

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 28 JUL 2016

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# DENR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Lopez shelves \$5.9-B Tampakan mine project

By MADELAINA B. MENDOZA

**S**ecretary Regina Lopez of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday made sure that this administration will not allow the take off of what could be the country's largest mining project and one of the world's largest copper mines — the \$5.9-billion Tampakan gold-copper mine — as she firmly believes this will only benefit the businesses and not the people.

The Tampakan project, the largest stalled mining venture in the country, has been put on hold since 2010 after the local government unit (LGU) of South Cotabato banned open-pit mining in the province.

The decision led to the biggest foreign divestment ever recorded in the Philippines when Anglo-Swiss mining giant Glencore plc decided to exit the project.

Lopez said she will not allow the Tampakan mine project to push through during her term even if it means a lost investment opportunity for the country.

With an estimated US\$5.9-billion project value, the mine is estimated to yield an average of 375,000 tons per annum of copper and 360,000 ounces per annum of gold in concentrate over the 17 year period of mining and ore production.

"I don't like Tampakan at all. Not

what the law is but to me it is socially unjust of business companies to put the lives of the farmers there and the indigenous people there at risk," she added.

She then said that all the permits given to the project will be reviewed.

"I'm going to study all the permits given to the project but I can't go against due process. The common good is the criteria. We will follow the law," Lopez said.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Leo Jasareno said that the secretary is allowed to review all the permits that have been previously awarded to any project.

To recall, the DENR has cleared the project in 2013, granting it an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) in 2013 despite the open-pit mining ban imposed by the local government.

even a little bit. It's a seven-hundred football field open-pit mine on top of an agriculture land," Lopez told reporters yesterday.

"There is no way I will ever, ever, ever allow a seven-hundred football field open-pit mine be on top of an agriculture land. It's immoral. I don't know

**DENR Secretary Regina Lopez shows photos from the department's audit of mining operations in Mindanao during a press conference held yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City. (MB photo/Federico Cruz)**

In a separate interview, Jasareno said even if the ECC has already been given to the project, issues with indigenous people, among others, still has to be addressed.

The Tampakan Project is under a Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) with the Philippine government, a partnership that allows the government to take a pre-determined share of project cash flow once development capital is paid back.

The project is owned by Sagittarius Mines, Inc. (SMI) and Indophil, which is controlled by the Alcantara group through Alsons Prime Investments Corp. (Apic).

Following the sale of its interest in SMI in 2015, Glencore is no longer involved with the Tampakan Project.

The Tampakan Project is 100 percent owned by local interests.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### No' to Tampakan open-pit mine – Lopez

WHAT could be the largest copper-gold project in the Philippines to date may not see development any time soon after Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez vowed to "shut it down" even before the project could start.

Lopez is directly pitting herself against a known ally of President Rodrigo Duterte and the business empire of the Philippines' richest man, Henry Sy, which already has a stake in the \$5.6-billion Tampakan copper-gold project.

"I really don't like Tampakan at all. Why do we even consider it? No Tampakan operations under my term," Lopez stressed during a Meet the Beat event in Quezon City.

The DENR chief said that she is directly opposing the project's proposed open-pit mining operations, about the size of 700 football fields, which would directly affect the livelihood of poor farmers and put the lives of people at risk.

"We will review everything. There's no way that I would ever, ever allow open pit mine on top of agricultural land. It's immoral and it's socially unjust to allow companies to put the lives of all the farmers and indigenous people at risk," Lopez said.

Tampakan, which involves one of the world's largest undeveloped copper-gold deposits, straddles four provinces in Mindanao – South Cotabato, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur.

Sagittarius Mines Inc. is the local contractor of the Tampakan project on behalf of an affiliate of Australian firm Indophil Resources NL, owned by Alsons Prime Investments Corp. of the Alcantara group.

The Sy-led group, through its banking unit Banco De Oro (BDO), also owns a minority stake in SMI. The SM



■ DENR Secretary Gina Lopez said she will not permit operation of the Tampakan Mining project in Mindanao during her term.  
PHOTO BY RUY L. MARTINEZ

group, owner of the country's largest chain of shopping malls, was assigned a seat in the seven-man Indophil board by Alsons.

Besides developing the mine, Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc. is also interested in building a 400-megawatt power plant that will power the copper-gold project.

Alsons Energy Development Corp., a unit of Alsons Consolidated, was selected by SMI as the preferred power generation supplier of the Tampakan mine.

Alsons Energy earlier proposed put up an \$892-million dedicated coal-fired power plant to support the power needs

of the Tampakan mining project.

Last year, SMI secured majority local government endorsement for the project, which is one of main requirements in getting approval for its Declaration of Mining Project Feasibility (DMPF).

Under the Mining Act of 1995, a mining company should have the endorsement of the majority of LGUs or local government units to secure government approval for its DMPE.

DMPF – which includes a proponent's final rehabilitation plan for the venture and an environmental protection and enhancement program, among others – is the final requirement for a mining

company to commence development of a project.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) director Leo Jasareno said that South Cotabato was the only remaining LGU or local government unit that has yet to endorse the project because of its current ban on open-pit mining as prescribed by its Environment Code.

"The ban is still in place. But the Philip-

pine Mining Act only requires majority LGU endorsement, which SMI has already complied with. So as far as the rules are concerned, they have already met it," he reiterated.

He said that SMI will also have to address the issue with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) over the cancellation of Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs) issued to five groups of beneficiaries under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

The existence of CLOAs issued to CARP beneficiaries within the proposed Tampakan mine site is one of four major issues hounding the \$5.9-billion Tampakan copper-gold project.

DAR had issued a five collective CLOAs involving properties within the mining tenement in May and July 2008. These CLOAs cover around 3,921 hectares in five different barangays in Tampakan, South Cotabato, the area where SMI intends to operate its open-pit mine to extract copper and gold ores.

Tampakan is estimated to have 15 million tons of contained copper and nearly 18 million ounces of gold. The total tax and royalty revenue to the Philippines over the 20-year life of the project is estimated at P346 billion or \$7.2 billion.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ



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# Never on my watch: Lopez on Tampakan

BY JED MACAPAGAL

**D**EPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) secretary, Regina Lopez said that the \$5.9 billion Tampakan mining project in Mindanao will never push through under her watch because it is on agricultural lands and will displace people living in the area.

