

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 26 JUL 2016

DAY : **Tuesday**

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# 'We will not stop'

*Human rights no excuse  
to destroy country – Duterte*

By ALEXIS ROMERO

## Defending Gina

President Duterte defended Environment Secretary Gina Lopez from critics and gave her the go-signal to amend, suspend or revoke mining permits of companies that violate environmental laws.

He also directed the military to intensify its support role against illegal logging, illegal mining and other destructive practices that aggravate the devastation of natural resources.

"I have to protect the country. Many are complaining against the appointment of Gina Lopez. But Gina and I – we share the same paradigm: the interest of the country must come first," he said.

"Gina Lopez and I are just telling you: follow government standards. Do not destroy the environment. Follow it to a T and we will not have a problem," he said.

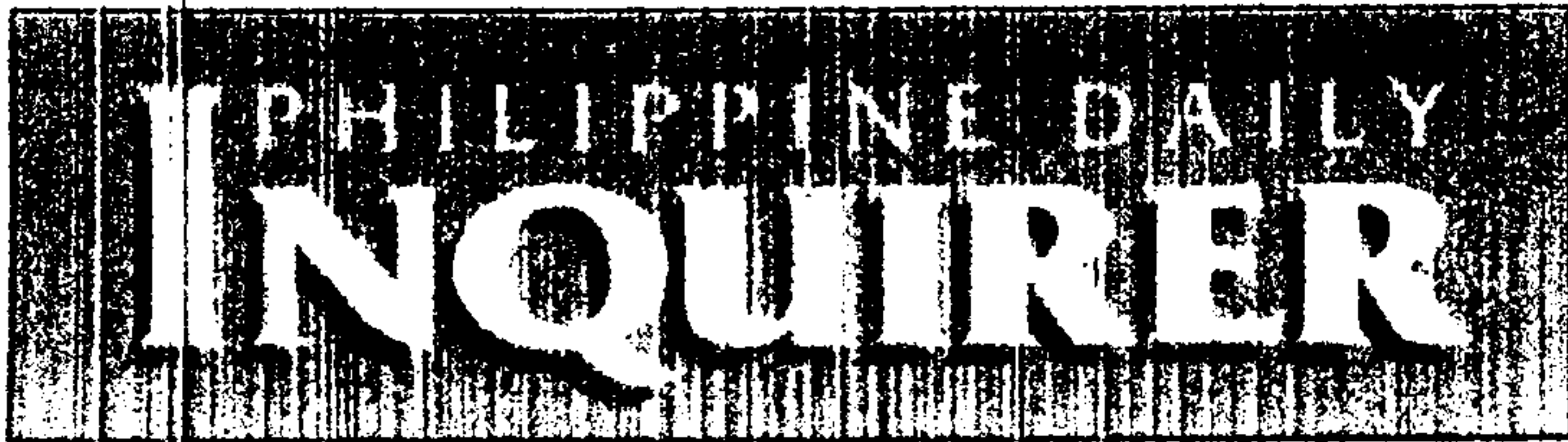
The President said Lopez, whom he described as an environmental crusader, is just doing her job in protecting the environment.

He also tasked Lopez to draw an eco-tourism plan for Laguna Lake to address environmental issues and support small-time fishermen.

The President hinted that the fish pens that dot Laguna Lake may be owned by a general, mayor, governor and even a member of the House of Representatives. – With Christina Mendez, Giovanni Nilles, Alexis Romero



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Miners obeying laws need not worry—Duterte

By Marlon Ramos and Ronnel W. Domingo

PRESIDENT Duterte yesterday assured mining companies that comply with current laws on mineral extraction that they need not fret.

In his first State of the Nation Address (Sona) yesterday, Mr. Duterte outlined his administration's policies on mining, even as he expressed full support for Environment Secretary Gina Lopez, a known antimining activist whose family owns broadcast giant ABS-CBN and the Energy Development Corp. (EDC), the country's largest geothermal company.

Calling her a "crusader," the President disclosed that the appointment of Lopez as head of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was met by complaints.

"(Lopez) and I share the same paradigm; the interest of the country must come first," the President said, drawing applause from the audience.

"I have to protect the country... There's a law allowing mining. Gina Lopez and I are just telling you to follow government standards. Don't destroy the environment. Follow it to a T and we'll have no problem," he said.

He said he had directed Lopez to look into all the permits covering mining, logging and other "environmentally sensitive activities to ensure compliance with government standards and, if warranted, to amend, suspend or revoke permits."

The President said he had also ordered the military to play a bigger role in the government's campaign against illegal logging, illegal mining and environmentally destructive activities.

Mr. Duterte also gave this piece of advice to those applying for mining permits from Lopez: Just smile and do not frown.

"She's a crusader and she will continue (to be one)," he said.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) yesterday expressed support for President Duterte's thrust against irresponsible miners, convinced that none of its

members are at fault.

In a statement, the COMP reiterated that its members had always followed standards.

"COMP members have in the past and will continue to abide by government and international standards," the industry group said.

Earlier, COMP executive vice president Nelia C. Halcon said that of the 42 companies named by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau that had not secured certification for ISO 14001—an internationally recognized standard relating to environmental management—only half or 21 were members of COMP.

In Southern Tagalog, environmental groups urged President Duterte to revoke mining permits issued in places tagged as key biodiversity areas.

## 'Understands our plight'

"Here's a President who truly understands the plight of the environment and communities," said environmental activist Rodne Galicha.

Galicha is the country manager of The Climate Reality Project and head of the nongovernment organization Bayay Sibuyanon in Romblon province.

"(But) while suspending mining permits due to violation of the laws and policies, we challenge the administration to automatically revoke mining permits in areas not yet destroyed, such as Sibuyan Island and other fragile island ecosystems," Galicha said.

In a separate statement, green group EcoWaste Coalition lauded Duterte's "clear stance" against illegal logging, mining and other destructive practices, but "we cannot help but ask him to seriously rethink his endorsement of waste-to-energy technologies to deal with the country's trash problem."

"We hope to dialogue with him and Lopez to discuss sustainable, cost-effective and job-creating options for managing our discards without incinerating them and discharging toxic pollutants, including hazardous ash, in the process," said Aileen Lucero, coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition. *With reports from Maricar Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Jaymee T. Gamil, Manila*





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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

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## More mining firms under review; OceanaGold confident on audit

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez has bared a new list of mining companies that will undergo extensive review following complaints from the indigenous people of Mindanao.

In a phone interview with **The STAR** Lopez said she met with the *Lumads* of Mindanao, which complained about eight mining firms that have been violating environmental standards.

"I met with them and they wanted to stop large scale mining in their provinces. And they were very explicit to the names [of the companies]," she said.

Among these firms include TVI Resource Development Philippines, St. Augustine Gold & Copper Ltd., San Roque Metals, Nickel Asia affiliate Taganito Mining, Chiense company Shenzhou Mining Corp., Sagittarius Mines Inc.'s Tampakan project, Greenstone Resources Corp. and Silangan Mining.

Canadian-owned TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. reportedly committed human rights viola-

tions. However, the company through director Kaycee Crisostomo denied any wrongdoing, saying this is a rehashed issue that dates back to 2012.

"It was the provincial government that formed a multi-agency task force dismantling the illegal small scale mining operations and not TVI. We are not driving out people," Crisostomo said.

The issues raised against the other companies were militarization for St. Augustine in Compostela Valley, siltation and land grabbing complaints for San Roque Metals Inc., chemical wastes emitted from Greenstone's mine, and open pit mining for Silangan Mining.

The environment chief is set to conduct another dialogue with the *Lumads* today to formalize their complaints.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau has imposed stricter audit standards for mining companies as part of efforts to put a stop to irresponsible mining.

MGB director Leo Jasareno

**Lopez**

said the comprehensive review would focus on the companies' compliance with the requirements of the Mining Act of 1995, Environmental Compliance Certificate, Forestry Law, and other laws pertaining to mining.

Jasareno added that the new round of audit would look beyond regulatory requirements to take into account the social and economic impact of the mining operations nationwide.

Lopez has subjected all

mines in the country to an audit and called for a moratorium on the approval of new mining projects.

The DENR is set to release the results of the audit of large and small-scale companies next month.

Meanwhile, OceanaGold said yesterday it welcomes and supports a transparent audit to be conducted by the national government which covers the aspects of technical, environmental and social development.

Ramoncito Gozar, OceanaGold's SVP for communications and external affairs, said the company is ready for any audit and is confident of its track record as a responsible operator. OceanaGold's Didipio operation is ISO 14001-certified and the first mining operation to receive such accreditation in 2015, well before it was mandated by the DENR. The certification contains the criteria for environmental management system.

In 2015, OceanaGold was





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

More mining firms under review; Oceana Gold confident on audit

awarded the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award (PMIEA) for exhibiting outstanding level of dedication, initiative and innovation in pursuit of excellence in mining operations, environmental, safety, health management and community development.

Gozar said any audit would also reveal OceanaGold's significant contribution to its host communities that have been over and above the mandated requirements under the Philippine Mining Act. More notably in the Didipio Community Development Corp. (DiCorp.), which was established to assist the local community in creating a sustainable business through capacity and skills development; OceanaGold Sustainable Agroforestry Inc. (OGSAI), its agroforestry arm that has already reforested over 1,300 hectares of land, planted more than 300,000 trees and donated more than 500,000 seedlings in support of the National Greening Program; the Di-

didipio Mine Water Treatment Plant, which has elevated the water quality of the Didipio River following decades of irresponsible small scale mining operations that use destructive practices in resource extraction and provide no economic benefit to communities.

"OceanaGold's recognition with the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award is reflective of the deep roots in the company founded on 25 years of successful mining operations in New Zealand, one of the most environmentally sensitive countries in the world. OceanaGold has brought these same principals to the Philippines, where it has built a strong social license to operate based on the endorsement of the local communities. The company is strongly committed as ever to working closely with its many stakeholder groups to continue providing significant benefits and leaving a positive, long-lasting legacy," he added.



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## Alvarez has 251 in super majority

Davao del Norte Rep. Pantaleon Alvarez outlined his legislative agenda yesterday immediately after an overwhelming majority of his colleagues elected him Speaker of the House of Representatives.

He succeeded Quezon City Rep.

By JESS DIAZ

Feliciano Belmonte Jr., one of four House members who nominated him to head their chamber in the 17th Congress.

Alvarez of the pro-administration PDP-Laban party received 251

votes against eight votes for Ifugao Rep. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. (Liberal Party) and seven for Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez (United Nationalist Alliance). Twenty-one members abstained.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

**Alvarez** From Page 1

Addressing his colleagues, Alvarez echoed the message of change of the Duterte administration.

"True and genuine change can only come if we, as a people and as a nation, join hands with President Duterte in achieving it," he said.

"We have to give him the necessary legislation to effect genuine and meaningful change. That means that we, too, must be an instrument of change."

He then proceeded to enumerate the measures that he wants enacted, the newest of which is empowering Congress to give legislative franchises to mining companies. Under present rules, they do not have to go to the legislature to obtain licenses and permits to operate.

"We would like to see mining companies securing a legislative franchise before they are allowed to operate," he said.

"That way, their activities would be subject to legislative oversight and their franchises can be revoked by the oversight body instead of a probably bribable bureaucrat in an obscure DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) office if they violate the terms and conditions thereof."

"Also, we would like to ensure that these companies do not export the ores they mine. Processing or semi-processing of these ores should be done within the Philippines. This is one way to give jobs to our people, instead of enriching only the stockholders of mining companies."

His proposal would lump mining firms with telecommunications companies and public utilities, which have to be franchised by Congress.

Invoking the "universal law on karma," Alvarez said the legislature should re-impose the death penalty and reduce the age of criminal responsibility from 15 years to nine years.

"If you take a person's life, if you are a drug lord who destroys people's lives, you have to pay for it," he said.

As for lowering the age of criminal responsibility, he said, "We must teach the young that there are consequences for everything we do."

He reiterated the need to give Duterte emergency powers to untangle traffic congestion in Metro Manila and other urban areas.

He said the President "has started the ball rolling on greater transparency in government by signing an executive order

on freedom of information."

"We should do our part and enact a meaningful Freedom of Information bill," he said.

"The greatest crimes are committed in dark secrecy."

Alvarez said the House would also simplify taxation and increase retirees' pension.

"And, of course, the most holy grail of all: the revision of the 1987 Constitution and the transformation of our system of government from a unitary presidential form to a federal parliamentary one," he said.

"The power of imperial Manila over the rest of our nation has to end. Our local governments need to be allowed to stand on their own feet and to develop and grow as they see fit, subject only to standards that the national government may set."

"Let us not fear change. The only thing we should fear is the fear of change itself. Instead, let us embrace change... Starting today, then, let us roll up our sleeves and get to work."

In nominating Alvarez for Speaker, Belmonte described him as a "friend and colleague," since they were both members of the 11th and now the 17th Congress.

He assured him that the LP bloc in the House, which he heads, "will be a partner for change" of Alvarez's super majority.

The House later passed resolutions commending Belmonte, former majority leader Neptali Gonzales II and former minority leader Ronaldo Zamora for their "sterling performance and stewardship" of the House in the 16th Congress.

Aside from Alvarez, the House elected Ilocos Norte Rep. Rodolfo Farinas as majority leader and Romero Quimbo of Marikina (LP), Eric Singson of Ilocos Sur (PDP-Laban), Mercedes Alvarez of Negros Occidental (Nationalist People's Coalition), Frederil Castro of Capiz (National Unity Party) and Raneo Abu of Batangas (Nationalista Party) as deputy speakers.

Most LP colleagues of Belmonte voted for Alvarez, including Henedina Abad of Batanes, wife of former budget secretary Florencio Abad.

However, at least three LP members voted for their partymate Baguilat: Edgar Erice of Caloocan City, Edcel Lagman of Albay and Raul Daza of Northern Samar.

