Lubang, Occidental Mindoro; Andrea Delgado, Naga City; Kisszel Malazarte, Pililla, Rizal; Imelda Schweighart, Puerto Princesa City; Karen Claudene Barot, San Jose City, Occidental Mindoro; Athena Mari Jamaica Catriz, City of San Pedro; Riji Anne Mae Canog, City of Sta. Rosa;

(NCR) Joanna Rose Tolledo, Caloocan City; Jennifer Mangaring, Las Piñas City; Kimberly Garcia, Makati City; Aprilh Angelique Arciaga, Muntinlupa City; Justine Blaire Galang, Parañaque City; Jessica Jane Morales, Pasig City; Jan Louise Abejero, Quezon City; (Visayas) Vallerie Joy Jereza, Bacolod City; Maria Fatima Al-sowayed, Dumaguete City; Hannah Vargas, Iloilo City; Ellyz Santos, Laoang, Northern Samar; Jessica Madeline Zevenbergen, Murcia, Negros Occidental;

Nina Sherra Tagalog, Palo, Leyte; Angelyn Presidente, Pototan, Iloilo; Genina Abrau, San Miguel, Bohol;

(Mindanao) Charinna Barro, Cagayan de Oro City; Grapes Pacara, Digos City; Aicha Francisco, Isabela City; Maelyn Joy Unson, Jasaan, Misamis Oriental; Jezza Mae Lim, General Santos City; Rhea Doll Gonzalo, Jolo, Sulu; Kristel Suizo, Pagadian City; Bellatrix

Tan, Zamboanga City; (International) Kiargiel Gregorio, London, UK; and Melanie Mader, Vienna, Austria.

The delegates from Puerto Princesa City; Laoag City; London, UK; Dumaguete City; City of San Fernando, Pampanga; Laoang, Northern Samar; Rosales, Pangasinan; Murcia, Negros Occidental; Piat Cagayan and Vienna, Austria were also picked as "10 Beauties of Nature"

by major presenter Hana Shampoo.

Preliminary competitions in swimsuit, gown, cocktail wear, resort wear, cultural costumes and eco campaigns will be held leading to the grand coronation night on June 11 at the Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite (to be aired on ABS-CBN at 10:30 a.m. the following day June 12, the 118th Philippine Independence Day.



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PHL needs climate-smart villages—Legarda

BY MARY GRACE C. PADIN [@_enren](#)

SEN. Loren B. Legarda called on the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to forge partnerships with the government to build and replicate climate-smart villages in the Philippines.

Legarda, who chairs the Senate Committees on Finance, Climate Change and Cultural Communities, said there is a need to create resilient communities, build rice-seed nurseries and improve the capacity of farmers to cope with the effects of climate change.

The lawmaker made the pronouncement following the unrest among farmers in drought-stricken areas in North Cotabato more than a month ago.

"I want to have, if not the whole

country, some prototypes of climate-smart villages, replicating what you've done in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and other countries," Legarda told IRRI.

According to IRRI, a climate-smart village is a community-based approach to minimize the impact of climate change through interventions that fit the local context and engagement with stakeholders.

IRRI said the vision for creating such communities is to mainstream climate-smart interventions into

“IRRI's technologies are there for the taking, since we are an international organization with a purely public purpose.”

—TOLENTINO

village-development plans with the use of local knowledge through local institutions. Its goal is to address three challenges in agriculture, namely, improving food production, adapting to climate change and contributing to mitigating greenhouse-gas emissions.

"Why not implement this in the Philippines? We'll find the funding," Legarda told IRRI officials.

"Let's go local, I mean grass-



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ISSN 1808-1189
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PHL needs climate-smart villages - Legarda

roots. Not just regional, but let's get down to the barangay level. Let's do it together with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the local governments where we should best implement these climate-smart measures," she added.

Legarda discussed the climate-smart village concept with Dr. Jackie Hughes, IRRI deputy director general for research; Dr. Bruce Tolentino, deputy director general for communication and partnerships; Dr. Reiner Wassmann, IRRI's climate-change expert; and Drs. Casiana Vera Cruz and Digna Manzanilla, leaders of the Heirloom Rice Project.

Considering that El Niño and La Niña are "nothing new," the senator also said the government should have been using the technologies developed by IRRI, such as drought- and flood-tolerant rice varieties, water-saving technologies and climate-smart mobile applications.