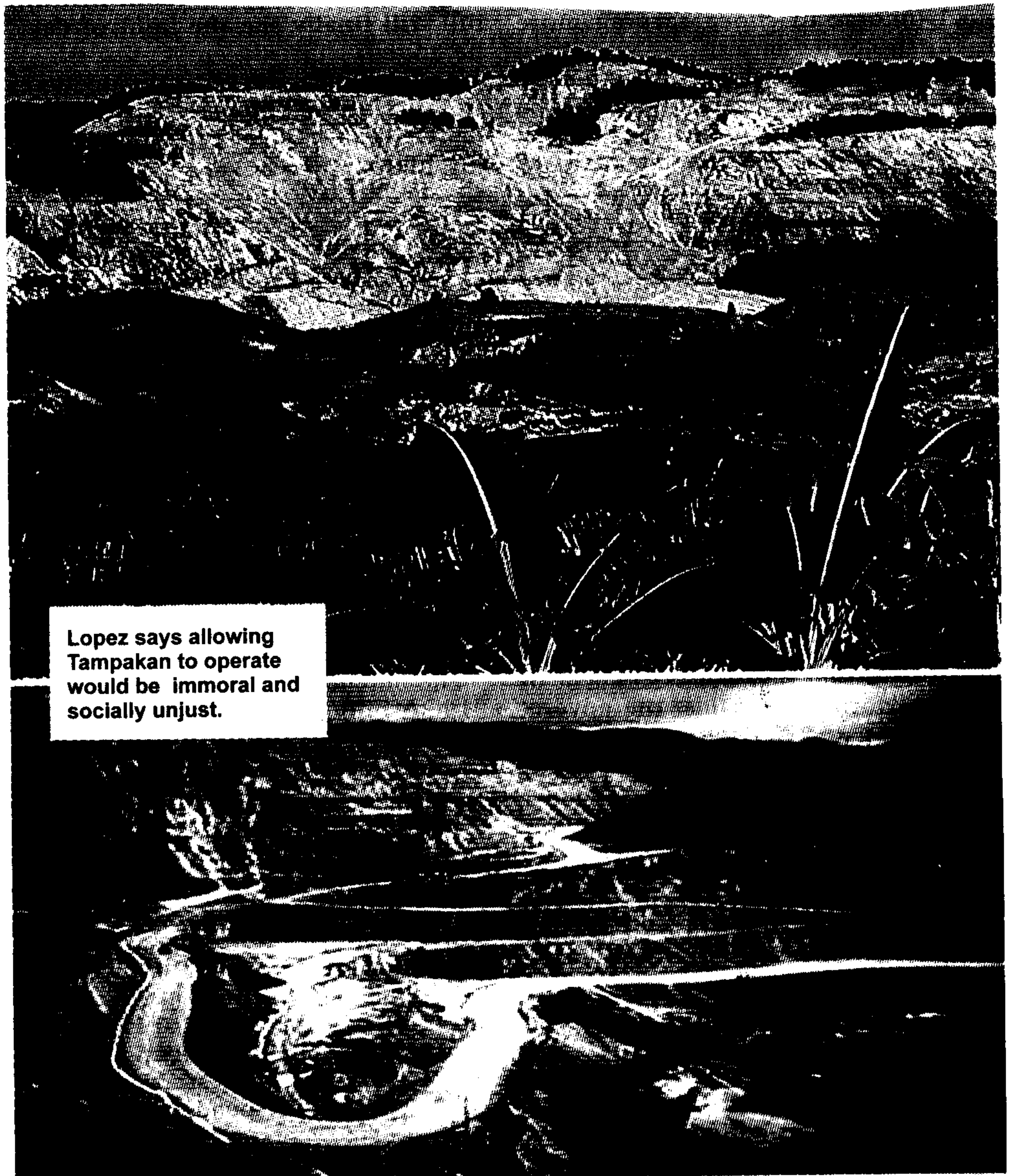
"I really don't like Tampakan at all, It plans open pit mining on an area equivalent to 700 football fields on agricultural lands affecting four provinces and six rivers. Why do we even consider it at all? Many poor people living there are farmers, is it right to put their lives at risk? (I'll) shut it down even before it started. No Tampakan operations under my term," she told reporters during a briefing in Quezon City.

Lopez added that allowing Tampakan to operate would be "immoral and socially unjust" since it will affect the lives of farmers and indigenous people. She added, however that she will still observe due process.

"All permits given will be under review. I have to follow the law, but even under review, as DENR chief, we have to follow the rule of the common good... There must be something in the law that must protect the common good, that's my major criteria," she said.

Leo Jasareno, Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) managing director, on the other hand said that investors can freely appeal the recent pronouncements of the government.

"Any private investor who thinks that the government is not doing it right can file a complaint. They can ask for reconsid-



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eration from the government,” MGB director, Jasareno said during the same event.

MGB earlier reported that operators of the Tampakan prospect is already processing to consolidate the three different areas covered under financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) into one.

FTAA is the agreement that may be entered into between a contractor and the government for the development of large-scale exploration, development and utilization of gold, copper, nickel, chromite, lead, zinc and other minerals.

Tampakan’s FTAA covers around 27,000 hectares but only 9,000 hectares will be mined and the rest allocated for power plant and some for waste disposal system.

The Tampakan project is said to be one of the largest undeveloped copper and gold deposits in the Southeast Asia with estimated reserves of 15 million tons of contained copper and nearly 18 million ounces of gold. Total taxes and royalties that the Philippine government can gain from it over the 20 year life of the project is said to be at around P346 billion.

Swiss firm, Glencore Plc quit the said project last year and is now currently operated by Sagittarius Mines, Inc. together with the Alsons group’s Indophil Resources.

Lopez also vowed to shut more operations causing environmental destruction.

A staunch environmentalist, Lopez said the government has suspended operations of seven domestic mines for failure to meet environmental regulations.

Lopez began an audit of all Philippine mines on July 8 as the new government led by President Rodrigo Duterte vowed to shut operations causing environmental harm.

“I do suspect that we’ll probably close more mines given the number of complaints. I have the support of the police and military to run after those violating environmental laws,” Lopez said.

Lopez is particularly against the use of open pits to extract minerals, earlier describing it as “madness” even to consider the method in the resource-rich Philippines because of the environmental impact.

Many mineral producers in the Philippines use open-pit mines, which are allowed under the country’s mining laws.

The Philippines is the biggest supplier of nickel ore to China, where the metal is used to manufacture stainless steel.

The suspension of some Philippine nickel mines has pushed global nickel prices CMNI3 to an 11-month high of \$10,900 a tonne on July 21.

Discovered in the early 1990s, Tampakan has yet to go into commercial operation and only secured an environmental clearance in 2013.