Navotas Rep. Tobias Tiangco, erstwhile UNA president, did not support Suarez. He said he was casting "a distinct vote of none of the above." — With Delon Porcalla, Artemio Dumlao



# The Manila Times

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## Alvarez calls on House to support mining reforms

BY JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

**A**S part of the Duterte administration's crackdown on illegal and destructive mining operations in the country, the new leadership at the House of Representatives on Monday said it wants mining companies to secure legislative license to operate, among other sweeping reforms to the industry.

Davao del Norte 1st District Representative Pantaleon Alvarez gave this marching order to the 292 members of the House after winning the speakership on Monday.

"That way, their activities would be subject to legislative oversight and their franchises can be revoked by the oversight body instead of a probably bribable bureaucrat in an obscure DENR office if they violate the terms and conditions thereof," said Alvarez.

In his acceptance speech during the opening of the 17th Congress, Alvarez once again called on Congress to support the President's priority measures—including the revival of a proposed measure to ban raw ore export and require mining companies to process materials locally to produce more revenue

and stronger job generation.

Alvarez, who is a close ally of President Duterte, said that it is expected that the labor component for the metal production will increase significantly as the development of downstream value addition becomes viable from the domestic production, particularly of nickel ore.

The production of nickel metal in the form of ferronickel and nickel pig iron is a significant value addition in the utilization and optimization of the country's mineral resources. It also reduces the country's dependence on the shipping of low-value, high-volume nickel ore to China.

Currently, all steel and stainless steel products are imported into the Philippines despite the country being rich in the basic minerals used to manufacture this product.

Indonesia's ore export ban follows the same principle, which has forced many Chinese smelters to plan the investment and construction of nickel pig iron plants in Indonesia to ensure that their nickel metal supply for their stainless steel manufacturing industry is not compromised.

With the Indonesian ore export ban in place, the Philippines is now the main supplier of nickel ore to China's nickel pig iron industry. China is heavily dependent on ferronickel and nickel pig iron for its stainless steel manufacturing industry.

Over the past three years, however, the Philippines failed to capitalize on its nickel production after Indonesia imposed a raw ore export ban in January 2014.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau attributed this to poor base metal price was brought about by the listless world economic growth and slowdown of the Chinese economy.

At present, there are only two nickel processing facilities in the Philippines, both owned by Nickel Asia Corp. Most of the country's nickel ore is shipped to Japanese and Chinese smelters. There are also just two gold processing plants and one for copper processing.

If approved, smelting operations

would directly benefit Mindanao.

In his State of the Nation Address, President Duterte has directed the DENR to review all permits granted to mining, logging and other environmentally sensitive activities. On mining, the president stressed that all companies must abide both government and international standards.

Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez earlier order a stricter audit of all mining operations in the country, imposing even higher standards than that of international firms. The review covers some 105 metallic and non-metallic mines—including quarrying and small-scale mining.

The DENR chief also said that they are eyeing the creation of a "commando group for the environment," who will work with the military and the police to go after those engaged in illegal mining activities.

In response, members of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said they are ready for an airtight audit.

"President Duterte reminded mining firms to abide by government standards. COMP members have in the past and will continue to abide by government and international standards. Congratulations to President Duterte on this occasion," the group said.



# BusinessWorld

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# Speaker wants miners to seek Congress franchise

By Janina C. Lim  
Reporter

THE House of Representatives will push as a priority bill a requirement for miners to seek a legislative franchise, to raise the level of scrutiny on the industry and avoiding the possibility of miners avoiding sanctions by bribing lower-level bureaucrats.

"As for mining, we would like to see mining companies securing a legislative franchise before they are allowed to operate," said Davao del Norte Representative Pantaleon D. Alvarez in his speech on Monday upon being elected as Speaker for the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Mr. Alvarez justified the proposed change, saying legislators will have the power to revoke a mining company's franchise instead of going through "a probably bribable bureaucrat in an obscure DENR office if they violate the terms and conditions thereof."

Sought for comment, Dante R. Bravo, president of Global Ferromineral Holdings, Inc., said in a mobile message that the Speaker's proposal was "creative." Mr. Bravo added that he will be awaiting more details on the proposed system of legislative franchise.

The division head of Philex Mining Corp.'s Public and Regulatory Affairs Francis G. Ballesteros, Jr. welcomed Mr. Alvarez's proposal

and touted his company's compliance with government rules.

"As it is now, the activities of responsible mining companies like Philex are already subject to enough governmental scrutiny and inquiry under current law and policy, and we have always held ourselves out to be properly transparent in this regard," Mr. Ballesteros said in a text message.

Mr. Alvarez also said he wants miners to process more of their output locally instead of simply shipping ore overseas, in order to ensure the creation of local jobs.

"This is one way to give jobs to our people, instead of enriching only the stockholders of mining companies," Mr. Alvarez added.

In his State of the Nation Address on Monday, President Rodrigo R. Duterte directed Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez to strike a balance between regulation and the ability of miners to earn a proper return: "*Ayusin mo, ma'am. Wag mo namang ipitin.*" (Fix it, but don't squeeze the miners.)

Mr. Duterte also defended Ms. Lopez's aggressive enforcement of her mandate, saying she "is just doing her job."

After assuming her post, Ms. Lopez ordered the suspension of two mines and asked a Nickel Asia subsidiary to halt the transport to China of ore stockpiles from a non-operational mine in Samar.



A WORKER pushes a cart loaded with ore inside a mine in Itogon, Benguet.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Congress leaders bare top legislative agenda

& BUTCH FERNANDEZ [@butchBM](#)

**A**FTER their impressive victories, President Duterte's bets to lead the House of Representatives and the Senate bared the legislative agenda of the Duterte administration and the 17th Congress "to effect meaningful and genuine change."

In his first speech at the House of Representatives, newly elected Speaker Pantaleon D. Alvarez said both the House of Representatives and Senate should give Mr. Duterte their full support through the immediate passage of the President's priority bills.

"We must give the President the necessary legislations, his tools to effect meaningful and genuine change. In sum, we, too, must be instruments of change," Alvarez said. "Our mission in this 17th Congress is clear: to enact laws that will deliver to our nation and our people a future better than yesterday and brighter than today," he said.

### Tax reform, mining

ALVAREZ said the 17th Congress will prioritize the passage of tax-reform measures. "The law on income taxation should be simplified into one imposed on gross income progressively. Tax laws have become so complicated that they are exploited by corrupt BIR [Bureau of Internal Revenue] officials to extort money from taxpayers," he said.

"Ordinary individuals, for their part, choose not to pay taxes precisely because they do not understand tax laws. A simplified law on taxation would encourage people to pay taxes and contribute to a society that they know will take care of them," he added. As for mining, Alvarez said Congress would like to see mining companies securing a legislative franchise before they are allowed to operate.

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## Legislative agenda. . . CONTINUED FROM A1

"That way, their activities would be subject to legislative oversight, and their franchises can be revoked by the oversight body instead of a probably bribable bureaucrat in an obscure DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] office if they violate the terms and conditions thereof," the speaker said.

"Also, we would like to ensure that these companies do not export the ores they mine. Processing or semiprocessing of these ores should be done within the Philippines. This is one way to give jobs to our people, instead of enriching only the stockholders of mining companies," he added.



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### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Davao miner being monitored for possible violations, MGB says

DAVAO CITY — A mining firm operating in the Davao Region is being closely monitored by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) over its irresponsible practices, the MGB said.

MGB Regional Director Wilfredo G. Moncano said over the weekend that the company is already “on the radar” of Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez, but declined for now to name the firm or give specifics of the possible violation.

At the same time, Mr. Moncano said mining companies have nothing to fear from Ms. Lopez as long as they mine responsibly.

“Responsible miners... must be able to positively contribute to growth in the community, remediate environmental disturbances, alleviate the lives of the people and respect the rights of indigenous peoples,” he added.

Meanwhile, a group of large-scale mining companies in the region promised to work with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in ensuring compliance.

Rodulfo A. Palma, president of the Alliance of Responsible Miners of Region-XI (ARMOR-XI), said their group will cooperate with the DENR.

Among ARMOR-XI member companies are: Sagittarius Mines, Inc., Apex Mining Co., Inc., Nationwide Development Corp./San Agustin Services, Inc., and King Eagle Exploration and Mining Corp.

ARMOR-XI said they view responsible mining to include “respecting the rights of all stakeholders, environmentally friendly [operations], embracing the best international standards and practices and upholding the rule of law while generating a sustainable and inclusive stream of benefits.”

Members also promised to uphold “human rights, responsible stewardship of the environment, uplift the quality of life of mining communities, promote sound, safe and responsible mining practices and advocate transparency, openness and good governance.”

Davao, particularly the provinces of Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley, is considered to be among the most mineral-rich regions in the country.

Both provincial governments, however, have previously complained that the mining industry has yet to significantly benefit the local communities and the provinces as a whole. —

**Carmelito Q. Francisco**



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## OceanaGold confident of passing mining audit

BY LEANDER C. DOMINGO

**B**AYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya: Australian-Canadian copper and gold mining company OceanaGold Philippines Inc. (OGPI) operating in the village of Didipio in Kasibu Town welcomes the audit by the national government "to prove its track record as a responsible operator" in the extractive industry.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez recently ordered OceanaGold audited following a petition by anti-mining activists to cancel its exploration permit renewal for an expansion.

Ramoncito Gozar, senior vice president for communications and external affairs at OceanaGold, said the company supports a transparent audit.

On July 20, anti-mining activists, together with Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos Padilla, his wife former Governor Ruth Padilla and provincial planning and development chief Edgardo Sabado, met with Lopez at a dialogue in Makati City to air their grievances about their ordeal with mining operations in the province.

Lopez assured Padilla's group that she would cancel the extended exploration permit period of OceanaGold's Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement

(FTAA) which had been granted by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB). The FTAA extension is valid from March 2016 to 2021.

Lopez also ordered MGB to review the permit granted to OceanaGold.

"The company is ready for any audit and is confident and proud of its track record as a responsible operator. OceanaGold's Didipio operation is an ISO 14001 certified and the first mining operation to receive such accreditation in 2015, well before it was mandated by the DENR," Gozar said.

He said the certification contains the criteria for environmental management system, adding that OceanaGold is also operating with OHSAS 18001, a certification on health and safety management systems.

He noted that in 2015, OceanaGold was awarded the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award (PMIEA) for

exhibiting an outstanding level of dedication, initiative and innovation in pursuit of excellence in mining operations, environmental, safety, health management and community development.

"With this, any audit would also reveal OceanaGold's significant contribution to its more than 10 host communities that have been over and above the mandated requirements under the Philippine Mining Act," Gozar said.

He also noted the establishment of the Didipio Community Development Corporation (DiCorp) to assist the local community in creating a sustainable business through capacity and skills development, employing and benefiting more than a thousand Didipio and neighboring community residents.

"We also have the OceanaGold Sustainable Agroforestry Inc. (OGSAI), our agro-forestry arm that has already reforested over 1,300 hectares of land, planted more than 300,000 trees and donated more than 500,000 seedlings in support of the National Greening Program," he said.

Gozar said one of the most controversial issues in the mining industry is about water pollution. He said the company has invested resources to protect the source of potable water in affected communities.

"The Didipio Mine Water Treat-

ment Plant we have put up has elevated the water quality of the Didipio River following decades of irresponsible small-scale mining operations that use destructive practices in resource extraction and provide no economic benefit to communities," Gozar said.

He also said that OceanaGold's recognition with the PMIEA is reflective of the deep roots of the company founded on 25 years of successful mining operations in New Zealand, one of the most environmentally sensitive countries in the world.

He said OceanaGold has brought these same principles to the Philippines where it has built a strong social license to operate based on the endorsement of the local communities.

"The company is strongly committed as ever to working closely with its many stakeholder groups to continue providing significant benefits and leaving a positive, long-lasting legacy," Gozar added.

Meanwhile, Padilla has formalized the provincial government's request to Lopez for the cancellation of OceanaGold's extended exploration permit for another five years.

In his letter to Lopez, Padilla said that the issuance of the exploration permit extension which resumes the exploration activity of the company seemed to be a "midnight deal and very suspicious."



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# BusinessMirror

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Tough times ahead for 'jobless' miners

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

**W**ORKERS of mining companies whose permits have been suspended by the government face tough times ahead: Either they find another work elsewhere, or end up joining the country's jobless lot.

Since assuming the top post of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez had already suspended the operation of four nickel-mining companies—two in the province of Zambales and another pair in Palawan.

As environment secretary, Lopez also ordered a mining audit of all large-scale mining operations in the country in accordance with the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, Executive Order 79 and DENR Administrative Order 2015-07 with a rating system that go beyond the usual technical audit criteria.

Lopez wants the mining audit to include the environmental and social impact of mining as part of criteria to decide whether a mining company should stop or continue to operate, even as she vowed to stop mining operations that cause environmental damage and sufferings to people.

The suspension would remain in force until such time that the mining companies have fully complied all conditions set by the DENR.

Lopez, nevertheless, vowed to help miners who may end up losing their jobs because of her campaign.

### 'No work, no pay'

LIKE in most companies, the "no work, no pay" policy applies in mining, industry sources said.

When a company's suspension order is in effect, a mining company's operation, which is specifically extraction of mineral ores from the mines, stops and employees are subjected to go on a "forced leave," which means they may still receive some salary for some time.

"If the available leave of the workers are used up, then they would, eventually, have nothing on the pay check," the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

A suspension order, however, does not necessarily affect all mining employees.

Some companies with deep pockets would absorb or reassign affected workers to other departments, such as administration department, maintenance and others to environmental or community relations units.

Normally, only a skeletal force doing administrative works stay behind, while others let go of their workers until mining operation resumes. "It depends on the company. It also depends on the nature of the suspension order. If the order means stopping all mining activities, it will be a big problem," the source added.

Suspension of mining opera-



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Though times ahead---

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tions usually takes at least six months in case of a major offense or violation, because it would require time and a huge amount of money to comply with conditions, such as remediation measures in case of spill, repair of damaged facilities, such as tailings dam, or construction of a new one.