Moreover, Legarda asked for the assistance of IRRI in crafting a water-use efficiency bill.

"In fact, my dream is to have all the water agencies, which are all over in different agencies, under one agency. If we can have a water-efficiency bill, which is so important, IRRI could help me draft that," Legarda said.

Tolentino assured the senator IRRI will come up with a proposal that will integrate all possible areas of collaboration between the research institute and government agencies.

"IRRI's technologies are there for the taking, since we are an international organization with a purely public purpose," he said.

"We have some activities going on right now that relate to water-saving work with the DA under the country's Food Staples Sufficiency Program. But it's really, really small and we need to expand it," Tolentino added.

Legarda also commended IRRI's partnership with the DA in identifying, preserving and propagating traditional rice varieties in the Philippines, particularly in the Cordillera region, under the Heirloom Rice Project.

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ECO-FRIENDLY
Contestants in this year's Miss Earth Philippines beauty pageant show the keywords to their advocacy of protecting the planet as they are presented to the media by the Diamond Hotel poolside on Monday. Forty-eight beauties from all over the country will vie for the title on June 11.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Miss Earth 2016 candidates hold up environmental slogans during a media presentation at the Diamond Hotel in Manila yesterday. A total of 48 environmentally aware and concerned women will compete to represent the Philippines at the Miss Earth beauty pageant.

EDD GUMBAN

The Manila Times

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS



Why 'Haring Ibon' is a 'mother' too

BY J KAHLIL BOHOL PANOPIO
HARIBON FOUNDATION

AS we recently celebrated all the mothers last May 8, we realized their importance in every family. In lieu of this, we at Haribon Foundation share five similar traits that make the Philippine Eagle the best mother too—just like yours and mine.

1. They wait for the *tamang panahon* (right time).

Before a female Haring Ibon starts her journey to motherhood, they enjoy being single for half a decade. They reach sexual maturity at around five years, two years earlier than males which mature at seven.

2. *Ligawan* (Courtship) stage is mandatory every breeding cycle.

Haring Ibon pairs exhibit courtship displays at the start of every breeding cycle. Courtship entails mutual soaring flight over their nesting territory, dive chases where the female dives diagonally with the male following in pursuit, and mutual talon presentation where the male spreads its talons to the females back and the female flips over to reciprocate.

3. They prepare for motherhood.

Female Haring Ibons are larger than their mate. This characteristic is shared among raptors (a group of birds that feed on other animals) or birds of prey and other animals including fishes.

This trait is not shared by most birds where males are often larger. There are

several hypothesis that try to explain this characteristic. One of them suggests that the reason why females need to be larger is because they need to accumulate fat reserves in order to produce their eggs. Another possible reason why they need to store reserves is because they do not hunt as much food as they normally do while they are incubating eggs and brooding young.

4. They are monogamous.

A pair of Haring Ibon bonds for life. They will only look for another partner if their current mate dies. So there is indeed forever when it comes to these magnificent birds!

5. They invest time and effort to ensure their child's future.

Females spend much more time incubating the egg than their mates. Incubating the egg is a shared responsibility but is mostly done by the females. Males spend less than a third of the time that is needed to incubate the egg. After the egg hatches, females are chiefly responsible for feeding the chick for the first three weeks of its life.

Taking care of the offspring is shared responsibility by both parents until the young becomes independent. The parents provide their young provisions until they can hunt on their own. They also protect the young from crows and hornbills until the offspring can defend itself.

Clearly, a mother Haring Ibon is an awesome nanay when it comes to nurturing its offspring. Sadly, their

population is fast declining because of rapid deterioration of the Philippine's remaining forests. A pair of Haring Ibon parents need 7,000 to 13,000 hectares of forest to call their territory to feed and rear a chick successfully. The need for such an expanse means that the species is particularly vulnerable to deforestation which is continuing at an alarming rate in the country. It takes two years for a pair of Haring Ibon to complete its breeding cycle which makes its inherent breeding characteristics unfavourable to its precarious survival.

We salute the resilience of Haring Ibon especially the Haring Ibon nanays who diligently perform their role as mothers and continue to do whatever it takes to survive for their offspring's future.