Sagittarius Mines this year was hoping to obtain other necessary approvals, including land access, to enable the project to proceed to construction, according to the company’s website. – with Reuters



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# Tampakan project prospects dim

ONCE TOUTED as potentially the Philippines' biggest foreign investment, the Tampakan copper-gold mine project in Mindanao — initially estimated to cost some \$5.9 billion to develop and which has suffered delays since 2010 due to regulatory and policy hurdles — will not proceed to operational phase at least in the next six years, if the new Environment chief were to have her way.

"I really don't like Tampakan at all. Not a little. You can put that in capital

letter[s]. At all... I would not even consider it at all," Environment and Natural Resources chief Regina Paz "Gina" L. Lopez said in a press conference in Quezon City on Wednesday.

"It's a 700-hectare football field, open-pit mine on top of rice fields and agriculture lands, affecting provinces and six rivers," Ms. Lopez said.

"Why do we even consider it at all?... It's immoral and it's socially unjust to allow companies to put the lives of all the

farmers and indigenous people at risk."

Sought for his group's side, Nicasio I. Alcantara — a contributor to the campaign of President Rodrigo R. Duterte and president of Alcantara Group that indirectly controls Tampakan project proponent Sagittarius Mines, Inc. (SMI) — said in a phone interview: "I cannot comment right now." Investors shrugged off the news, as reflected by the 2.11% hike in share price of the group's listed Alsons Consolidated Resources, Inc. to P1.94.

The project site covers an area of around 10,000 hectares straddling Tampakan, South Cotabato; Columbio in Sultan Kudarat; Kiblawan in Davao del Sur; and Malungon in Sarangani.

The project site is estimated to have 15 million tons of copper and nearly 18 million ounces of gold.

Value of mine production had been estimated at \$37 billion over 20 years.

After South Cotabato banned open-pit mining on the eve of former president

Benigno S. C. Aquino III's assumption of office at end-June 2010, SMI said in 2012 that it deferred start of commercial operations to 2019 from 2016 originally.

The government issued a provisional environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the project in February 2013, but that was conditional on it securing the endorsement of local governments of areas hosting the project, among other requirements.

Tampakan, SI/5

Tampakan,  
from SI/1

Mines and Geosciences Bureau Director Leo L. Jasareno told reporters Wednesday: "Remember *ang ECC pag binibigay ng DENR, hindi naman tapos* (... when the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issues an ECC, it is not final but) — subject to certain conditions."

By last year, SMI had secured the endorsement of most local government units (LGU) concerned, fulfilling a key requirement for Declaration of Mining Project Feasibility — the final clearance for a mining company to start construction on site.

Mr. Jasareno noted that only South Cotabato does not endorse the project.

"The ban is still in place. But the Philippine Mining Act (of 1995, or Republic Act No. 7942) only requires majority LGU endorsement, which SMI has already complied with. So as far as the rules are concerned, they have already met it," Mr. Jasareno said.

But he added that SMI still has to secure a permit from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

There is also the need to first cancel Certificates of Land Ownership Award issued in 2008 to land reform beneficiaries covering 3,921 hectares of the project site in five barangays in Tampakan. — J. C. Lim



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# Lopez vows to prohibit Tampakan mine project

By Anna Leah E. Gonzales

**E**NVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Lopez said Wednesday she will not allow the \$5.9-billion Tampakan mine project to operate under her term.

Sagittarius Mines Inc., which is controlled by Indophil Resources NL, is developing the Tampakan project, which could be one of the world's largest undeveloped copper-gold deposits. The Alcantara Group bought Glencore Plc. out of SMI last year.

"I don't like Tampakan at all. That open-pit mining will be on top of rice fields, agricultural lands and will affect four provinces and six rivers. Why do we

even consider it at all?" Lopez said.

Lopez said the Tampakan project was as large as 700 football fields. "I will not consider it at all. There are many poor farmers there. I have to be honest, I will have to live by my principle. There is no way I would ever, ever allow a 700 football field open-pit mine on top of agricultural land," Lopez said.

"It's immoral and it's socially

unjust to allow companies to make money and put in the lives of the people there at risk," she said.

Early estimates showed the Tampakan project had a resource of 2.94 billion tons, containing 15 million tons of copper and 17.9 million ounces of gold at a 0.2 percent copper cut-off grade. The copper and gold mine straddles the town of Tampakan in South Cotabato and Kiblawan in Davao del Sur.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Leo Jasareno said the mining project was facing several issues. The project is also being opposed by the provincial government of South Cotabato, because of the SMI's plan to undertake open-pit mining.

"They still need to address the issue of the certificate of land ownership award which is issued under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. That should be resolved first. In addition to that is the open-pit ban in South Cotabato," Jasareno said.

Jasareno said under Executive Order No. 79, CARP-covered areas were closed to mining.

Meanwhile, MGB said mineral production value fell 12 percent in the first quarter to P22.09 billion from P24.98 billion in the same period last year on lower metal prices. MGB said total gold production value amounted to P10.68 billion in the three-month period.

Masbate Gold Project of Filminera Mining Corp. and

Philippine Gold Processing and Refining Corp. in Masbate and Didipio Gold Project of Oceana Gold Philippines Inc. in Nueva Vizcaya produced 1,640 kilograms and 1,456 kilograms of gold, respectively.

Value of direct shipping nickel ore and mixed sulfide amounted to P6.88 billion, while copper production value reached P4.34 billion.

The remaining 0.87 percent or P0.19 billion, came from the combined values of silver and chromite.

"The slow start of mine production of direct shipping nickel ore for the year was attributed to the unfavorable weather condition that generally prevailed in the areas of Dinagat and Surigao provinces," MGB said.





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### LOPEZ FIRM ON STAND

# DENR thumbs down Tampakan mine project

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

The \$5.9-billion Tampakan project in South Cotabato, dubbed as potentially the country's biggest foreign investment and believed to be one of the largest gold prospects in the world, will not materialize as Environment Secretary Gina Lopez remained firm in her decision not to allow operations even before it has started.

"I really don't like Tampakan at all. There's no way I would ever allow (an open pit mine the size of 700 football fields) on top of agricultural

lands," Lopez said in a press conference.

"There will be no Tampakan mine operations under my term."

Upon her appointment, Lopez was firm on her stand against open pit mining in the country.

"I'm targeting companies that have complaints against them. I don't care whether it's nickel or gold, they should not disadvantage farmlands," she said.