In Zambales alone, Lopez's campaign had already affected some 3,000 workers belonging to four different nickel-mining companies. These are the Zambales Diversified Metals Corp, Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines Inc., Eramen Minerals Inc. and LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc.—all of which operate in Santa Cruz, Zambales.

Nickel-mining companies in Zambales were told to comply six conditions for the lifting of the suspension order. These include addressing issues of tree-cutting or earth-balling practices; completion of mine haul road; rehabilitation of mined out areas; deposit of final mine-rehabilitation fund; compensate owners of affected fishponds, farmlands and water bodies; and repair of damaged portions of public roads because of their hauling operations.

To recall, the DENR had suspended all four nickel-mining companies in Zambales in 2014 due to unsystematic mining or stripping methods.

The Zambales Diversified and Benguet Corp., which managed to secure a temporary lifting order last year, were slapped with a preventive suspension order early this month on account of a writ of kalikasan issued by the Supreme Court, Executive Order 1 issued by the Provincial Government of Zambales and the numerous complaints aired by concerned residents of Santa Cruz, Zambales.

In Palawan Lopez had ordered to suspend the operation of Berong Nickel Mining Corp. and City Nickel Corp. also because

of numerous complaints against their operation. There is no formal or official communication, yet, detailing the conditions for the lifting of the suspension order for Berong and City Nickel.

All mining companies also face with corresponding fines depending on the gravity of the offense committed. Eventually, the suspension order would force affected workers from nickel mines in Zambales and Palawan to look for other jobs.

### Catching 'tulingan'

ASIDE from the nickel mines in Zambales and Palawan, Lopez last week had ordered to stop the hauling of nickel-ore stockpiles

of Hinatuan Mining Corp. (HMC) on Manicani Island in the town of Guiuan, Eastern Samar, rendering 495 of its workers jobless.

HMC workers who would soon find themselves jobless are not as lucky. Lopez's order specifically put to stop the hauling of nickel-ore stockpiles on the island.

Unfortunately, those affected have nowhere else to go except to go back to farming or fishing—ways of life, which, for the longest time, failed to improve the lives of millions of Filipinos anywhere in the country.

A subsidiary of Nickel Asia Corp., the country's top producer of nickel, said their hauling operation provide regular income to 495 workers.

Farmers and fishermen in the Philippines belong to the poorest of the poor sector.

While there are a variety of fish that can be caught in the municipal waters of Guiuan, it is only during the months of March to May that fishermen can actually have bountiful harvest.

Beyond the three-month window, fishing is almost impossible because of the strong wind and ocean current on top of the fact that there are few fish to catch, except *tulingan*, or tuna, which sell from P60 to P90 a kilo.

With the diminishing fish

catch brought about by overfishing in the area, there is no way that small fishermen would be able to survive the day-to-day cost of living on the island.

A fishing expedition could yield catch as much as 10 kilos a day, but these would have to be divided among four fishermen working as a group.

Workers of HMC on Manicani whose task is to haul the stockpiles of nickel ore accumulated by the company a long time ago receive P12,000 a month, enough, they say, to send their children to college, while the company makes its final exit off the island.

### Better than fishing

FISHERS of Manicani Island are among the lowest-income earners in the province despite the town having the largest marine protected area called Guiuan Protected Landscape and Seascape.

Arcenio Arcesmo, chairman of Barangay San Jose, said HMC had provided jobs to fishermen hauling the stockpiles of nickel. This, he said, is a blessing to his constituents, because farming and fishing offer no hope of improving their lives.

"If the DENR stops [nickel-ore] hauling on the island, many of our fellowmen would be rendered jobless. Our fishing ground is no



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**“If the DENR stops [nickel-ore] hauling on the island, many of our fellowmen would be rendered jobless. Our fishing ground is no longer productive. Sometimes, fishermen go home with just a few kilos, enough to cover the cost of gasoline. In most cases, they go home empty-handed.”—ARCESMO**

longer productive. Sometimes, fishermen go home with just a few kilos, enough to cover the cost of gasoline. In most cases, they go home empty-handed,” said Arcesmo, a fisherman himself.

Residents expect the company to rehabilitate the mined out area starting with the removal of the remaining nickel-ore stockpiles.

Arcesmo said majority of the people in Barangay San Jose depend on the HMC's hauling operation and would suffer the consequence of Lopez's stop order without alternative job or livelihood opportunity.

“If they stop it [hauling], many of the workers would experience economic hardships. Fishing and farming are not profitable,” he said.

Arcesmo said only a few are opposed to the hauling of the nickel-ore stockpiles for unknown reason. Most of those who oppose it, he added, are not even residents of Manicani who would suffer the consequence if the mountain of soil are swept away by flood in the event of another Yolanda, referring to the super typhoon that severely affected Guiuan. A total of 171 town and cities were by Yolanda, which left a path of death and destruction on November 8, 2013.

“We don't want that to happen again that's why we want HMC to remove the stockpiles,” he said.

Zacarias Baldecanas, chairman of barangay Banaag, said the people themselves want the stockpiles of nickel ore removed by HMC because of the danger it pose to the people. They said removing the nickel-ore stockpiles would minimize the risks of disasters, such as flood and mudslide in case of excessive rainfall.

“We are afraid that if the hauling would stop and another typhoon hits us, people would again be at risk because of the stockpiles that would be left behind,” Baldecanas, also a fisherman said.

He said every time it rains, water runoff further causes damage to their coastal ecosystem. The discoloration of the coastal waters, he said, affects whatever is left of their mangrove and beach forests, and corals.

Another pitfall on Lopez's order to stop the hauling activities, they said, is the resurgence of destructive fishing activities, such as the use of dynamite and cyanide.

The rampant use of dynamite and cyanide had caused the destruction of marine ecosystem in Guiuan, particularly on islands that are beyond the reach of law enforcers.

“I am not saying all fishermen are into illegal fishing activities. But it happened before. With no job and income to support their families, they would not be able to

send their children to school. This hardship would force them to go back to illegal fishing,” he said.

Sought for comment, Lopez said those affected by the suspension orders would get help from the government. “We will get them involved in line rehabilitation and the greening of the area. We will talk to them and ask them what they want to do,” she said.

“I am committed to their welfare. I have instructed my people to look after them,” Lopez added.

As for the employees of HMC, Lopez vowed to stop the destructive fishing activities in the area.

“There must be rule of law around Manicani. Manicani is a protected marine reserve and, actually, the whole area is protected. My commitment is for the people. My people already went there this week and would go back next [week] to bring trees and things for the people. They will be OK. *Kailangan tulungan*,” she said.

Lopez told the BUSINESSMIRROR that her visit and dialogue with communities in Palawan saddened her. “When I went to Palawan, my heart bled. Palawan should not be poor. They just need a little bit of help,” she said.



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*Though times ahead....*





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### 4K supports Lopez call to watch cement makers

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

🐦 @jonlmayuga

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has found an ally in a newly formed advocacy group, which backed her campaign against irresponsible mining.

An antiminining advocate, Lopez has ordered an airtight mining audit of mining operations in the Philippines, including metallic and nonmetallic mines, such as quarry.

The cement manufacturing industry, according to the Kilusang Kontra Katiwalian at Kabulukan (4K), is worth looking into in the fight against irresponsible mining.

In a statement, 4K said the cement-manufacturing industry extracts huge volume of limestone, which poses environmental destruction.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said the cement-manufacturing sector is the third-largest industrial source of pollution in the world, emitting more than 500,000 tons per year of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide.

Such pollution is associated with health and environmental impacts, such as ground-level ozone, acid rain, global warming, water-quality deterioration, and visual impairment and lung diseases to affected population.

Meanwhile, the group urged the

Duterte administration to look into the alleged price manipulation of local cement in the Philippines.

The 4K said the cement cartel Cement Manufacturers of the Philippines (Cemap), led by former Trade undersecretary Ernesto Ordoñez, is to be blamed for the artificial shortage of cement.

“With the artificial shortage of cement, the government can’t control the retail prices of cement, and Cemap is the first to benefit from the situation,” said Rodel Pineda, 4K secretary-general.

Pineda also questioned the merger of Holcim Philippines Inc. and Lafarge Republic Inc., which now controls 75 percent of the cement industry. This, the group said, violates the antitrust law.

“How come the PCC [Philippine Competition Commission] let this merger? Our local cement industry is now controlled by foreigners under Cemap and they are making a killing in cement prices because they dictate the retail prices,” Pineda said.

Ordoñez is the president of Cemap and an official of PCC. He said holding two positions constitute conflict of interest in the merger of Holcim and Lafarge.

“This must be investigated by the government and Cemap must be scrapped to stop the monopoly in the cement industry,” he said.



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**NANGAKO SI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR) SECRETARY GINA LOPEZ** na gagawin niya ang lahat ng kanyang makakaya upang marekober ang nawalang mabubuting bagay na NILALAYON NI PANGULONG RODRIGO DUTERTE na mapasigla ang pagpapapanatili ng kabutihan para sa nakararami, paglingap at kalinga para sa mga kapus-palad at pag-ayuda sa mga mahihirap na mamamayang Pilipino na biktima ng mapang-aping ekonomiya na kinokontrol ng mga abusado at iresponsableng industriya ng pagmimina.

"Ito ang paninindigan ko, and this is what I really believe...we cannot and we must not build an economy based on suffering. We cannot do it," hayag ni LOPEZ habang ipinapaliwanag na maaari ngang nagkakamal ng salapi ang mga mamumuhunan sa pagmimina ngunit nakabase naman ito sa paghihirap ng taumbayan. "At the end of the day, who is benefitting from this? Not the poor, so why do we keep doing it?"

**KILALANG MATIBAY NA ANTI-MINING ADVOCATE BAGO NAPILI NI PRESIDENT DUTERTE** para pamunuan ang DENR, **IPINADAMA NI LOPEZ** ang kanyang intensiyon na panatilihin matamasa ng bawat isa ang mayamang natural na kalikasan ng bansa.

"I would like to keep our biodiversity and not let it be raped by any selfish interest because it belongs to the Filipino people," saad ng DENR SECRETARY.

Kabilang sa mga sektor na nagdudulot nang **MALUBHANG PANGANIB SA KALIKASAN ANG CEMENT MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY**. Nagdudulot nang mabigat na suliranin ang pagmimina ng **APOG o LIME-STONE** sa kalikasan kung kaya dapat panatilihin ng pamahalaan ang pagbabantay at pagkokontrol sa proseso ng operasyon upang matugunan ang mga requirement na itinakda ng mga ahensiyang kagaya ng **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU (EMB)** at **MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU (MGB)**.

Ayon sa **US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**, ang cement sector ang pangatlo sa pinakamalaking industriyang pinagmumulan ng polusyon sa buong mundo, nagpapakawala ito ng mahigit pa sa

## IRESPONSABLENG PAGMIMINA BINIRA NI LOPEZ

500,000 tonelada kada taon ng sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide at carbon monoxide na may isang malaking pangangib sa kalusugan at kalikasan kagaya ng ground-level ozone, acid rain, global warming, water quality deterioration at paglabo ng paningin at sakit sa baga na nakaaapekto sa populasyon.

Samantala., **HINILING NG ADVOCACY GROUP** na **KILUSAN KONTRA KATIWALIAN AT KABULUKAN (4K)** sa **ADMINISTRASYONG DUTERTE** na **DURUGIN NA ANG KARTEL SA CEMENT INDUSTRY SA PANGUNGUNA NG CEMENT MANUFACTURERS OF THE PHILIPPINES (CeMAP)** sa **ILALIM NI DATING DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY UNDERSECRETARY ERNESTO ORDONEZ** na nakikinabang sa kanyang kampanya laban sa mga importer ng semento kung saan kontrolado nila ang presyo ng kanilang mga produkto.

"The DTI asked local cement producers to explain the recent surge in retail prices of cement in the country and CeMAP can explain why there are shortages of their product in some key areas. With the artificial shortage of cement, the government can't control the retail prices of cement and CeMAP is the first beneficiary in this situation," paggigiit ni **4K SECRETARY GENERAL RODEL PINEDA**.

**KINUWESTIYON DIN NI PINEDA** ang **PAGSASANIB NG HOLCIM PHILIPPINES INC** at **LAFARGE REPUBLIC INC.** na kumokontrol sa halos 75 percent ng cement industry na isang malaking paglabag sa Anti-Trust Law.

"How come the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) let this merger? Our local cement industry is now controlled by foreigners under CeMAP and they are making a killing in cement prices because they dictate the retail prices. Ordenez is the president of CeMAP and he is also an official of PCC and there is a clear conflict of interest in the merger of Holcim and Lafarge. This must be investigated by the government and CeMAP must be scrapped to stop the monopoly in cement industry," pagpupunto ni **PINEDA**.



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### KARTEL SA CEMENT INDUSTRY PINABUBUWAG!

NANAWAGAN ang advocacy group na KILUSAN KONTRA KATIWALIAN AT KABULUKAN (4K) sa administrasyon ni PANGULONG RODRIGO DUTERTE na durugin o buwagin na ang kartel na CEMENT MANUFACTURERS OF THE PHILIPPINES (CeMAP) sa ilalim ni dating DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY UNDERSECRETARY ERNESTO ORDONEZ na nakikinabang sa kanyang kampanya laban sa mga importer ng semento kung saan kontrolado ng grupo ang presyo ng kanilang mga produkto.

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KINUWESTIYON DIN NI PINEDA ang pagsasanib ng malalaking kompanya na HOLCIM PHILIPPINES INC. at LAFARGE REPUBLIC INC. na kumokontrol sa halos 75 porsiyento sa industriya ng semento na isang malaking paglabag sa Anti-Trust Law.