Haribon Foundation currently implements the Philippine Eagle Project in Mt. Mangan which is made possible with funding and support from Bird-life International, Toyota Foundation, Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE) fellowships of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) - Edge, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit Protected Area Management Enhancement (GIZ-PAME), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the local government units of Gabaldon, Dingalan and San Luis. For more information about Philippine Eagles in Luzon, please email: wildlife@haribon.org.ph.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Wanted: Lead-safe schools

CONSUMERLINE



By CHING M. ALANO

While the new President is hell-bent on flushing out criminality and corruption, there's another threat he probably should tackle with his iron fist: the prevalence of lead poisoning among children.

According to World Health Organization statistics, the prevalence of lead poisoning among children living in a rural area covers about one-third of the Philippines. Investigators have found children's elevated blood lead levels to be "associated

with proximity to lead acid battery recycling or repair activities, consumption of certain foods, and playground soil."

WHO stresses the fact that "young children are particularly vulnerable to the toxic effects of lead and can suffer profound and permanent adverse health effects, particularly affecting the development of the brain and nervous system."

WHO further notes, "Lead affects children's brain development, resulting in reduced intelligence quotient (IQ), behavioural changes such as shortening of attention span and increased antisocial behaviour, and reduced educational attainment."

Before the May 9 polls, the use of paints with no added lead, a brain-harming chemical, in schools got the thumbs-up from doctors, bishops, educators, trade unionists, environmentalists and "green-minded" candidates.

Over 100 groups and individuals from different backgrounds signed the "Solidarity Statement towards a Lead-Safe School Environment for Bright and Healthy Children."

The EcoWaste Coalition recently wrote to Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Armin Luistro urging him to issue a directive that would make it mandatory for schools to use lead-safe paints to minimize, if not eliminate, sources of lead pollution in the school environment.

The statement said: "We join the EcoWaste Coalition, a non-profit environmental group, in calling on the DepEd to declare the entire educational system as a lead-free zone by adopting a lead-safe paint procurement policy and by carefully addressing lead paint hazards."

It added, "Childhood lead exposure, mainly through the ingestion and inhalation of lead-containing paint, dust and soil — which are major sources

of lead exposure among children — can and must be prevented to protect our children's brains, their health and future."

Aileen Lucero, EcoWaste Coalition coordinator, declares, "With broad support from a cross section of the society, we are certain that Sec. Luistro will swiftly take action before students and teachers return to class to ensure only lead-free paints are used to decorate schools."

Lucero adds, "The adoption of a lead-safe school policy will have enduring health benefits for the students and also for the teachers and non-academic personnel." She notes that lead exposure in adults can cause, among many lead-induced health effects, abnormal sperm, reduced sperm count, miscarriages and stillbirths.

Among the "green-minded" politicians who signed the statement, were presidential candidate Grace Poe and her running mate Chiz Escudero, as well as senatorial candidates Neri Colmenares, Risa Hontiveros, and Juan Miguel Zubiri.

The health professionals who strongly backed the push for lead-safe schools included Dr. Ulysses Dorotheo of the Philippine Medical Association-Committee on Environmental Health and Ecology, Dr. Milagros Bautista of the Philippine Pediatric Society, Dr. Eva Irene Yu-Maglonzo of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians, Dr. Victoria Bael of the Child Neurology Society Philippines, Dr. Lynn Crisanta Panganiban of the Philippine Society of Clinical and Occupational Toxicology, Dr. Luis Gatmaitan of the National Children's

Television Network, Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, former Secretary of the Department of Health, and Dr. Suzette Lazo, former director of the Food and Drugs Administration.

Bishops from different denominations reinforced the move with their strong voices. These included Archbishops Socrates Villegas, Antonio Ledesma and Ramon Arguelles and Bishops Pablo Virgilio David and Broderick Pabillo of the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Frederick Luis Belmonte of the Anglican Church in the Philippines (Traditional), Obispo Maximo Ephraim Fajutagana of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, Bishop Noel Pantoja of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, and Bishop Arturo Asi of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

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Water : Lead -safe schools

Also signing the statement were the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, Davao Association of Catholic Schools, Environmental Resource Management Center of De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, one of the "greenest" schools in Asia, and Miriam Environmental Studies Institute. They said, "While lead exposure is also harmful to adults, particularly to women of child-bearing age and workers, human fetuses and children are most susceptible to the health effects of lead exposure, which can be permanent and can have lifelong impact."