Operator Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI) has already secured the declaration of mining feasibility and is a few step closer

to operations.

The Tampakan mine development is targeted to start operations in the next two years, as part of the aggregate \$14.75 billion pegged investments for 2018.

"Why do we even consider it at all? Many poor people living there are farmers and it is not right to put their lives at risk," Lopez said.

Lopez emphasized that all permits earlier granted would undergo review, but as the DENR chief, she has to follow the rule of the common good.

"I will never ever allow this because it's immoral. It's socially unjust to allow companies to put the lives of all the farmers and indigenous people at risk," the Environment chief said.

The SMI is yet to release a statement on Lopez's decision.

Meanwhile, Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Leo Jasareno said private investors who think the government is not doing it right should file a complaint.

"They can ask for reconsideration from the government," he said.

The Tampakan deposit contains an estimated 2.94 billion tons of mineral resource containing 15 million tons of copper and 18 million ounces of gold.

The prospective mine is projected to produce 375,000 tons of copper and 360,000 ounces of gold per year in the initial mine-life of 17 years, with potential for mine-life extension.

The project has been on hold since the province banned open-

pit mining in mid-2010.

The project site covers an area of around 10,000 hectares covering Tampakan, South Cotabato; Columbio in Sultan Kudarat; Kiblawan in Davao del Sur; and Malungon in Sarangani.

Value of the mine's production is estimated at \$37 billion over a period of 20 years.

To recall, the new DENR administration called for the official audit of all operating mines and the moratorium on the approval of new mining projects.

Lopez reiterated that technical audit alone is not enough, as social, environmental, and health aspects are being considered as well.

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

- With Mary Grace Padin



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# 'Politics' forcing DMCI to stop nickel mine activities

By Doris Dumlao-Abadilla

THE CONSUNJI group may pull the plug on the nickel mining operations of DMCI Mining Corp. if regulatory kinks won't be resolved soon.

DMCI Mining has interests in mining projects in Berong, Palawan under Berong Nickel Corp. and Zambales through Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. (ZDMC).

The two mining projects, which both use the open pit technique to extract nickel, chromite and iron laterite for direct shipping to China and Japan, have had problems with

environment and mining regulators and host local government units.

The operations of both the Palawan and Zambales mines were recently suspended by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for allegedly breaching environmental standards.

The firm also said local governments were interfering too much in activities under the DENR's jurisdiction.

"It has become too politicized," DMCI Holdings president Isidro Consunji told reporters on the sidelines of the company's annual

stockholders meeting Wednesday.

"The smoke has to clear. If it's not cleared, then we'll stop operations. We can't afford a stop-and-go operation. I don't think any mining com-

pany can afford that, so we have to clear that as soon as possible."

Policy uncertainties have been costly not just for DMCI Mining but for other mining

firms especially in an environment where commodity prices are on a downturn.

"I think a lot of the mining companies are barely surviving. And I think the prices of oil will be low in the next five years and that nickel, copper, gold, coal prices will (also) be low," Consunji said.



# Lopez trains eye on Mindanao mining

By Jaymee T. Gamil

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Gina Lopez is now training her eyes on mining operations in Mindanao.

In a press briefing in Quezon city yesterday, Lopez said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) audit and impact assessment on mining operations, which began earlier this month, covered six mining sites in Surigao. She said the assessments would hopefully be concluded this week.

The rest of the mining operations in Mindanao will be audited next week, Lopez said.

Lopez said the DENR was focusing on Mindanao "because the President is from there, and

I would like to ensure that, at the very least, in Mindanao their social injustice will be minimal," Lopez said.

Lopez also prioritized Surigao after members of indigenous people's groups met with her earlier this week and aired their grievances against mining operations in their areas, particularly Sagittarius Mines Inc. in Tampakan, Sultan Kudarat province; SR Metals Inc. in Tubay, Agusan del Sur province; and Greenstone Mining and Taganito Mining, both in Surigao del Norte province.

According to DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau chief Leo Jasareno, there are currently 23 nickel mining operations in Surigao and Agusan, and one

in Compostela Valley.

Nationwide, the DENR audit will cover 105 mining sites: 40 metallic, 65 nonmetallic, Jasareno said. All the reports will be submitted to Lopez by mid-August. Mining firms which fail the audit will be suspended.

Jasareno said the mining firms could appeal the findings of the audit.

"The audit is not just physical or technical. It's also social and environmental; it involves the community. It's a total impact evaluation of the mining sites in that area," Lopez explained.

"There will be a moratorium on all new mining applications until the audit is finished," Lopez said.

The DENR has already suspended seven mining firms in Luzon, four of them in Zambales province. These include Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. (ZDMC) and Benguet-corp Nickel Mines Inc. (BNMI). In 2014, a suspension order was already issued to Int'l Archipelago Minerals Inc. and Eramen Minerals Inc., which remains in effect.

The other three are in Palawan province: The Berong site, and two Citinickel mining sites.

"A month ago, Berong spilled 1,200 metric tons of nickel into the corals in one of the best island destinations of the country," Lopez said. "They have actually broken rules and regulations."





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## Metal output drops 12% in Q1

Metal production fell 12 percent to P22 billion in the first quarter due to the persistent soft metal prices in the world market, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said.

The aggregate value of metal production for January to March this year was lower than the P25 billion recorded in the same period last year.

Direct shipping nickel

ore and mixed nickel-cobalt sulfides, which used to account for half of total metal production value, suffered a 38 percent dip from P11 billion to P6.8 billion.

"The slow start of mine production of direct shipping nickel ore for the year was attributed to the unfavorable weather condition that generally prevailed in the areas of Dinagat and Surigao prov-

inces," the MGB said.

Revenues from copper production, which comprise 20 percent of total metal production value, also went down 11 percent to P4.34 billion from P4.89 billion in 2015.

Nickel price dropped to \$3.85 per pound from \$6.52 per pound, while copper price was also down from \$2.64 per pound to \$2.12 per pound.

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### Metal... From B-7

On the other hand, gold production

accounted for 48 percent of the total production value with aggregate earnings of P10.7 billion, up 22 percent from P8.7 billion in 2015.

Higher gold production in the first quarter was due to increased production in the following projects: the Dipio Copper-Gold Project of Oceana Gold Philippines Inc. in Nueva Vizcaya and the Masbate Gold Project of Filminera Mining Corp.

But metal prices were less favorable for producers in the first quarter as gold fell 3.5 percent to \$1,178.92

per troy ounce from \$1,221.87 per troy ounce on the comparative period.