"How come the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) let this

merger? Our local cement industry is now controlled by foreigners under CeMAP and they are making a killing in cement prices because they dictate the retail prices. Ordonez is the president of CeMAP and he is also an official of PCC and there is a clear conflict of interest in the merger of Holcim and Lafarge. This must be investigated by the government and CeMAP must be scrapped to stop the monopoly in cement industry," paggigiti ni PINEDA.

Nauna rito, NANGAKO SI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES (DENR) SECRETARY GINA LOPEZ na gagawin niya ang lahat ng kanyang makakaya upang marekober ang nawalang mabubuting bagay na NILALAYON NI DUTERTE na mapasigla ang pagpapapanatili ng kabutihan para sa nakararami, paglingap at pagkalinga para sa mga kapus-palad at pag-ayuda sa mga mahihirap na mamamayang Pilipino na biktima ng mapang-aping ekonomiya na kinokontrol ng mga abusado at irresponsibleng industriya ng pagmimina.

"Ito ang paninindigan ko, and this is what I really believe...we cannot and we must not build an economy based on suffering. We cannot do it," saad ni LOPEZ habang ipinapaliwanag na maaaring nang nagkakamal ng salapi ang mga mamumuhunan sa pagmimina ngunit nakabase naman ito sa paghihirap ng taumbayan. "At the end of the day, who is benefitting from this? Not the poor, so why do we keep doing it?"

KILALANG MATIBAY NA ANTI-MINING ADVOCATE BAGO NAPILI NI DUTERTE para pamunuan ang DENR... IPI-NADAMA NI LOPEZ ang kanyang intensiyon na panatilihin matamasa ng bawa't isa ang mayamang natural na kalikasan ng bansa.

"I would like to keep our biodiversity and not let it be raped by any selfish interest because it belongs to the Filipino people," pahayag ng DENR SECRETARY.

Kabilang sa mga sektor na nagdudulot nang malubhang panganib sa kalikasan ang cement manufacturing industry. Nagdudulot nang mabigat na suliranin ang pagmimina ng APOG o LIMESTONE sa kalikasan kung kaya dapat panatilihin ng pamahalaan ang pagbabantay at pagkokontrol sa proseso ng operasyon upang matugunan ang mga requirement na itinakda ng mga ahensiyang kagaya ng ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU (EMB) at MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU (MGB).

Ayon sa US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), ang cement sector ang pangatlo sa pinakamalaking industriyang pinagmumulan ng polusyon sa buong mundo, nagpapakawala ito ng mahigit pa sa 500,000 tonelada kada taon ng sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide at carbon monoxide na may isang malaking panganib sa kalusugan at kalikasan kagaya ng ground-level ozone, acid rain, global warming, water quality deterioration at paglabo ng paningin at sakit sa baga na nakaaapekto sa populasyon.

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### ***Mga bundok nauubos at 3 llog patay na Quarry sa Antipolo, ipinasasara!***

DAHIL sa paubos nang kabundukan ng Antipolo City sanhi ng walang habas na quarrying operations, napipintong mas mabilis na ang pagbaha sa Metro Manila dahil sa kawalan ng mga bundok at punong-kahoy na pipigil sa tubig-ulan mula sa Sierra Madre mountains.

Ito ang pangamba ng mga mamamayan ng Antipolo na ipina-abot kay DENR Sec. Gina Lopez, dahil sa muling "full blast" operation ng Hardrock Aggregates, Inc. sa pagpapasabog ng kabundukan at paghahakot ng graba ng daan-daang dump trucks araw-araw, mula Antipolo patungo sa mga construction sites.

Nauna rito, ipinasara ni Antipolo City Mayor Casimiro "Jun-jun" Ynares III ang Hardrock matapos i-ere sa ABS-CBN ang kalunos-lunos na kalagayan ng mga mamamayan na nakatira sa paligid ng quarry site at ang panganib na dulot ng pagkawasak ng kalikasan lalong lalo na sa mga taga Marikina at San Mateo.

Sa "Notice of Violation" na ipinadala ni Violeta Sabulao-Faiyaz, CENR-WM Officer noong May 26, 2016, na nilagdaan ni Mayor Ynares, nakitaan ng kulay brown ang Nangka River mula sa tributaries nitong Bibit at Kamias rivers, dahil sa pagdaloy ng mga putik at bato sa quarry site ng Hardrock.

Gayundin, sinita nila ang Hardrock sa paggamit ng Kingsway, isang public road, bilang paradahan ng daan-daang dumptrucks, dahilan para wala nang madaanan ang mga mamamayan.

Subalit sa hindi malamang kadahilanan, biglang pinayagan ni Mayor Ynares na muling makapag-operate ang Hardrock noong unang linggo ng July, sa kabila ng patuloy nitong pagpatay sa Nangka, Bibit at Kamias rivers, ang patuloy na paghambalang ng daan-daang dumptrucks sa mga kalsada, pagpapasabog ng dinamita sa mga bundok, at ang kabuuang pagkawasak ng kalikasan.

Ayon kay Marcial V. Briones, presidente ng Kingsway Homeowners Association, Inc., hindi katanggap-tanggap sa mga residente ang ingay ng mga trak, ang pagbalik ng droga at prostitusyon sa kanilang lugar, ang alikabok na siyang sanhi ng pagkakasakit nila sa бага, ang pagbaho sa kanilang lugar dahil kung saan-saan na lang dumudumi ang mga daan-daang drivers at pahenante ng mga trak, ang pagtabon sa Bibit at Kamias rivers dahil sa mga batong nahuhulog sa kanilang pagpapasabog ng bundok.

Ipinanukala umano ng Hardrock na maglalagay sila ng portalets sa gilid ng kalsada subalit ito ay mariing tinutulan ni Briones at sinabing "kung ikaw ay lalagyan ng kubeta sa harap ng iyong bahay, papayag ka ba?"

Kasabay nito, hiniling din ng Save the Mountains of Antipolo Coalition (SMAC) kay Sec. Gina Lopez na bigyan ng pansin ang kanilang kalagayan, "dahil tanaw na tanaw umano mula sa Lopez compound ang pagka-ubos ng kabundukan ng Antipolo dahil sa paspasang quarrying ng limang mga dambuhalang kumpanya doon.

Idinagdag pa ng SMAC na maraming nang namatay sa mga malagim na aksidente sa Marcos Hiway dahil sa mga dambuhalang dump trucks ng Hardrock na kadalasang nawawalan ng preno o lasing ang mga nagmamaneho.



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## PINAKAKUWELANG SONA

WALA ni isang segundo na na-bore ang audience sa isinagawang unang State of the Nation Address (SONA) ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte. Simple, prangka, mula sa puso, napakatotoo at may halong kuwela ang kanyang talumpati.

Malinaw na tuloy-tuloy ang kampanya laban sa droga, na ikukulong ang mga nagkasala sa bayan sa nakaraang administrasyon, na pagtutuunan ang imprastraktura na naantala sa panahon ng dati ring administrasyon.

Marami siyang nabanggit na pagbabago sa bansa ngunit ang katuwaan ay sentro sa kanyang talumpati. Pinabaklas na rin niya ang mga terminal ng bus sa EDSA upang maampatan ang bigat ng trapiko,

pati na ang panibago at pinaigting na kampanya sa mga kolorum, pati korapsiyon ay maaari nang irekta sa Malakanyang sa pamamagitan ng isang hotline.

Pinabibilis na rin niya ang proseso ng procurement ng mga bagong bagon at pag-rehabilitate sa mga riles ng tren.

Pinapurihan din niya ang isinasagawang kampanya ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez na aniya ay isang crusader. May mga bulungan nga lamang na nararapat lamang din umanong ipakulong ng administrasyon ang mga nanamantala at sumira ng kalikasan lalo na sa lalawigan ng Zambales kung saan pinatag na ang bundok at bunga nito ay hindi na maawat ang pagbaha sa mga lugar doon.

Dadagdagan din ng administrasyon ang run-



## MASAlamin ni Ed Cordevilla

way sa NAIA at bibigyan ng tuon ang airport sa Clark at ang mga pribadong eroplano naman ay ililipat sa Sangley Point upang huwag nang makadagdag sa trapiko ng mga sasakyang panghimpapawid sa NAIA.

Nabanggit din niya ang mga pagbabagong maaasahan sa PTV-4 at Radyo ng Bayan na parehong pagmamay-ari ng taumbayan.

Nakiusap naman siya na bigyan ng ibayong tuon ng Kongreso ang planong federalism at ang hinihingi niyang emergency power para naman sa trapiko sa Metro Manila.

Ipinag-utos din niya ang pagwawasto sa proseso ng mga permit na sa kasalukuyan ay kuma-

kawawa sa mga mamamayan at pinag-uugatan pa ng korapsiyon.

Samantala, hinamon din niya ang CPP-NPA-NDF na ibaba na ang mga armas at simulan nang makipag-usap sa gobyerno tungo sa kapayapaan.

Sa usapin naman sa South China Sea, pabor ang pangulo sa mapayapang pagreresolba sa usapin sa nasabing pinag-aagawang teritoryo.

Sa kauna-unahang pagkakataon ay wala ring nangyaring kiskisan at alingasngas sa pagitan ng mga pulis at mga raliyista na tala-ga namang nakatutuwa.

Ngayon ay masasabi ng bawat Pilipino na isa nga tayong bansa.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Duterte vows to do better in boosting PHL growth

By DAVID CAGAHASTIAN @davecaga

**T**HE government will maintain current fiscal and monetary policies, increase infrastructure spending, create more jobs and cut income taxes to boost economic growth in the next six years, President Duterte said in his first State of the Nation Address (Sona) on Monday.

SEE "DUTERTE," A2

**“We will initiate tax reforms toward a simpler and more equitable tax system. We will lower personal and corporate income tax and relax the bank-secrecy law.”—  
PRESIDENT DUTERTE**

“We will continue macroeconomic policies and even do better. We will achieve it through prudent fiscal and monetary policies, which will translate to high growth, job creation and poverty reduction. I hope to hand over an economy characterized by solid growth, stable inflation, more dollar reserves and a robust fiscal position,” Mr. Duterte said.

At the first meeting of the Development Budget Coordinating Committee (DBCC) earlier this month, the GDP growth targets for 2016 is at a range of 6 percent to 7 percent, which will go up to a range of 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent in 2017, then finally to a range of 7 percent to 8 percent for 2018 to 2022.

The fiscal and debt management of the previous Aquino administration will be maintained, one of the main features of which

is the dependence on domestic sources of funding, as opposed to foreign sources to save on foreign-exchange costs.

The Duterte administration intends to have a debt mix of 80 percent from domestic creditors and 20 percent from foreign creditors.

### Infrastructure spending

THE Duterte administration will spend more on infrastructure at a rate of more than 5 percent of GDP, and will prevent underspending by the government, due to the lack of

absorptive capacity or inefficient project implementation.

Budget Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno announced that for 2017, the budget proposal of the Duterte administration will include infrastructure spending of at least P890 billion. Mr. Duterte identified the infrastructure projects planned by his administration during the next six years.

“We will accelerate infrastructure spending. We will create the Mindanao Logistics Infrastructure Network and other road network master plans, interisland linkage projects, structural mitigation to address flooding in Metro Manila,” Mr. Duterte said.

He said the government will also work to increase the country's road network and use the resulting bigger road network to promote more tourist areas throughout the country.

### Traffic congestion

AS a consequence of higher infrastructure spending, Mr. Duterte said the government would also be able to solve traffic congestion in Metro Manila.

He said the government is looking to increase the number of trains and increase the train speeds of the existing railway systems in Metro Manila and rehabilitate these railway systems to allow for the opera-



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

*Duterte vows to do better in  
boosting PHL growth*

tion of more trains at higher speeds.

President Duterte said the procurement of these additional trains will be addressed at the soonest, for which he appealed to be given

emergency powers to be able to purchase the trains right away.

However, for immediate relief from the traffic congestion in Metro Manila, he said the revival of the Pasig River ferry system is a "very viable" option to provide an alternative for commuters to travel around Metro Manila.

To ease traffic congestion at the airports, Mr. Duterte said he wants to develop the Clark International Airport to handle some local and in-

ternational flights, but a bullet-train system from Manila to Clark should be installed first to ferry passengers.

### Tax reforms

TO further stimulate the economy, Mr. Duterte said the government will lower individual and corporate income-tax rates.

"We will initiate tax reforms towards a simpler and more equitable tax system. We will lower personal and corporate income tax and relax the bank-secrecy law. There must be sufficient income for all Filipinos," he said.

We shall continue inviting more investments to create more jobs and will undertake reforms to ensure competitiveness. Measures to promote ease of doing business shall be mandatory," President Duterte added.

The Tax Management Association of the Philippines (TMAP) has welcomed this declaration from the President in recognition of his earlier promise to make the tax brackets more equitable and reflective of the inflation that has set in since the last amendment in 1997.

However, the TMAP cautioned against increasing the value-added tax (VAT) rates as a means to recover the expected foregone rev-

enues in the lowering of income taxes, which was also a campaign promise of Mr. Duterte.

President Duterte did not mention a possible increase in the VAT rates, as pushed by some members of his economic team and only endorsed the lifting of the bank-secrecy law as a means for the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to increase its tax collection by looking into the hidden assets and income of suspected tax evaders.

### Environmental concerns

PRESIDENT Duterte said the government will also prioritize efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, but reiterated that restrictions on the use of energy sources should not stymie the industrialization of the Philippines.

He was referring to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015, which advocates the use of green energy. However, Mr. Duterte said he would repudiate this if the restrictions on the use of energy sources, such as coal will prevent the economic development of the Philippines because of the high cost of "cleaner" sources of energy.

As for mining, Mr. Duterte directed the Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez to review all mining permits and, if necessary, amend or revoke these permits. He said the military will be tapped to prevent the proliferation of illegal mining operations.

"There is already a law allowing mining, but they should follow the law. They should follow the government standards and pay the correct taxes," he said.