On a bright note, lead-containing architectural, decorative and household paints will be phased out by January 1, 2017 as required by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2013-24. The phase-out of lead-containing industrial paints will take effect on January 1, 2020.

Let's listen to some of these anti-lead leaders-advocates:

- **Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines, Inc. (CEAP), Br. Jun. Erguiza, FSC, president:** "CEAP is aware that lead is detrimental to the human body, particularly for young children whose brains and nervous systems are still in the formative stage. Recognizing that lead exposure even in low doses poses hazards to children's health and development, CEAP expresses its solidarity with the laudable advocacy of the EcoWaste Coalition to prevent the use of lead-containing paints in school facilities and amenities across the country. CEAP is one with the EcoWaste and other stakeholders in promoting a lead-safe school environment for all children."

- **Davao Association of Catholic Schools, Inc. (DACS), an association of 65 Catholic schools, colleges, and universities in the Davao Region; Fr. Joel E. Tabora, SJ, president:** "As the Philippine government has scheduled the phase-out of leaded architectural, household and decorative paints by January 1, 2017 and leaded industrial paints by January 1, 2020 as per DENR A.O. 2013-24 (aka Chemical Control Order for Lead and Lead Compounds), DACS also enjoins all its member institutions to support this advocacy, scrutinize the content of paints and other materials purchased for school buildings and facilities and to help ensure the health safety of all young children who may be severely harmed by the effects of too much exposure to lead found in these products."

- **Child Neurology Society, Philippines, Inc. (CNSP), Dr. Victoria G. Bael, president:** "I am very much pleased to learn of your advocacy against lead exposure especially among children. It is already well established that lead exposure can affect a child's neurological health, specifically their behavior, sleep, and memory. Moreover, it also causes headaches, peripheral nerve disease, and developmental regression. The CNSP is a society that champions the neurological health of all Filipino children and we strongly support the banning of lead-containing products that children often use such as in toys, paints, and other art supplies. In behalf of all child neurologists in the country, I support your advocacy and further support future collaboration on projects that will provide a safer, lead-free environment for our children."

Will Tatay Diggy take the lead in this "anti-lead in schools" campaign?

The Manila Times

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Binay camp hits hasty gov't spending

THE camp of Vice President Jejomar Binay has decried the rushed spending of the Aquino government, saying it leaves the new administration little room for its priority programs.

"The Aquino administration's mad rush to spend during the election season has left the incoming administration of President-elect Rodrigo Duterte little room to work on during its first year," Binay's spokesman Rico Quicho said on Monday.

"After years of underspending, the administration decided to go on a spending binge obviously to swing voters to favor its chosen one but to no avail. Such recklessness will have as its casualty the priorities of the incoming administration," he added.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has released P2.5 trillion or almost 84 percent of the P3 trillion national budget for 2016.

"We reiterate our call for our people to set aside political differences and support the new administration as it navigates its first year with only 16 percent of the budget," Quicho said.

Binay's camp previously condemned the Aquino administration's anemic spending, especially for programs and projects to mitigate the impact of El Niño.

In the 2016 national budget, P19 billion has been allotted for subsidies, alternative livelihood projects, irrigation and other assistance projects for farmers affected by drought.

Budget Secretary Florencio Abad, however, refused to release in March the P900 million to the Department of Agriculture (DA) for projects intended to mitigate

the effects of El Niño.

Quicho said government's withholding of the fund led to a bloody and tragic outcome, with two people killed and more than 30 farmers injured during a protest rally in Kidapawan City in April.

He slammed DA Secretary Proceso Alcala's claim that the agency provided seedlings for farmers.

"Our farmers have been starving since December last year. How Secretary Alcala could expect them to plant the seedlings when they are already dying of hunger is beyond me," Quicho said.

"This just shows the administration's utter disconnect with what's happening on the ground," he added.

Quicho cited earlier the failure of the administration to release funds allotted for important infrastructure projects and basic services.

He noted the Aquino administration did not push through with approved programs for 2014 by not releasing fund allocations totaling P303 billion.

The unreleased appropriations affected projects of major departments: Department of Education (P2.2 billion); Department of Public Works and Highways (P26.3 billion); Department of Agriculture (P2.6 billion); Department of Agrarian Reform (P5.8 billion); and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (P1.9 billion).