The production value of silver, likewise, grew 27 percent to P186 million from P146 million in 2015 despite the decline in prices from \$16.76 per troy ounce to \$14.84 per troy ounce in 2016.

The remaining 0.87 percent of total metallic production, or P190 million, came from the combined value of silver, iron ore and chromite. — Louise Maureen Simeon



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## PH Q1 metallic mineral value drops 12% to P22.9B

BY JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

**P**HILIPPINE metallic mineral production value dropped in the first quarter of the year due to persistent soft metal prices in the world market, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau said on Wednesday.

In a report, MGB Director Leo Jasareno said that metallic mineral value reached P22.09 billion in January-March 2016, down by 12 percent from P24.98 billion during the same period a year ago.

After dominating the production scene since 2012, nickel direct shipping ore and mixed sulfide relinquished the top spot to gold during the period.

Gold accounted for 48.34 percent of the total production value, or a total of P10.68 billion.

The Masbate Gold Project of Filminera Mining Corporation/Philippine Gold Processing and Refining Corporation in Masbate, and Didipio Gold Project of Oceana Gold Philippines Inc. in Nueva Vizcaya led production with 1,640 kilograms and 1,456 kilograms, respectively.

Direct shipping nickel ore and mixed sulfide took the second spot with a 31.12 percent share, or P6.88 billion; while copper came in third with 19.66 percent contri-

bution, or P4.34 billion.

The remaining 0.87 percent, or P0.19 billion, came from the combined values of silver and chromite. Ore Asia Mining and Development Corporation in Bulacan reported zero iron ore production during the period.

"The slow start of mine production of direct shipping nickel ore for the year was attributed to the unfavorable weather condition that generally prevailed in the areas of Dinagat and Surigao provinces," Jasareno said.

At present, 17 companies operate in the said provinces; 12 reported zero production for Q1 2016. A nickel mining operation, being surface mining, is always vulnerable to the weather condition.

The top nickel mines in terms of production during the quarter were Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation (RTNMC) and Taganito Mining Corporation (TMC) with 789,483 dry metric tons and 723,493 dry metric tons, respectively. The mines

are operated by Nickel Asia Corporation, the country's largest lateritic nickel ore producer.

In addition, RTNMC exclusively supplies limonite ore to Coral Bay Nickel Corporation (CBNC) while TMC is the sole supplier of the limonite ore requirement of Taganito HPAL Nickel Corporation (THPAL). CBNC and THPAL are the only hydrometallurgical nickel processing plants in the country commissioned in 2005 and 2013, respectively.

Mixed sulfide of nickel and cobalt is the main product of the said plants. In Q1 2016 CBNC and THPAL produced 10,239 dry metric tons and 11,897 dry metric tons, respectively. The total output of the two plants was 22,136 dry metric tons, 10 percent lower than the 24,649 dry metric tons year-on-year.

The red metal, which accounted for almost 20 percent, or PhP4.34 billion, of the total metallic mineral production value in the first quarter of 2016, enjoyed a growth of 16 percent, or 12,585 dry metric tons, in mine output to 92,561 from 79,976 dry metric tons dry metric tons year-on-year.

Of the three copper mines in the country today, Toledo Copper Project of Carmen Copper Corporation in Cebu contributed 55 percent, or 50,838 dry metric tons, while in far second and last

position were Didipio Copper-Gold Project of Oceana Gold Philippines Inc. in Nueva Vizcaya, and Padcal Copper - Gold Project of Philex Mining Corporation in Benguet Province with 23,919 dry metric tons and 17,804 dry metric tons, respectively.

Despite the increase in production volume, value went down by 11 percent, or P544 million, from P4.89 billion to P4.34 billion year-on-year. The deficit was attributed to the lower copper price during the period from \$2.64 per pound to \$2.12 per pound, a \$0.52 per pound deficit.

In terms of metal prices, precious metals gold and silver, and the base metals copper and nickel, all posted downward trend during the review period. The average price of the yellow metal registered a decline of 3.51 percent from \$1,221.87 per troy ounce to \$1,178.92 per troy ounce. Similarly, the white metal closed the first quarter with an average of \$14.84 per troy ounce, down by 11.48 percent from the \$16.76 per troy ounce year-on-year.

Similarly, the three-month averages for nickel and copper also went down by 40.88 percent and 19.71 percent, respectively. Nickel went down from \$6.52 to \$3.85 per pound while copper slipped from \$2.64 to \$2.12 per pound year-on-year.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# DENR accredits Maynilad for environmental testing

Water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. said its central laboratory recently secured an accreditation from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as an environmental testing laboratory.

Maynilad said the laboratory, which monitors and tests the quality of water and wastewater in the West Zone, met all the standards and requirements of the DENR during an assessment conducted in the last quarter of 2015.

"This accreditation substantiates the central laboratory's high standards when it comes to the quality, accuracy and precision of chemical and microbiological testing results it generates," the company said.

"This DENR accreditation is a validation of Maynilad's continuous effort to ensure that the water and wastewater produced by our treatment facilities pass the country's strict standards," said Maynilad president and CEO Ramon-

cito Fernandez.

The water company further said it is now authorized by the DENR to generate data in relation to environmental impact assessment, environmental monitoring and research initiatives, which can be used by the government for environmental planning and policy making.

The recognition was obtained following the implementation of a quality management system that satisfies the requirements of the ISO 17025:2005 standard.

Maynilad has also been recognized by the Department of Health as a laboratory for drinking water analysis.

The company is the largest private water concessionaire in the Philippines in terms of customer base. It is the agent and contractor of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) for the West Zone of the Greater Manila Area.



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# BusinessMirror

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



**SAVING WATER BODIES PROGRAM** Environment Undersecretary Juan Miguel T. Cuna (right) leads the signing of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Hedcor Inc.'s Chris Fernando Faelnar (third from left) to Adopt an Estero, Creek, River, Water body Program in the Cordillera Region. Witnessing the signing of the MOA are DENR-CAR Regional Director Ralph C. Pablo (second from left) and officials of Hedcor at Crown Plaza Baguio. MAUVICTA



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Corals restored through transplantation

By ROMINA CABRERA

**Environmentalists are trying to glue back the ocean's rainforest, one coral fragment at a time.**

Through the combined effort of local communities, businesses and government agencies, conservationists are looking to revive the country's reef system using nails, epoxy clay, cable ties and coral fragments.

The process is known as coral transplantation, which kick-starts as well as shortens the recovery time of a reef compared to the natural process of sexual reproduction.