He said the illegal occupation of influential people over large tracts of land and water resources at the Laguna Lake should also be checked, as fishermen in the area are now only left with a very little area to make a living.

### Federal system

MR. Duterte urged Congress to fast-track the country's shift to a federal system of government, which he suggested to be a parliamentary form of government but with a President who will be elected at large by the people, but will only have some ceremonial powers.

To allay fears that a parliamentary form of government, would allow him to perpetuate himself in power, President Duterte said he would gladly step down even with two or three years left in his term if the shift to a federal system of government can be completed in three or four years.

"About the federal system, my advice to you is to maintain a federal system, a parliament, but be sure to have a president. I can commit today that if you hurry up the federal system, and you can submit to the Filipino people by the fourth or fifth year, you call for a referendum and after that call for a presidential election. Then, I will go," he said.

"Copy the system in France, not the pure parliament, because it's dangerous. It takes time to have something like that in England. You must have a president, just limit his powers. Then, even if there's still two years or three years, I will go," he said.



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# BusinessMirror

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Duterte vows to do better  
in boosting PHL growth

### South China Sea

ON the territorial dispute with China over parts of the South China Sea, Mr. Duterte said the Philippines will continue to honor the verdict in its favor in the arbitration case decided by the United Nations' Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA).

"We strongly affirm and respect the outcome of the case before the PCA as an important contribution to the ongoing efforts to pursue a peaceful resolution and management of our disputes," Mr. Duterte said.

This is in apparent rejection of the suggestion of former President Fidel V. Ramos to set aside the PCA ruling as suggested by China when Manila initiates bilateral talks with Beijing over joint exploration and exploitation of natural resources in the disputed territories.

Ramos had already accepted Mr. Duterte's offer for him to lead the backchannel negotiations with China on economic rights over the disputed areas in the South China Sea.



# Gina goes after dirty LGUs

By Jaymee T. Gamil

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Gina Lopez has thrown her support behind President Duterte's plan to probe local government executives for their failure to rid their respective areas of mounting piles of trash.

Apparently dismayed over dirty cities and municipalities, Mr. Duterte last week announced that he would create an investigating body to look into the use of the intelligence and discretionary funds of local officials, because this could have been used for garbage management.

In a statement yesterday, Lopez said she would also look into the compliance or noncompliance of local government units (LGUs) with Republic Act (RA) No. 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

"I understand that cases have been filed against 50 [LGUs] in the Office of the Environmental Ombudsman. If there's a need to add more, we will

do so in order not to cause more suffering to our people due to a dirty environment," Lopez said.

In February, the National Solid Waste Management Commission filed 50 complaints with the Environment Ombudsman against local executives who failed to implement the 16-year-old solid waste management law.

## High time for accounting

"It is high time that local government officials be made accountable, especially now that we are anticipating that La Niña would be bringing excessive rainwater and could put a lot of low-lying areas under water for days," Lopez said.

In its complaint, the commission accused around 600 officials of 50 LGUs in 13 administrative regions of having "conspired in committing the violations of RA 9003," chief of them, the operation of illegal dump.

The complaint noted that the local officials had "the mandate to es-

tablish policies... having control over the funds of the city."

Duterte made a similar observation, in a video-recorded statement he made on July 15 at the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency office in Davao City.

"Many localities in the country are so dirty and yet the mayors are not doing anything about it," Duterte said.

"There is trash and garbage around and if you have to wait for the plastic to go inside the drainage every time there's a downpour and excessive rain water, *nagka-clog*," he pointed out.

"I will create a special team. I will review, including your intelligence funds. Those funds are the easiest to put in their pockets. Those mayors who are not performing, you make your city clean and peaceful," Duterte said.

Meanwhile, Lopez noted that a number of local governments had already banned the use of plastic.



# BusinessWorld

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### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DENR's Lopez warns LGUs on sub-standard garbage management

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez said she will hold local governments to account for improper handling of garbage, particularly if such mismanagement worsens the impact of natural disasters like flooding.

"It is high time that local government officials should be made accountable, especially now that we are anticipating La Niña that would be bringing in excessive rainwater and could put a lot of low-lying areas under water for days," Ms. Lopez said in a statement issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ms. Lopez promised to review the compliance of local government units (LGUs) with Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. RA 9003 calls for a systematic, comprehensive and ecological solid waste management program that

requires LGUs to ensure proper segregation, collection, storage, treatment and disposal of

waste via the adoption of best practices in environmental management.

Ms. Lopez said that LGUs that have banned the use of plastics in their areas should ensure the ban is continually implemented.

"It is not enough that you have issued the ban, we should make sure that the ban is implemented to the letter in order to get the results that we have envisioned," Ms. Lopez said.

The DENR's move was in response to President Rodrigo R. Duterte's earlier statement expressing dismay over the management of garbage in municipalities and provinces by effectively utilizing their respective intelligence discretionary funds.

In February, commissioner of the Ecowaste Coalition Romeo Aldana filed complaints against 50 LGUs who allegedly failed to comply with RA 9003, which calls for these laws to be strictly enforced to prevent the cause of more suffering to people due to a large amount of waste.

BW FILE PHOTO



LOCAL government workers clearing garbage from a street market in Mandaluyong.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DENR warns local govts against garbage dumping

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz Lopez has warned local government units (LGUs) against the continued use of open dumps, saying non-compliance with Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 will be met with a corresponding administrative case.

"It is high time that local government officials should be made accountable, especially now that we are anticipating La Niña that would be bringing in excessive rainwater and could put a lot of low-lying areas under water for days," Lopez said on Monday.

Lopez issued the statement in light of President Rodrigo Duterte ordering government agencies to go after local government executives who are remiss in their duties to address garbage problems in

their respective localities.

Duterte earlier expressed dismay over the inability of mayors and governors to manage garbage in their areas, as he vowed to create a special body that will look into the intelligence and discretionary funds of local officials.

The President pointed out that governors and mayors could effectively manage their garbage well using their respective intelligence and discretionary funds.

Lopez, meanwhile, said she would look into the matter, adding that those who fail to comply with the 16-year-old solid waste management law can be charged administratively before the Office of the Ombudsman.

"I understand that cases have been filed against 50 LGUs with the Office of the Environmental

Ombudsman. If there's a need to add more, we will do so in order not to cause more suffering to our people due to dirty environment," she added.

The solid-waste law provides the legal framework for the country's systematic, comprehensive and ecological solid waste management program that ensures protection of public health and the environment.

It seeks the creation of mechanisms and incentives to pursue an effective solid waste management at the local government level.

The law also calls for mandatory segregation of solid wastes and establishment of LGU materials recovery facility; and prohibits use of open dumps, littering in public places, open burning of solid waste and squat-

ting in open dumps and landfills, among others.

While a number of LGUs have already banned the use of plastics in their respective areas, Lopez said there is a need to follow up on implementation of the ban to get results.

"It is not enough that you have issued the ban; we should make sure that the ban is implemented to the letter in order to get the results that we have envisioned," she pointed out.

The Environment chief underscored the need to raise public awareness of RA 9003 and the ordinances related to garbage, saying "it is only when you get people to act on a community problem that we will be able to address this national concern with success."

**JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ**





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### DENR to help Duterte go after LGUs over garbage woes

**ENVIRONMENT** and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez has expressed strong support on President Duterte's move to go after local government executives who are remiss in their duties to address garbage problems in their respective localities.

"It is high time that local government officials should be made accountable, especially now that we are anticipating La Niña that would be bringing in excessive rainwater and could put a lot of low-lying areas under water for days," Lopez said.

Earlier, Duterte expressed dismay over the inability of mayors and governors to manage garbage in their areas, as he vowed to create a special body that will look into the intelligence and discretionary funds of local officials.

The President pointed out that governors and mayors could effectively manage their garbage well using their respective intelligence and discretionary funds.

Lopez said that she would look into the compliance or non-compliance of local government units (LGUs) with Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

The RA 9003, which was crafted in response to the looming garbage problems, declares the policy of the state in adopting a systematic, comprehensive and ecological solid waste management program that ensures the protection of public health and the environment.

The law mandates LGUs to ensure proper segregation, collection, transport, storage, treatment and disposal of solid waste through the formulation and adoption of best environmental practices.

"I understand that cases have been filed against 50 LGUs with the Office of the Environmental Ombudsman. If there's a need to add more, we will do so in order not to cause more suffering to our people due to dirty environment," Lopez said.

While a number of LGUs have already banned the use of plastics in their respective areas, Lopez said that there is a need to follow up on the implementation of the ban to get results.

**Cory Martinez**



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## 2 more approvals required for coal plants' environmental clearance

Two more layers of approvals are required in the environmental clearance certificate (ECC) that coal-fired power plant projects must secure for their investments.

In a recent memorandum issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), it was stipulated that ECCs must also go through the maze of approvals of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Office of Senator Loren B. Legarda.

The DENR memorandum stated "this pertains to the letter dated May 2, 2016 of Senator Loren B. Legarda addressed to the Secretary, requesting to be informed of the reason for the continued issuance of ECCs to coal-fired power plants."

Legarda's correspondence to the DENR was purportedly premised on "the Department's request to the President to defer endorsement of

coal-fired power projects in view of the global direction on climate change mitigation efforts."

The DENR memorandum further noted that "pursuant to the handwritten instruction of the Secretary, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) is hereby directed to require in the application for ECC for operations of coal-fired power plants a clearance from the Climate Change Commission and the Office of Senator Legarda prior to processing and approval of their applications."

The memorandum was dated June 22, 2016 but it was just circulated to industry stakeholders on July 8 this year, based on the stamped date in the document.

Beyond the letter of Legarda to the DENR, it was not clearly stated as to what legal authority her office should stand for in securing the lawmaker's approval for coal-fired power

projects.

Legarda is a known environment advocate and her son Leandro Leviste is also a relevant player in the renewable energy sector, a nemesis of coal-fired power plants.

Investors have already been complaining of the lengthy processes of project approvals and permitting – that for one project, it could take roughly 400 signatures before they can even move to development phase.

This is one area that the Duterte administration has been intending to address – to streamline project approval processes.

On his campaign promise, he noted that his administration would want investors get out of government offices' doors with approvals of their project permits secured in the fastest and leanest bureaucracy set-up possible. (MMV)



# BusinessWorld

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### China sets up South China Sea environment protection fund

BEIJING — China has set up a 15-million yuan (\$2.25-million) environmental protection fund for the South China Sea having already spent double that in the past four years, the Xinhua state news agency said on Monday.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled this month that China did not have historic rights to the South China Sea and it criticized environmental destruction in the waters. China rejected the ruling and refused to participate in the case.

The tribunal found that China's large-scale land reclamation and construction of artificial islands has caused severe harm to coral and violated its obligation to preserve fragile marine environments.

China has repeatedly denied damaging the environment in the South China Sea.

Xinhua said the funds, to be used over the next three years, would initially be spent on exploring the world's deepest underwater sinkhole in the Paracel Islands.

"The funds will be used to support scientific research and development of new methods

and equipment in environmental protection," environmental protection official Shi Guoning told Xinhua.

Over the past four years, China has spent more than 30 million yuan to protect reefs and islets, the news agency added.

The government has also released fish and sea turtles into the sea six times and cracked down on illegal hunting of sea birds, it said.

China claims more than 90% of the South China Sea, an area which accounts for more than a tenth of global fisheries production and is also claimed in part by the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

China says that as the islands in the South China Sea are its territory it can do as it likes there, and has heavily invested in building infrastructure, including ports and airports, on some of them.

China is also extending 4G mobile phone coverage to more parts of the South China Sea, including the Spratly Islands, the State Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission said in a statement on its Web site on Monday. — **Reuters**



## Blessed but cursed

### NO FREE LUNCH

*Cielito F. Habito*



I AM writing this in Jerusalem, where moving around the largely desert landscape in surrounding areas would make any Filipino visitor appreciate how truly blessed our country is with nature's bounty. In stark contrast to the all-too-common arid desert landscape in the Middle East, we dominantly see green and blue practically all over our country. We have 30 million hectares of land, 70 percent of which were covered with forest just over a century ago, and which host an extremely rich and diverse array of plant and animal life. More than 50,000 plant and animal species have been documented in the country, about two-thirds (65 percent) of which are unique to the Philippines. On top of that, more new species are discovered in the country every year than in any other country in the world. Our animal life is extremely diverse, with over 1,000 species of nonfish vertebrates identified, nearly half of which are native to the country. Our great abundance of mineral resources supposedly makes us the fifth most mineral-endowed country worldwide.

With more than 36,000 kilometers of coastline and abundant inland waters, we have an extremely rich array of marine and freshwater resources known to be among the richest and most diverse in the world. Furthermore, the Philippine archipelago lies in the "Coral Triangle," the center of the most diverse habitat in the marine tropics. Philippine coral reefs make up more than one-fourth of the total reef area in Southeast Asia, and are recognized to be among the richest and most diverse in the world, boasting 464 species of hard corals and more than 50 species of soft corals identified. All these have given the Philippines the distinction of being named one of the world's 17 "megadiversity" countries that together account for 60-70 percent of global biodiversity.

One would think that with all the natural endowments the Philippines is blessed with, it ought to be among the most economically prosperous countries in the world. But we are not. Our average income of around \$2,635 puts us among the

"low middle-income countries," in the World Bank definition, certainly nowhere near the top. In the United Nations' Human Development Index, we ranked 115th out of 188 countries in 2015. Poverty incidence, at around 26 percent, is among the highest in Asia. In short, we are rich, yet we are poor.

We are a classic illustration of the so-called "natural resource curse" cited by many development analysts, notably economist Jeffrey Sachs of "The End of Poverty" fame. Sometimes also called the "paradox of plenty," this is the commonly observed phenomenon whereby countries rich in natural resources tend to have less economic growth, less democracy, and worse development outcomes than countries far less endowed. We only need to look at nearby Singapore to see the contrast. Is it because where there is abundance, there's a tendency for a small minority to capture it for its own narrow benefit? Or does the wealth tend to get siphoned by foreigners away from the hands of the locals who should logically reap prior benefits from them? Does abundance generally breed complacency and mismanagement?