Quicho said the underspending adversely affected economic growth.

He also noted that even Abad admitted in a congressional hearing on the 2016 national budget that the backlog in the disbursement of funds and the underspending or non-release of funds affected economic growth.



THE PHILIPPINE STAR

ISSN 1908-1189
9 770190 811892

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Duterte to US: Are you with us?

DAVAO CITY – Incoming president Rodrigo Duterte has one thing to ask US Ambassador Philip Goldberg when the latter pays him a courtesy call this week.

"I would only ask the US ambassador, 'are you with us?'" Duterte said.

The US ambassador, Duterte said, signified his intention to see him personally when his election victory became imminent.

The meeting between Duterte and Goldberg would

mark the first time that the outgoing Davao City mayor would formally receive an American government official.

The US government drew the ire of Duterte after a British-American national facing charges for exploding dynamite inside his hotel room in 2002 was brought out of the country by US authorities.

Duterte is also against the conduct of the joint Philippine-US Balikatan exercises.

The incoming president also said he would like to get an

official report on how China seized Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, noting that the takeover is depriving Filipino fishermen of livelihood.

"I would like to know from anyone in the previous administration why and how we lost control of Scarborough Shoal," Duterte told reporters. "It means the loss of livelihood and security of the Filipino people."

Panatag Shoal is 124 nautical miles from mainland Zambales, or well within the Philip-

pinas' 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Chinese ships started cupying the shoal on April 2012 after they prevented Philippine Navy from arresting Chinese poachers who harvested endangered marine species and corals.

Chinese boats accompanied by larger vessels have since barred Filipino fishermen from entering the area.

The Philippines, one of the weakest in the region in terms

of military might, filed a diplomatic protest against the occupation but China maintained it has "indisputable sovereignty" over the area.

The Philippines has turned to an international tribunal for help in reaffirming its entitlements in the West Philippine Sea and in stopping China's seizure of areas within the Philippines' EEZ.

Envoys visit

After taking a week-long break, Duterte yesterday began

receiving well-wishers and supporters at the Matina Enclave Residences here.

His visitors included Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua, Israel Ambassador Effie Ben Matityau and Japan's Ambassador Kazuhide Ishikawa.

Duterte said he does not intend to travel outside Davao City until he is sworn in as president on June 30.

Zhao said he was looking forward to good bilateral relations in a Duterte administration.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

'Duterte may face impeachment over Scarborough claim'

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV yesterday warned incoming president Rodrigo Duterte that he could face impeachment if he continues to claim that the Philippines has lost Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal to China.

Speaking at a press conference held at his office, Trillanes said the people around Duterte should advise him about the country's maritime claims, from the Spratly Islands in the West Philippine Sea to Panatag Shoal.

Trillanes said Duterte could at this time be pardoned for issuing those statements because he has not yet assumed the presidency.

However, he said that repeating the same statement

after he assumes office on June 30 could make him liable for an impeachable offense.

In his previous interviews, Duterte said it was unacceptable that the Philippines lost control over Panatag Shoal, which he blamed on Trillanes.

Duterte cited the backchannel talks with China initiated by Trillanes in 2012, which he said resulted in the Philippines losing the shoal.

The camp of Duterte has filed treason charges against President Aquino and Trillanes in relation to this issue.

Trillanes said that Duterte was either misinformed or giving a preview of a plan to blame him and Aquino for

the alleged loss of the shoal to China.

"I will not allow it to happen because we have it on record that before he assumed office, we still had Scarborough. There is no reclamation going there," Trillanes said.

Citing the statements made by the country's security officials in two separate hearings conducted by the Senate committee on national defense and security, which he heads, Trillanes said that Panatag Shoal remains with the Philippines in spite of China's aggressive moves to claim the disputed waters in the West Philippine Sea as well as surrounding areas.

Once Duterte becomes president, Trillanes said that such statements would lead to dangerous consequences for the Philippines because he would no longer be speaking as an ordinary citizen or mayor of Davao City.

"His statement is very dangerous because it will weaken our claim. What is important here is we stand firm that we have a claim there. Physically we have not lost it, the records will bear me out. Senior defense officials have been placed on record declaring that we have not lost Scarborough. Do not take it from me, do not take my word for it but take the word of all security officials of the country," Trillanes said.