It primarily involves the nursing of coral fragments from different parts of the islands, and gluing them back to the ocean floor.

This asexual reproduction technology gives environmentalists a bigger chance of hastening reef recovery as opposed to a success rate of 10 percent through the natural process, according to Melvin Carlos, director for technology transfer and promotion at the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (DOST-PCAARD).

"We've been doing a lot of research for reproduction, but we realized in 2011 that it was going to take so much time," Carlos said.

Taking the principle of asexual reproduction technology, he said they innovated and tested how it would work in Philippine conditions.

The use of epoxy in coral transplantation was first tested by the DOST in partnership with the University of San Carlos in 2012.

Carlos said an epoxy clay produced by Republic Chemical Industries Inc. (RCI) yielded superior results as it was versatile enough to use underwater but did not release toxic chemicals.

Pioneer's Epoxy Clay Aqua has since been used in 20 sites all over the country, including reef sites in Boracay, Camiguin, Zamboanga and General Santos, in the two phases of the DOST-PCAARD Coral Restoration program.

Coral transplantation with the use of epoxy yielded a success rate at an average of 95 percent, withholding the effects of unforeseeable natural forces.

The DOST initially set a target of transplanting 30,000 fragments in Puerto Princesa alone, as well as establishing 10 coral nursery units (CNU) through the help of the local community and other shareholders.

As of April 2016, around 11,000 coral fragments have been transplanted and the 10 CNU target has been met,

with 5,000 materials ready for process.

Unfortunately, coral bleaching, brought about by rising water temperatures from El Niño phenomenon, also wiped out some 95 percent of the coral nursery, with the remainder already in bleaching condition.

Bleaching is a stress condition in coral reefs that involves the breakdown of zooxanthellae algae residing within the tissues of most hard corals.

Tangdol reef, encompassing 221,912 square meters in Barangay Banca-Banca, Puerto Princesa, is currently reeling from the massive coral bleaching event.

An estimated 90 percent of the corals in this reef were affected by the bleaching event, which may have started in late May, with some corals currently dead and overgrown with algae, according to the Puerto Princesa City Agricultural Office.

## **Public-private partnership**

Tangdol Reef was the chosen kick-off site for the partnership between the Pioneer Adhesives Foundation Inc. (PAFI), an affiliate of RCI, and the DOST for its reef restoration program.

The partners have come up with a six-month plan for the reef, which primarily involves coral transplantation technology and the use of epoxy clay.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

*Corals restored through transplantation*

"It starts today – awareness and training on how to do the coral transplantation... hopefully when the seas are in better condition, we can proceed with the transplanting to help restore the reef. By the end of this process, we hope we would've been able to jumpstart the restoration of the reef," said Martina Spakowski, PAFI executive director.

The DOST and PAFI are expected to sign a memorandum of agreement to help restore coral reefs in different parts of the country later this month.

RCI has committed to donating 2,500 tubes of the epoxy to the local government of Puerto Princesa, which is expected to aid the transplantation of at least 12,500 coral fragments.

PAFI will also donate solar-powered buoys for deployment in Tangdol Reef to protect the coral nursery and surrounding areas.

Carlos said they are adapting public-private partnership (PPP) models in the future to help the restoration of coral reefs in the country.

"We're also moving toward

PPPs in the business sector who would like to pitch in for the national effort. After all, this is not just a government responsibility," he said.

The Philippines, Carlos said, stands to lose billions of pesos in revenue if it does not take care of its vast coral resources.

A healthy coral reef spanning only a square kilometer generates an estimated P2.5 million in income from fishing and tourism, data from the World Bank's Philippine Environment Monitor in 2005 showed.

With more than 26,000 square kilometers of coral cover in the country, coral reefs can contribute P70 billion to the economy per annum.

Sadly, however, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources estimated that only 10 percent of the coral cover in the Philippines is healthy.

"A lot of people love the beach. We Filipinos love the beach, but I think sometimes we forget what's underneath. It is the corals. The fish depend on the corals," Spakowski said.

DOST-PCAARD is planning Phase 3 of its Coral Restoration Program, which will cover the whole Philippines.



Reef restorers in Palawan demonstrate in mid-July how coral transplantation is done through epoxy clay.





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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### Aboitiz Cleanergy Park now a pawikan, bird sanctuary in Davao

By **MARLON PURIFICACION**

**THE** Aboitiz Cleanergy Park, an eight-hectare outdoor biodiversity park jointly managed by the Aboitiz Foundation and Davao Light that is also home to various wildlife, is fast becoming a sanctuary for birds, reinforcing the park's status as a thriving outdoor biodiversity preserve that is also one of the country's few nesting sites for hawksbill turtles and 66 other species.

Thirty six 'endangered bird species' are now living in the Aboitiz Cleanergy Park as attested by members of the Davao Wild Bird Photographers group and the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF).

Two prominent species discovered include the endangered Spotted Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula Carola*) and the Brown Noddy (*Anous Stolidus*).

The spotted Imperial Pigeon is said to be endemic or native to the Philippines, while the Brown Noddy has never been spotted in Davao City before.

All 36 species have been properly identified and validated with the assistance of PEF.

"We believe creating a #BetterWorld involves creating a sustainable environment for nature to thrive. We will strive to ensure our feathered friends will continue to call the Aboitiz Cleanergy Park their home for years to come," Sonny Carpio, Aboitiz Foundation Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer, said.

Located in Punta Dumalag, Davao City, the Aboitiz Cleanergy Park showcases urban-based habitat conservation and biodiversity management. It is one of the few identified nesting sites of the critically endangered hawksbill turtle (pawikan).

Earlier this year, the Aboitiz Foundation stepped up its conversation campaign with "#BetterWorld for the Pawikans," a drive to raise funds for the protection and preservation of the hawksbill turtle in Punta Dumalag, one of the last few remaining natural habitats for this turtle specie.

This fundraising activity will not only secure the sanctuary for the hawksbill turtles but also spread greater public awareness on how everyone can help ensure its survival amid climate change and environmental degradation.



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Humans communicate and collaborate

with humans, study confirms

Humans use a unique call to request help from honeyguide birds, and the birds also 'actively' human partners. This is two-way teamwork, scientists say, a rarity between people and wildlife



Yao honey hunter Orlando Yassene poses with a greater honeyguide in Niassa National Reserve, Mozambique. (Photo: Claire Spottiswoode)

### "BRRR-HM!"

When a human makes that sound in Mozambique's Niassa National Reserve, a wild bird species instinctively knows what to do. The greater honeyguide responds by leading the human to a wild beehive, where both can feast on honey and wax. The bird does this without any training from people, or even from its own parents.