The signs are there. While we are indeed a "megadiverse" country, we have also been tagged internationally as a biodiversity "hotspot"—that is, a country where biodiversity is under extreme threat from deforestation, conversion, fragmentation of natural habitats, unregulated trade, and low overall environmental quality. Nearly 200 of our vertebrate species are reportedly threatened by extinction, the best-known being the Philippine eagle. These endangered species are now barely

surviving in the remaining small patches of forest that serve as their natural habitat.

Forest destruction, including rampant conversion of uplands to monoculture (single-crop) farming, has been the single biggest enemy of biodiversity in the Philippines. Hunting of animals, especially of birds, for trade, trophy or meat, is a major threat to the country's animal biodiversity. Also damaging is the reckless introduction of invasive alien plant or animal species to the islands, among the most harmful being the giant catfish, black bass, golden snail, various toads including the marine toad, and the American bullfrog. Invasive aquatic plants like the water hyacinth and water fern have also significantly affected wetland biodiversity adversely. The past 40 years have seen an enormous rise in risks associated with such biotic invasions.

In the sea, nearly a third of our coral reefs are considered in poor condition. Moreover, there has been a steady decline in the quality of the coral reefs, with only a tiny 0.24 percent reported to be in excellent condition in 2004, against 4.3 percent in 2000 and 5.3 percent in 1991. Of these reefs, 98 percent are considered under medium or high threat. At the same time, overfishing, pollution and other human economic activities on the coasts have increasingly threatened the country's rich endowment of some of the world's most unique marine ecosystems. Strong population pressure in coastal communities has stretched coastal fishery resources to their limits. Efforts by dedicated groups such as the World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines are very helpful, but these are tiny Davids facing the Goliath-like enemy fed by collective myopia and indifference, bad governance and rampant corruption.

Some say that the Philippines is a rich country pretending to be poor. I guess no one's pretending. Like many an overnight millionaire who won the lottery, we simply don't know how to handle wealth while we have it.

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### Aguilar declares main roads as zero-garbage zones

**LAS Piñas City -- Mayor Imelda "Mel" Aguilar has declared Zapote-Alabang Road and other major roads in the city as zero-garbage zones with the strict implementation of anti-littering ordinance imposing stiffer penalties to violators.**

Residents and business establishments along the major roads in the city are advised to dispose their garbage only during the scheduled time at 3 a.m. and 8 a.m. daily.

Bantay Tapon Basura volunteers were deputized to apprehend anyone caught illegally disposing garbage and will be meted penalty of P500 with imprisonment of from 10 days up to 30 days, or both fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the court as provided for in the anti-littering ordinance of the city.

Aguilar also enjoined the city residents' participation in solving the garbage problem by managing their garbage properly and practice waste segregation at home to reduce the volume.

"Waste segregation at source is important which is a long-term solution to our garbage problem. It's our collective responsibility in making our city clean and achieve our target of zero-garbage in all major roads in the city," Aguilar said.

Barangay officials and green volunteers in the city have been conducting series of clean-up activities since summer to clear water ways and

all tributaries of wastes to prevent flooding with the onset of the rainy season.

More than 1,000 volunteers, called the Kaagapay sa Kalinisan at Kagan-dahan ng Las Piñas, in the city's 20 barangays have been deployed to maintain cleanliness and help in information dissemination for the clean and green drive awareness.

The green volunteers also maintain order and beautification of the major and secondary streets through landscaping and creating mini parks on open spaces.

The campaign is part of the city effort to efficiently manage garbage collection and disposal with the launched of no-plastic campaign and war against all forms of destructive environmental practices since 2013.

Aguilar likewise appealed to private subdivision residents, through the homeowners' associations, and school authorities to strengthen and maintain regular clean up activities in their surroundings to arrest the possible spread of disease.

Aguilar said the indiscriminate dumping of plastic bags and packaging materials into the environment and its eventual burning in open dumps coupled with an apathetic behavior of the population worsen air pollution, deteriorates water quality that contribute to the shallowing of bays and rivers becoming a serious threat to public health and the ecosystem.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### METROLINE

#### Las Piñas declares major roads as trash-free zones

Las Piñas City Mayor Imelda "Mel" Aguilar yesterday declared Zapote-Alabang Road and other major roads in the city as zero-garbage zones.

Bantay Tapon Basura volunteers have been deputized to arrest anyone caught throwing garbage along these roads. Violators will be fined P500 and jailed from 10 to 30 days, she said.

Aguilar advised residents and business establishments along the city's major roads to dispose of their garbage only at 3 a.m. and 8 a.m. each day.

She also asked residents to practice waste segregation to reduce the volume of garbage.

More than 1,000 volunteers, called the Kaagapay sa Kalinisan at Kagandahan ng Las Piñas, in the city's 20 barangays have been deployed to clean up and beautify the streets by landscaping and creating mini-parks in open spaces.

— Perseus Echeminada



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### DENR, civic groups join forces to reforest Marikina watershed

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has once again joined forces with two service-oriented organizations to rehabilitate the 26,125-hectare Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL), one of Metro Manila's sources of water supply.

Around 120 volunteers from the Rotary Club of Makati-Rockwell (RCMR) and the Career Executive Service Board (CESB) trooped to an upland barangay within the UMRBPL early Saturday morning to plant some 2,000 native tree seedlings.

The activity was part of the commitment of the RCMR and CESB to help the DENR address the loss of forest cover in UMRBPL due to illegal activities, like slash-and-burn farming, charcoal making and timber poaching. The two groups have been partners of the DENR since 2010.

This is the second time that the RCMR and CESB volunteers have conducted reforestation activities in Sitio San Ysidro in Barangay San Jose, Antipolo City, to fulfill their commitment to reforest at least 7 hectares of open and denuded forestland allotted by the DENR under the National Greening Program or NGP.

The tree-planting activity was led by DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones, RCMR President Kris Gorra Dancel and CESB Executive Director Ma. Anthonette Allones.

The effort was an offshoot from the success the tripartite partnership had in the roadside greening of the South Luzon Expressway, which saw the planting of some 18,423 tree seedlings from 2010 to 2014, covering a combined distance of 40 kilometers. The effort posted a survival rate ranging from 70 percent to 95 percent based on the monitor-

ing report of the DENR-Region 4A office in Calamba, Laguna.

Volunteers from the Region 4 office of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), led by Cavite District Engr. Arthur Pascual Jr., also took part in the event.

In October last year the volunteers planted some 1,000 native fruit-bearing and forest trees in the area, covering 2 hectares of land and has an elevation of 350 meters above sea level.

Anchored on the theme preventing disasters and providing livelihood, the tree-planting project in UMRBPL has some 20 households beneficiaries, each consisting of as many as three families, who were hired to conduct maintenance and protection activities on the planted areas.

The beneficiaries are also entitled to harvest the fruits from the trees planted and grown at the site.

The UMRBPL is considered one of the most important protected areas being supervised by the DENR, as the watershed is a major source of water for Metro Manila and nearby areas.

The river basin was placed under the administrative jurisdiction and control of the DENR by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 296 issued in 2011. The entire area covers the upper reaches of the Marikina watershed in the province of Rizal, straddling Antipolo City and the towns of Baras, Rodriguez, San Mateo and Tanay in Rizal province.

The flooding in Metro Manila and other nearby low-lying areas during Tropical Storm Ondoy (international name Ketsana) in 2009 exposed the extent of forest loss and degradation in UMRBPL, fueling public-private partnerships on rehabilitating the watershed to prevent similar occurrences in the future. *PNA*



**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

# Stop DENR 'corruption,' green groups urge Lopez

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.  
*Inquirer Southern Luzon*

LUCENA CITY—Environmentalists have welcomed Environment Secretary Gina Lopez's plan to enlist former police and military personnel as part of an intensified war against illegal loggers in the country, but they urged her first to stop "rampant" corruption among enforcers involved in forest protection in her department.

"She should start her house cleaning. Stop the corruption in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources first," Fr. Pete Montallana, who heads the Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance (SSMNA), said on Thursday.

SSMNA is a network of indigenous peoples' groups, non-government organizations, religious and other individuals working for the conservation and protection of the Sierra Madre, which stretches from Quezon to Cagayan provinces. It is home to the largest remaining tract of old-growth tropical rainforest in the Philippines.

Lopez had said the proposed law-enforcement team would be patterned after the police's highly trained special weapons and tactics (SWAT) unit.

## 'Timely response'

Montallana called the secretary's plan a "timely response to protect and save of what remains of the country's fragile forest," referring to the Sierra Madre mountain ranges.

"We fully agree with [Lopez's] plan to form a strike force. But she should first stop the connivance between forest destroyers and law enforcers," said Glenn Forbes, area director of Tanggol Kalikasan, a public interest law office with advocacy on environmental protection.

Forbes cited his group's findings that some personnel from the DENR, Department of Justice, police, military and even communist rebels, were protecting illegal loggers and their financiers.

He identified northern Quezon, Montalban and Tanay in Rizal province, and the provinces of Aurora, Isabela and Cagayan as illegal logging hotspots.

Illegal loggers use the Umiray River, which connects Aurora and Quezon and ends at the mouth of Pacific Ocean in Infanta town in Quezon, to transport logs felled from the Sierra Madre, Forbes said.

After its construction was completed in early 2014, the Umiray Bridge provided easy access to the mountain and opened another route to the transport of illegal forest resources, environmental advocates said.

## Commercial fishers

Forbes urged Lopez to also wage war against commercial fishers who continue to use destructive fishing implements and methods in Lamon and Tayabas bays.

He said small fishermen had been complaining about their dwindling catch because of commercial trawl fishing.

Montallana said he had initial reservations about Lopez's appointment to head the DENR due to her connection with a giant media conglomerate and for being a member of an influential clan involved in varied business interests.

"But she is now the DENR secretary, and we have to deal with it. President Duterte chose her and we all have to respect that," he said.

Montallana praised Lopez's firm stance against mining as commendable. "She needs all the support," he said.



**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



**VICE President Leni Robredo and villagers negotiate a steep trail on their way to a consultation in the remote community of Zone 4 in Barangay Del Rosario in Ocampo, Camarines Sur province, on Saturday.**

## Leni pushes 'laylayan' meetings

**By Juan Escandor Jr.**  
*Inquirer Southern Luzon*

OCAMPO, Camarines Sur—Despite the drizzle, she trekked more than three kilometers to the upland village of Del Rosario here and met with 49 families living inside the national park of Mt. Isarog on Saturday.

Vice President Leni Robredo was keeping her promise during the recent election campaign to visit people on the margins ("laylayan") of society on weekends and directly consult them about their needs which she, in turn, would refer to concerned government agencies on weekdays.

For 45 minutes, Robredo walked through an upward trail between bushes and coconut trees on the shoulders of Mt. Isarog as one of her "laylayan events." She was accompanied by Del Rosario's barangay chair, Francisco Buenavente, and a coterie of members of the Presidential Security Group.

The country's second highest elected official and her staff met the mountain dwellers who pre-

pared boiled bananas and young coconuts at a makeshift chapel. Robredo acted as facilitator.

Buenavente presented to the Vice President the infrastructure needs of his village before the consultation meeting. But Robredo told the residents that building facilities inside the national park was prohibited by law.

She encouraged them to find landowners at the boundary of areas controlled by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) where they may be allowed to build their houses. She said she would coordinate with the DENR in laying down an environmental program with the villagers actively participating to protect and reforest areas as stakeholders and guardians.

Danilo Llanera, a barangay councilor and officer-in-charge of its Zone 4, said illegal loggers were still active there.

Del Rosario residents, numbering about 300, rely on growing vegetables, root crops and abaca for their livelihood. Sometimes, they work in sugarcane

plantations in the lower portion of the village in February, March, May and June, each receiving P150 to P180 in daily wage.

Llanera said some of the children had stopped going to school because they live more than 3 km away from the elementary school at the village center.

Robredo said the Department of Education could not really build a school there because the number of children was not enough to meet the requirement for school establishment aside from the place being part of the national park.

She said she could recommend to the Department of Public Works and Highways to build a road that can be used by tricycles to bring the children to school.

Consolacion Hamer, 69, revealed that when typhoons strike, people would run to a nearby cave for shelter. This surprised Robredo, who advised them to always heed the government's typhoon advisory and to follow the order where they should seek shelter.



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### No stopping glam and glitz in Sona

By Cathy Cañares Yamsuan

PRESIDENT Duterte set a simple tone for his inaugural State of the Nation Address (Sona) to Congress by ordering the event stripped of its trademark swank and opulence, but that did not deter guests from making an effort to look memorable as they

**NO STOPPING/A17**

### No stopping glam and glitz in Sona

From page A1

entered the House of Representatives yesterday.

Actress Gretchen Barretto was among the first to arrive with partner Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco in a black and off-white ensemble from Inno Sotto that apparently took its cue from Christian Dior's postwar New Look.

Barretto donned a fitted long-sleeved blouse accentuated with a black ribbon as belt, a dramatic black ankle-length skirt and pointy black heels.

Sen. Loren Legarda posed for selfies in a fuchsia tunic coat with okir-inspired embroidery galvanized by Maranao motif that was made by Len Cabili of Filip+Inna. She carried a crocheted bag from Bauang, La Union province, and wore shoes by Tish Sevilla.

Sen. Nancy Binay was in a midnight blue knee-length dress by Randy Ortiz. She carried an ikat-designed structured bag and wore black sling backs.

Sen. Grace Poe wore an off-white, knee-length dress with sampaguita blooms embroidered on the bodice. Her dress was made by Paul Cabral, who also created the outfits she had worn to previous presidential addresses to Congress.

#### Du30 instruction

The instruction to wear "business casual attire" was handed down by the leadership of the House days before. It was implied that Mr. Duterte himself ordered the budget scaled down and guests told to leave the posh gowns and designer clothes at home.