This unique relationship pre-dates any recorded history, and likely evolved over hundreds of thousands of years. It's a win-win, since the birds help humans find honey, and the humans (who can subdue a beehive

more easily than the 1.7-ounce birds can) leave behind beeswax as payment for their avian informants.

While this ancient partnership is well-known to science, a new study, published July 22 in the journal *Science*, reveals incredible details about how deep the connection has become. Honeyguides "actively recruit appropriate human partners," the study's authors explain, using a special call to attract people's attention. Once that works, they fly from tree to tree to indicate the direction of a beehive.

Not only do honeyguides use calls to seek human

partners, but humans also use specialized calls to summon the birds. Honeyguides attach specific meaning to "brrr-hm," the authors say, a rare case of communication and teamwork between humans and wild animals. We've trained lots of domesticated animals to work with us, but for wildlife to do so voluntarily -- and instinctively -- is pretty wild.

Here's an example of what the "brrr-hm" call sounds like:

"What's remarkable about the honeyguide-human relationship is that it involves free-living wild animals whose interactions with humans have probably evolved through natural selection, probably over the course of hundreds of thousands of years," says lead author Claire Spottiswoode, a zoologist at the University of Cambridge.

"[W]e've long known that people can increase their rate of finding bees' nests by collaborating with honeyguides, sometimes following them for over a kilometer," Spottiswoode explains in a statement. "Keith and Colleen Begg, who do wonderful conservation work in northern Mozambique,



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**Honey hunters use smoke to subdue bees while they work. They face no competition over food from honeyguides — humans take the honey, and the birds eat the beeswax.**

(Photo: Claire Spottiswoode)

alerted me to the Yao people's traditional practice of using a distinctive call which they believe helps them to recruit honeyguides. This was instantly intriguing -- could these calls really be a mode of communication between humans and a wild animal?"

To answer that question, Spottiswoode went to Niassa National Reserve, a vast wildlife refuge larger than Switzerland. With the help of honey hunters from the local Yao community, she tested whether the birds can distinguish "brrrhm" -- a sound passed

down from generation to generation of Yao hunters -- from other human vocalizations, and if they know to respond accordingly.

She made audio recordings of the call, along with two "control" sounds -- arbitrary words spoken by the Yao hunters, and the calls of another bird species. When she played all three recordings in the wild, the difference was clear: Honeyguides proved much more likely to answer the "brrrhm" call than either of the other sounds.

"The traditional 'brrrhm' call increased the prob-

ability of being guided by a honeyguide from 33 percent to 66 percent, and the overall probability of being shown a bees' nest from 16 percent to 54 percent compared to the control sounds," Spottiswoode says. "In other words, the 'brrrhm' call more than tripled the chances of a successful interaction, yielding honey for the humans and wax for the bird."

The researchers released this video, which includes footage from their experiments:

This is known as mutualism, and while lots of animals have evolved mutualistic relationships, it's very rare between humans and wildlife. People also recruit honeyguides in other parts of Africa, the study's authors note, using different sounds like the melodious whistle of Hadza honey hunters in Tanzania. But aside from that, the researchers say the only comparable example involves wild dolphins who chase schools of mullet into anglers' nets, catching more fish for themselves in the process.

"It would be fascinating to know whether dolphins

respond to special calls made by fishermen," Spottiswoode says.

The researchers also say they'd like to study if honeyguides learned "language-like variation in human signals" across Africa, helping the birds identify good partners among the local human population. But however it began, we know the skill is now instinct, requiring no training from people. And since honeyguides reproduce like cuckoos -- laying eggs in other species' nests, thus tricking them into raising honeyguide chicks -- we know they don't learn it from their parents, either.

This human-honeyguide relationship isn't just fascinating; it's also threatened, fading away in many places along with other ancient cultural practices. By shedding new light on it, Spottiswoode hopes her research can also help preserve it.

"Sadly, the mutualism has already vanished from many parts of Africa," she says. "The world is a richer place for wildernesses like Niassa where this astonishing example of human-animal cooperation still thrives."

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Rody: Phl will honor Paris climate treaty if...

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

President Duterte assured the US government yesterday that the Philippines would recognize the agreement of cooperation reached during the Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris, France last year as long as it will be fair to all.

Duterte conveyed the message to US Secretary of State John Kerry, who paid a courtesy call on the President in Malacañang.

Duterte and Kerry later had a working lunch where they discussed major issues, including ways to strengthen ties between the US and the Philippines through the Enhanced Development Cooperation Agreement (EDCA).

Kerry cited the importance of the Paris treaty.

"They also touched on climate change and Mr. Kerry was helpful in defining certain issues about the Paris pact and the President also responded appropriately when he said that the Philippines will work out just as long as everything is fair," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said after the courtesy call.

Prior to Kerry's visit, Duterte said the

Philippines could not attain its full development and industrialization if it will commit to the Paris treaty, which limits the carbon emissions of developing countries.

Since he plans to put up industrialized areas, Duterte slammed developed countries for putting a gag on developing countries when they wantonly destroyed the environment on their way to progress.

### US aid for crime campaign

The US has vowed to provide \$32 million to support the Duterte administration's intensified law enforcement efforts.

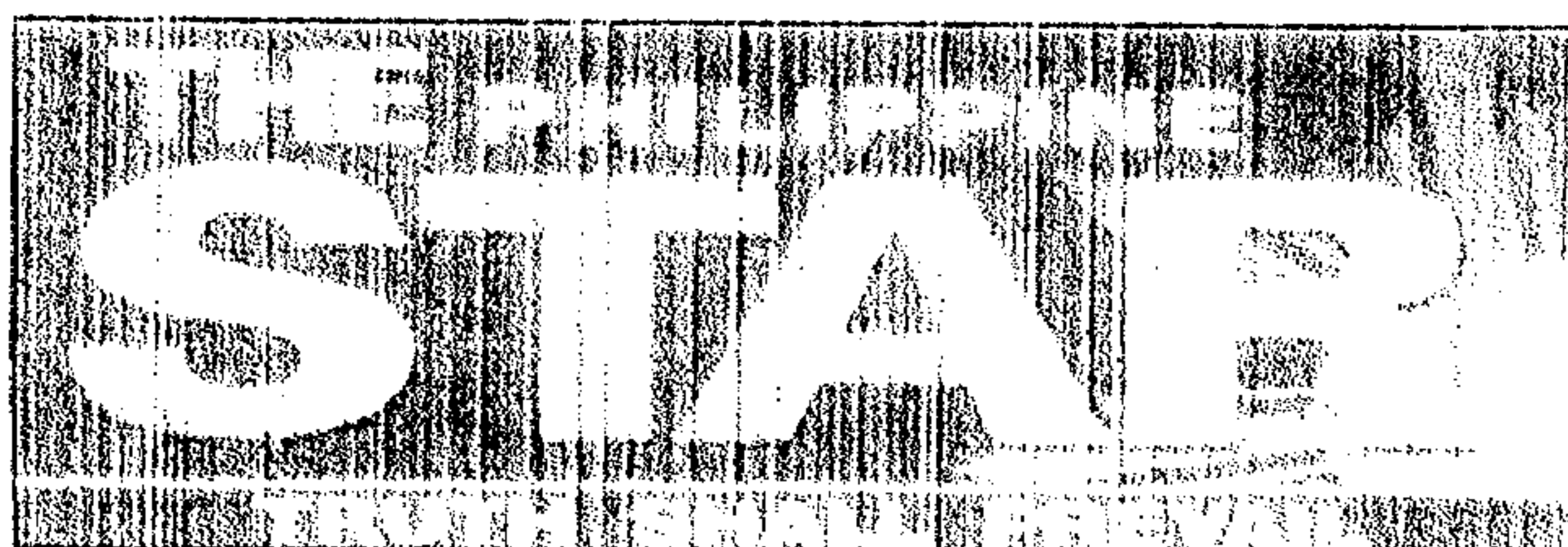
Washington's support for law enforcement activities was one of the topics Duterte and Kerry discussed.

"The US committed \$32 million in training and services," Abella said in a press briefing.

It remains unclear what specific programs will be funded by the US. There is no information also on whether the training will cover maritime law enforcement in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) and other territorial waters.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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### Rody

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Apella confirmed that Duterte had also briefed Kerry about his crackdown against illegal drugs and crime.

#### Human rights protection

Kerry underscored the protection of civil and human rights in ensuring a safe society.

He said the US and the Philippines have broader agenda than just the question on the South China Sea.

The Philippines and the US, he said, continue to work together with other countries in the region on law enforcement, regional security and combating transnational crimes like human trafficking.

"I made very clear that civil and human rights need to be protected even as we work to keep our society safe," Kerry said in a joint press conference with Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. following the Philippines-US Bilateral Meeting held at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

Kerry is the first foreign minister to call on Duterte.

The two countries also work together on countering violent extremism.

"Unfortunately, the Philippines is no stranger to the threat of terrorism. This nation has been managing these threats by groups like Abu Sayyaf for some period of time and our nations work very closely in order to counter those threats," he said.

Yasay said the US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty has been a cornerstone of security in the region for decades.

Kerry said the EDCA would not only help to coordinate efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region, but it also allows the US to provide rapid assistance to the Philippines in the event of an emergency. It enables the US to preposition humanitarian relief supplies.

"The EDCA agreement will also expand opportunities for our militaries to train together and that will help modernize the AFP and increase their effectiveness in responding to 21st century threats," he added.

He said the President committed to Kerry that agreements between the Philippines and the US would be fulfilled and respected.

- With Alexis Romero, Pia Lee-Brago





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### PH worse off under Paris pact

LEGAZPI CITY -- Albay 2nd District Rep. Joey Salceda said the Philippines should not ratify the 2015 Paris climate agreement adopted during the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 21st Conference of Parties last December 2015 because the country will be worse under it.

Salceda was former co-chair in 2013-2014 of the UNFCCC's Green Climate Fund Board where he represented Southeast Asia and developing countries but has criticized the Paris accord as early as February this year, branding it as a "bad agreement" because it shifts the burden of responsibility of reducing carbon emissions to developing countries, and away from their wealthy counterparts which have "actually caused untold damage to the environment" in the past decades.

The Paris agreement is a compilation of pledges to hold the increase of global average temperature to "well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and "to pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels."

Salceda, however, said the global average of "well below 2°C limit of temperature increase" in reality would translate into much more than that in the developing world -- with more than 4 degrees for Africa alone.

President Rodrigo Duterte himself has criticized the Paris deal and threatened not to have it ratified. He has ordered a review of the "crazy" commitments the Philippines may have made when it signed the accord last April.

#### ENVIRO WATCH

He said as much in his July 25 State of the Nation address. The Senate has issued a statement it will not ratify the treaty following Duterte's pronouncement.

Salceda, who was among the first to voice opposition to the Paris deal, however, said Manila's signature on it does not mean final commitment, for which reason it has to be ratified by the Senate.

The United States, he pointed out was a signatory too to the Kyoto Protocol, but chose not to become a Party to it.

In an article he wrote last February, he lamented that "Western-dominated media hailed the COP21 Paris Agreement but ignored the dissenting voices from developing countries including the Philippines."

Ratification for the Philippines, Salceda said, means looking into what was put on the table as our "intended nationally determined contributions which were mainly formulated under the tutelage of developed countries, without consultations with concerned sectors of our society."

Ratifying the accord, he warned, "may lock our people in poverty for the rest of their existence until we are completely annihilated by continued extreme weather events."

An active climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction campaigner, Salceda said the Philippines has been fulfilling its commitments for over 20 years under the Kyoto Protocol.

"Despite our state of development, our country has honored its UN cli-

mate commitments under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, currently the only two treaty instruments on climate change that are in force. The Paris agreement has not entered into force yet and is, therefore not legally binding yet on the Philippines," he added.

Salceda explained that while Philippines signed the agreement in April 2016, its signature, under international law, creates only an obligation under Art. 18(a) of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties to "refrain from acts which would defeat the object or purpose of the treaty... until it shall have made its intention clear not to become a party to the treaty."

If the Senate ratifies the Paris agreement, the Philippines will have committed to severely cut by 70 percent its greenhouse-gas emissions by 2030 from 2000 levels, if it gets support from developed nations to convert to clean technologies.

Salceda said the Philippine pledge, like those of other developing countries, was made on two motivations: 1) that it would be matched with the same commitment by developed countries, which did not materialize, and; 2) it was conditional on financing and technology transfer which also was not provided.

Based on the two unfulfilled criteria, Salceda lamented, developed countries have "transformed ambition into folly."

The Kyoto deal was aimed at curbing emissions but only 19 countries including France and island-states threatened by rising sea levels have so far ratified it.