In the past, many of the prominent women who attended the annual event considered it an opportunity to face off in fashion feathers, to the consternation of conservative observers.

This time, instead of long gowns, women guests were asked to wear knee-length skirts. Sen. Alan Cayetano came in a somber black midi-length business suit that flattered her svelte figure.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros came in a body-hugging short-sleeved white dress with a delicate lace bodice and nude heels.

Leyte Rep. Lucy Torres Gomez entered the House also wearing a black body-hugging shift dress with short sleeves and nude heels. But Gomez appeared to be headed to her office to change for the event.

New Leyte Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez got away with a fabulous Cary Santiago pink terno with a knee-length skirt. It featured a peplum and an attractive cabbage rose on the left side of the bodice.

Former Sen. Nikki Coseteng wore a floor-length vintage Patis Tesoro piña jusi caftan accented by a turquoise choker. She said it was 25 years old and had seen action since her days as a legislator.

Sen. Leila de Lima wore an eye-catching earth-toned blouse and skirt ensemble topped with her signature shawl.

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez was French chic in a bottle green business suit she wore with a magenta shawl and gold strappy wedges.

New Batangas Rep. Vilma Santos covered a strapless knee-length sheath with a piña jusi blouse with puffed sleeves.

Legislative spouses who previously wowed in the red carpet still made their marked entrance yesterday.

Heart Evangelista, wife of Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, wore an off-the-rack off-white business suit from Massimo Dutti that she accessorized with pearl earrings and a white Hermes clutch.

Taguig Mayor Lani Cayetano, wife of Sen. Alan Cayetano, wore a richly embroidered blouse over an A-line black skirt, pearls and open-toe heels.

#### Vintage terno

Red carpet favorite Tootsie Angara, wife of Sen. Edgardo "Sonny" Angara Jr., wore a vintage green knee-length terno with a bodice of reworked Muslim fabric and floral appliques.

Former actress Dina Bonnevie, wife of Rep. Deogracias Savellano of Ilocos Sur, donned a gray printed blazer on top of an electric blue dress while a glowing Bocaue Mayor Joni Villanueva, wife of Cibac Rep. Sherwin Tugna, wore a simple off-white blouse with stark black embroidery on the left chest and simple back parts.

Businesswoman and INQUIRER Lifestyle columnist Audrey Zubiri, wife of Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, was among the few who kept to the Filipiniana theme of previous presidential addresses with a knee-length Maria Clara-inspired outfit.

#### 1st transgender solon

Bataan Rep. Geraldine Roman, the Philippines' first transgender congresswoman, also kept the Filipiniana tradition with her emerald Maria Clara dress.

Ifugao Rep. Teodoro Baguilat had the most dramatic entrance, stepping in barefoot and wearing the red costume of his tribe to express pride in his heritage.

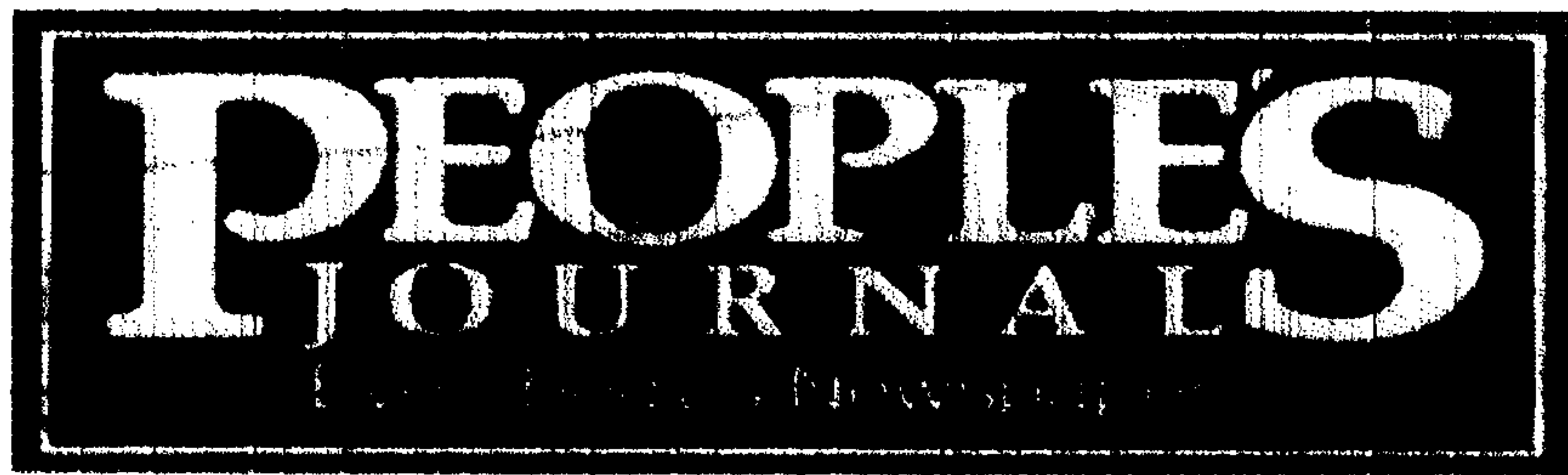
President Duterte arrived in a helicopter at 3:30 p.m. wearing a white barong Tagalog over black pants, with the sleeves of the Philippine formal men's shirt rolled up.

Celebrity filmmaker Brillante Mendoza laid out a no-drama production, showing Mr. Duterte as he was, under subdued lighting and without visual aids.

There was a script, according to Jose Apolinario Lozada Jr., who advises Mr. Duterte on foreign affairs, but the maverick President deviated from it to expound on major points in his speech and give instructions to the teleprompter technician in Visayan-accented Filipino.

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar on Sunday said Mr. Duterte's speech made him cry when he read it in draft, but yesterday the President, known less for rousing speeches and more for entertaining, unscripted and usually profanity-laden remarks, sent his audience yawning or giggling or laughing, but also clapping. **With reports from DJ Yap and Reuters**





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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# FIRST ADDRESS TO THE NATION

**By Efren Montano**

**PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte** yesterday said in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) "vindictiveness is not in my system", but promised that "those who do betrayed the people's trust would have their day in court."

"We cannot move forward if we allow the past to pull us back. Finger-pointing is not the way," Duterte said as he began his SONA at the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City.

"This is why I will not waste precious time on dwelling on the sins of the past or blaming those who are perceived to be responsible for the mess that we are in and suffering from," he said pointedly referring to his predecessor who had on many occasions lamented that he had inherited many problems from the previous administration.

President Duterte noted that focus must be on the present and the future, and that the country must only look back to the past to "maybe extract a lesson from these errors."

But he made it clear that those who do wrong will be held accountable.

"Lest I be misunderstood, let me say clearly that those who betray the people's trust shall not go unpunished and they will have their day in court," he said.

## CEASEFIRE WITH REDS

Duterte announced in his speech that he had declared a unilateral ceasefire with the Reds in line with his administration's bid to end communist insurgency.

Duterte made the announcement ahead of his administration's first formal talks with communist rebels from August 20 to August 27 in Oslo, Norway.

A unilateral ceasefire on the part of the government means the military will halt offensive operations against communist rebels.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), led by its founder Jose Maria Sison, earlier indicated that it was willing to

stop offensive operations during the peace talks.

Presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza earlier said that some 11 detained leftist leaders will be freed so they can participate in the peace talks.

The leftist movement's demand for the release of political detainees resulted in the breakdown of the group's talks with the previous administration of President Benigno Aquino III.

The Aquino administration had said there was no way of verifying who was qualified for release under the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), as the diskette containing their names got corrupted over time.

The JASIG is a mechanism which grants CPP-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) leaders immunity and protection while peace negotiations are ongoing.

The leftist leaders were detained for various criminal charges, but the NDF insisted that the charges were all made up.

Duterte vowed to respect human rights but warned that such rights should not be made as an excuse to "destroy the country."

Duterte's relentless campaign against crimes and the illegal drug trade has come under fire from critics that the "war" has cost too many casualties.

Unfazed by criticism the President said in his speech "human rights must work to uplift human dignity, but human rights cannot be used as a shield or an excuse to destroy the country."

Duterte has marching orders to authorities to kill dealers and drug lords if they fight instead of surrender to finally put an end to the drug menace.

In his SONA however Duterte sought to allay concerns about human rights abuse, vowing that his administration "shall be sensitive to the state's obligation to promote and protect, fulfill human rights of citizens, especially the poor, marginalized and vulnerable."

"Social justice will be pursued even as the rule of law shall at all times prevail," he added.

## EMERGENCY POWERS AND FEDERALISM

Turning to the traffic problem in Metro Manila he called on Congress to grant him emergency powers to fix the situation even as he made a strong pitch for a shift to a federal form of government.

Straying from his prepared speech, Duterte urged Congress to hurry up and push for a federal form of government in the next couple of years before he steps down from office in 2022.

"You call for a referendum and then a presidential election and I will go... You must have a president, wala na ako nun. Do not worry about me. I do not have much ambition," the President said.

"Nanalo nga ako, hindi ko alam kung bakit nandi-to ako. Dati nandoon lang ako," he added, eliciting laughter from the lawmakers and the rest of his audience.

Duterte also urged lawmakers to grant him emergency powers in order to address the monstrous Metro Manila traffic problem, pointing out that the situation needs an immediate solution.

"Alam naman ninyo na sagad na. If you give it, fine. If not, we will take the longer route. Slowly," the President said.

"I assure you, this will be a clean government," the President stressed as he dispelled doubts from lawmakers that granting emergency powers would lead to graft and corruption.

Earlier, transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade said proposed emergency powers include favoring direct contracting over public bidding for transportation-related projects, opening private subdivision roads to traffic, and removing transport terminals and public markets located on busy highways.

Tugade bared that Duterte has drafted several measures to ease crippling traffic, even before Congress grants him "special powers."

Duterte earlier cited the traffic nightmare in Metro

Manila as he apologized for declining invitations to serve as guest honor in various events.

A study by the Japan International Cooperation Agency found that the country loses P2.4 billion daily due to heavy traffic in the metropolis.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### ILLEGAL LOGGERS, MINERS

Duterte also ordered the Armed Forces to go after illegal miners and loggers.

"In the area of environment, the military is directed to intensify its support role against illegal logging, illegal mining... and other destructive practices that aggravate the devastation of our natural resources," Duterte said.

"I have to protect the country... The interest of the country must come first," he added.

Defending the appointment of natural resources protection advocate Regina Paz "Gina" Lopez as the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), he called her a "crusader" for the environment.

Lopez, an environmentalist and a staunch anti-mining advocate, accepted the post on June 21, taking it as an "opportunity to make something good happen to this country."

"Gina Lopez and I are just telling you... do not destroy the environment. Follow (the laws) to a T, wala tayong problema. Just pay the correct taxes, follow the standards," Duterte said.

"The DENR is directed to review all permits directed to mining, ensure compliance with government standards and if warranted, amend, suspend, or revoke permits," he added.

### SOUTH CHINA SEA ISSUE

On the country's territorial dispute with China Duterte said he would "strongly affirm and respect" the outcome of an international court's ruling that junked China's vast claims in resource-rich waters in favor of the Philippines.

He said the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) would help end the South China Sea disputes.

"With regard to the West Philippine Sea, otherwise known as China sea, we strongly affirm and respect the outcome of the

case before the PCA as an important contribution to the ongoing efforts to pursue a peaceful resolution and management of our disputes," the President said.

Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua was seen among the audience,

which included top government officials and diplomats.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos has already accepted Duterte's offer for him to be his "special envoy" to China after the landmark ruling of The Hague-based court.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Billions of euros, US dollars for fossil fuel are being diverted to green, sustainable business



Cecilio T. Arillo

## DATABASE

**T**HE prestigious Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and its powerful copartners are expected in the next few days to announce some of the best strategies to divert huge US dollar and euro capital from fossil fuels (coal, gas and oil) industries to green innovation and sustainable business.

While I was writing this column on Sunday, Berlin joined other European capitals Stockholm, Paris, Copenhagen and Oslo in making a powerful, public rejection of the fossil fuel industry.

Officially, the Berlin House of Representatives adopted a new investment policy, banning coal, oil and gas companies from the city's €750-million pension fund, which includes shares in companies, such as RWE, E.ON and Total.

The diversion of capital from fossil-fuel industries is a new approach to reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, which could turn out to be a global "game changer," PIK said in a statement relayed to Database.

"Banks and insurers can play a crucial part in stabilizing the climate, while, at the same time, safeguarding their clients' assets," the PIK statement said.

The statement said leading representatives of finance and climate research, including the Swiss global bank UBS, the French multinational insurance firm AXA, CDP, the European innovation initiative Climate-KIC and Humboldt-Universität zu

Berlin, discussed the best strategies on Thursday in Berlin for a turnaround in investing.

"Already today," said the PIK, "investments of billions of euros are being redirected. Pioneered by students of wealthy US universities, divestment has reached financial big shots like Allianz by now: the financial services company announced its intention to divest from its assets in coal mining. The foundation of the legendary US oil dynasty Rockefeller plans to divest their funds from the fossil-fuel industry, as well."

"The risks of climate change affect everyone and everything. When the finance sector now divests billions from the fossil business, this does not only reflect a moral responsibility but also makes good business sense," says PIK director Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, coiniciator of the Berlin conference.

"While weather extremes increase already, many of the biggest climate impacts, like the consequences of sea-level rise, will become perceptible only after it would be too late to act. Therefore, it is important for the finance sector to

recognize the warnings of science and to ramp up sustainable investments as soon as possible.

### Aftermath of the historic Paris Agreement on climate change

"THE Paris Agreement substantiates that the nations of the world aim at reaching zero emissions by 2050. This means we are now in year one of the Great Transformation. Whoever still invests in coal and oil will not only damage the environment but, eventually, also lose a lot of money," Schellnhuber said.

"As a global bank, it is of major importance to recognize the possible economic and social impacts of climate change, in order to better prepare us and our clients," said Axel Weber, chairman of the Board of Directors of UBS Group AG.

"The financial sector is working hard to lay the foundations for filling gaps in financing climate action and to support nations in delivering on



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Billions of euros, US dollars  
for fossil fuel are being diverted to green,  
sustainable business

**"While weather extremes increase already, many of the biggest climate impacts, like the consequences of sea-level rise, will become perceptible only after it would be too late to act. Therefore, it is important for the finance sector to recognize the warnings of science and to ramp up sustainable investments as soon as possible."**

their corresponding commitments. We aim for a sensible long-term allocation of capital that is congruent with a low-carbon economy," Weber emphasized.

For his part, Christian Thimann, global head of strategy, sustainability and public affairs at AXA Group and vice chairman of the FSB Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure, says: "Finance has an important role in addressing climate change, because it steers long-term investment.

"Investors need to understand how companies address climate change in their strategies, which goes well beyond the current carbon footprint. Under the mandate of the G20 [Group of 20] and the Financial Stability Board, the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure seeks to develop consistent voluntary disclosures by companies and enhance investor understanding of climate-related business risks and opportunities. Such disclosures and better investor understanding will foster implementation of the COP21 [21st Conference of Parties] agreement."

Susan Dreyer, CDP country director for Germany, Austria, Switzerland, argued that: "Divestment is one of the most potent signals of investor discontent and can be a valuable method to manage portfolio risk, given climate risks are becoming more urgent every day.

"Having built a platform for transparent and comparable climate strategies, into which 5,600 companies worldwide are voluntarily reporting today, CDP knows of the impact investor engagement can unfold.

"Shareholder resolutions or setting joint reduction targets are good examples. And yet, the clear signal from both civil society and investors that fossil-based business models do not have a future in the decarbonized world of 2050, is helpful and needed."

Among the distinguished speakers in the Berlin conference are Rainer Baake, state secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Laurence Tubiana, French Ambassador for international climate negotiations at COP21, Monsignor Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and high-ranking finance representatives, from the major bank HSBC to the central bank of the Netherlands and to the French Ministry of Finance.

Our policy-makers must not lose sight on this great opportunity described above.

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## 'PH should honor Paris climate deal'

DESPITE President Rodrigo Duterte's earlier pronouncement that the Philippines will not honor climate change commitments it made under the Paris agreement, Climate Change Commission Vice Chairperson Heherson Alvarez stressed that the deal will be a powerful pillar towards the administration's industrialization goal.

The Philippines was among 195 nations that pledged last December in Paris to cut down carbon emissions to contain global warming to below two degrees Celsius.

The deal comes into force when 55 countries covering 55 percent of global emissions formally join. The Philippines accounts for less than 1 percent of the world's emissions, and has yet to ratify the deal.

Duterte has said that he will not honor the international climate pact, stressing that it would stifle the country's development. The new administration earlier bared plans to create industrial zones all over the country to usher the Philippines into "a golden era of development."

The president, however, despite his skepticism, called on Congress to provide him with a clear understanding of the treaty.

Alvarez, who is also a former secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said that the Paris Agreement

would be a powerful pillar towards the Duterte goal - a strongly industrialized but healthy nation.

"Ultimately, its impacts would allow Filipinos to study, live, work and enjoy cleaner cities with a healthier environment," he said.

"The challenge is to pursue massive industrialization while simultaneously protecting our people - the Philippines being identified as the most vulnerable country in the world - from the disastrous impacts of climate change most especially the threatened sectors that have significantly contributed to the growth of our economy—agriculture, industry, the environment and our people," he added.

Alvarez explained that the climate change pact works on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). The premise is that all nations, whether developed or developing, large or small, emit varying amounts of greenhouse gases. Different countries would therefore take on different kinds of actions to reduce emissions based on their capabilities and their current economic circumstances.

Anchored on the CBDR principle, honoring the Paris Agreement is both a moral and legal obligation of all 197 member nations

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PH. Small version Paris climate deal

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of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of which the Philippines is a member, Alvarez said.

"This principle compels us to share in the upkeep of the United Nations, the same principle why every Filipino who earns an income pays taxes, in varying percentages based on their rate of income, to support the government. Our country will be most comfortable with this principle because it largely reflects the 'bayanihan' spirit in the Filipino culture," he said.

The Philippines has long been engaged in a wide variety of mitigation programs to reduce CO2 emissions, including solid waste management, reforestation, air pollution reduction - in our energy, transport, industry, and agriculture sectors - and imposing new standards and green technologies in the building sector.

Alvarez said that the low carbon program is an essential strategy for stimulating the economy, creating more jobs and moving us rapidly to a clean energy future. He added that investments towards reduced CO2 emissions would spur growth in a broad range of manufacturing sectors and environmental services, as has already been experienced by countries that pursue massive renewable energy investments.

The Philippines is fortunately abundant in alternative energy, including solar, wind, hydro, and especially geothermal. The country is the second biggest producer of geothermal in the world.

"We are near the equator where the solar radiance is consistent and most powerful. We have all the opportunity to tap and deploy abundant, readily available, cheap, alternative energy," he said.

"Coal seems to be the cheapest energy source in the market. However, once the externalities of coal are factored in -- such as the costs of pollution and healthcare -- the price of coal would be extremely high and uneconomic," he added.

In fact, Alvarez said that there is a cry now to price carbon appropriately, apply corresponding taxes, and remove subsidy that makes carbon artificially cheap all over the world.

"We should be transparent and candid about the terrible burdens that coal imposes on our environment and the health of our people, especially the poor who are the most vulnerable. It will be the morally right thing to do," he said.

"We must help shape the policy instruments to overcome the barriers. Government should provide benchmarks and incentives for industries, schedules of renewable energy coming into stream, and proactive policies to promote new technology and green growth. It will also be essential to mobilize

public and private financial resources to cut emissions without undermining the country's economic growth," he added.

The Philippines commitment of a 70 percent emission reduction is conditioned on financing resources, technology development and transfer, and capacity building. The 70 percent commitment will be a slow transition up to the year 2030. All INDC of the 197 nations signatory to the Agreement will be subjected for review every five (5) years and will be continuously updated, depending on economic growth and development.

The Paris agreement makes clear that developed countries will continue to provide and mobilize the UN Green Climate Fund to support developing countries, with developed countries agreeing to continue their 2020 commitment of mobilizing \$100 billion a year, at least until 2025.

"The Philippines should be able to tap this fund as a vital component to help us with our industrialization. Honoring our commitment will send the right signals to the international community engaged in technological and financial support systems that we are committed to cooperate for the welfare of the global community," he said.

**JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ**



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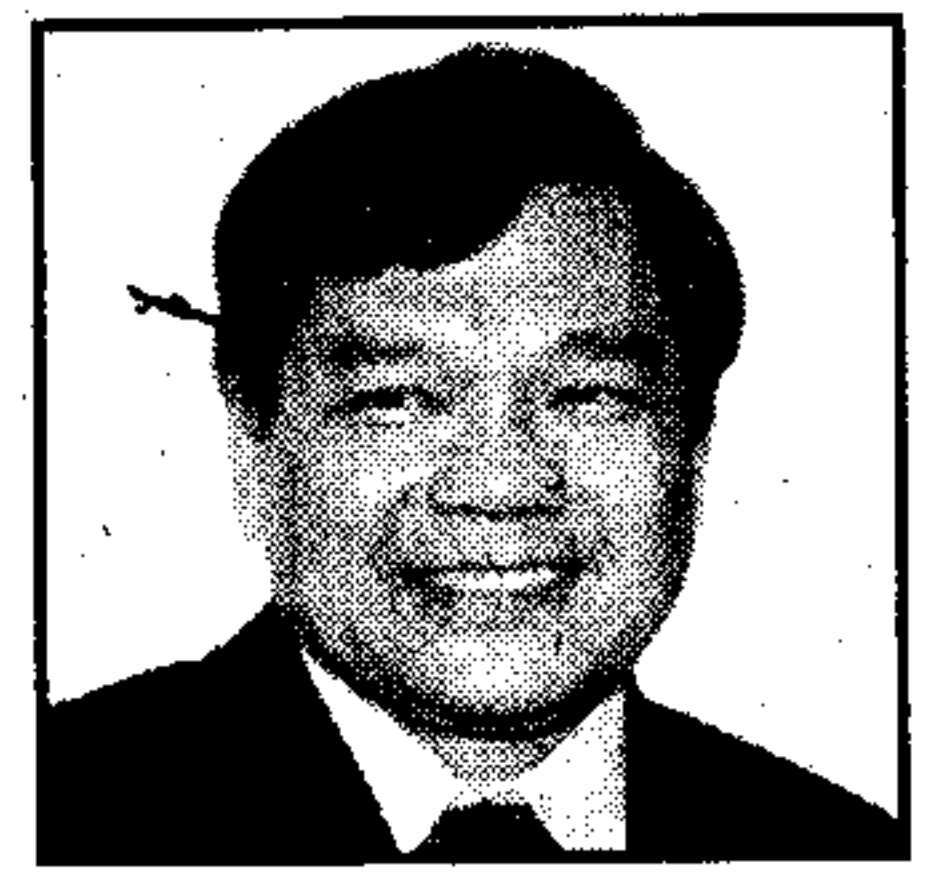
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

FINDING ANSWERS

# How to heed Rody's 'no demolition without relocation' policy



By **ATTY. JOEY D. LINA**  
Former Senator

**N**ATIONAL government agencies and local government units are now hard-pressed to find suitable resettlement sites in the wake of the policy reiterated by President Rody Duterte that houses of informal settlers should not be destroyed if they have nowhere else to go.

"During my time, there will be no demolition pag walang (if there's no) relocation. Hindi ako papayag (I will not allow)," Duterte said during a fellowship dinner with San Beda College of Law alumni in Malacanang on July 17.

"Kasi 'yung walang mapuntahan, sirain mo bahay, parang aso. E saan pupunta 'yung mga tao? (Because those with nowhere to go, you destroy their houses, treat them like dogs. Where will the people go?) Where will they find shelter? But I would be very generous to them. I'd look for money, 'yung lahat na gusto nating gamitin (everything we want to utilize). We will go for a suitable relocation," Duterte explained.

So how does government now go about seeking suitable relocation sites and making them available for displaced informal settlers? Well, the answers can all be found in RA 7279, or the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA), the so-called "Lina Law" that I crafted way back in 1992 when I was a member of the Senate.

UDHA clearly provides the mechanism by which affordable housing can be made available for poor beneficiaries but, unfortunately, no administration has ever taken the initiative or mustered enough political will to implement a legacy program of socialized housing. But there is now renewed hope that the dreams of millions of homeless Filipinos will be realized under the Duterte administration, especially with Vice President Leni Robredo as the housing czar.

Under UDHA, among the initial steps toward affordable housing is to conduct inventory of lands as stated in Section 7, Article 4: "Within one year from the effectivity of this Act, all local government units shall conduct an inventory of all kinds and locations of lands in their jurisdiction for socialized housing purposes." The inventory shall include the following: (a) Residential lands; (b) Government-owned lands, whether owned by the national government or any of its subdivisions, instrumentalities, or agencies, including government-owned or controlled corporations and their subsidiaries; (c) Unregistered or abandoned and idle lands; and (d) Other lands.

"In conducting the inventory, the local government units concerned, in coordination with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board and with the assistance of the appropriate government agencies, shall indicate the type of land use and the degree of land utilization, and other data or information necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act. For planning purposes, the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council shall be furnished by each local government unit a copy of its inventory which shall be updated every three (3) years."

While many LGUs may have already complied with such provision, considering it should have been done way back in 1993, a year after enactment, and updated every three years, it is possible a large number have not. The HUDCC, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government must find out which LGUs have complied, and for those that have not, be compelled to do so.

The next step that ought to be done is in UDHA's Section 8, another crucial provision, which states: Identification of Sites for Socialized Housing. — After the inventory, the local government units, in coordination with the National Housing Authority, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, the National Mapping Resource Information Authority, and the Land Management Bureau, shall identify lands for socialized housing and resettlement areas for the immediate and future needs of the underprivileged and homeless in the urban areas, taking into consideration and degree of availability of basic services and facilities, their accessibility and proximity of jobs sites and other economic opportunities, and the actual number of registered beneficiaries.

Fully implementing just the two aforementioned UDHA provisions could get our socialized housing program really going, as these form the basic foundation for the government's primary strategy to provide poor beneficiaries with affordable decent housing to include basic services—water, sanitation, electricity, roads, schools, among others.

Of course there are other UDHA provisions which are also crucial. These include the priorities in the acquisition of land—government-owned lands as first priority, followed by alienable lands of public domain, unregistered or abandoned and idle lands, those in Areas for Priority Development, Zonal Improvement Program sites, and Slum Improvement and Resettlement Program sites not yet acquired, Bliss sites, and then lastly, private lands.

Also included are various modes of acquiring land: community mortgage, land swapping, land assembly or consolidation, land banking, donation, joint venture, negotiated purchase, and expropriation, among others. HUDCC was tasked to design a system for registration of qualified beneficiaries, in coordination with LGUs that are required to identify and register beneficiaries within their localities.

Another critical UDHA provision, perhaps the most important, concerns funding which shall come from: 50 percent of annual net income of the Public Estate Authority; proceeds from disposition of ill-gotten wealth; loans, grants, bequests and donations, whether from local or foreign sources; flotation of bonds; proceeds from social housing tax and, as concurred by LGUs, idle lands tax; proceeds from disposition of alienable public lands in urban areas; and domestic and foreign investment or financing through appropriate arrangements like the build-operate-and-transfer scheme.

Indeed, everything needed to realize what President Duterte wants for the homeless poor can be found in UDHA. It is just a matter of LGUs and concerned national agencies getting their act together. And political will, particularly with the LGUs which are supposed to be in charge of the housing program, is very crucial for success.

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