

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 23 AUG 2016

DAY : Tuesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Organic fertilizer firm closed

No environmental compliance certificate, says EMB



GARLIC MOUNTAIN Truckloads of supposedly rotten garlic from the Ilocos Region have been found mixed with carbonized rice hull inside a fertilizer plant that was shut down by the Environmental Management Bureau and the city government of Palayan in Nueva Ecija province.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

ORGANIC FERTILIZER . . .

PAGE 2/2

By Armand Galang
Inquirer Central Luzon

PALAYAN CITY—A manufacturer of organic fertilizer has been shut down by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) for operating without an environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

Vieva Green Growth Inc. (VGGI) was served a notice of violation on Aug. 18 by a team from the EMB and the city's environment and natural resources office (Cenro), said Lormelyn Claudio, the bureau's Central Luzon director.

The facility also failed to get a permit from the city government, having been operating in a residential area, city officials said.

Before its closure, residents were alarmed by the foul odor VGGI facility had been emitting from a two-hectare compound in Caballero village. The property is owned by Maynard Cruz, husband of Leah Cruz, who heads the Vegetable Importers, Exporters and Vendors Association of the Philippines (Vieva).

In 2014, the Office of the Ombudsman investigated Vieva in connection with the spike in garlic prices from P80 to P300 per kilo that had been attributed to a cartel with links to former officials of the Department of Agriculture.

VGGI and Vieva have yet to issue a statement.

From the road, the VGGI facility appears like an ordinary farm planted with eggplants, ampalaya and corn. A tarpaulin describes the business as "an organic nursery, research and demonstration farm."

At the back, however, are mountains of rotting garlic and stacks of carbonized rice hull.

A VGGI employee, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media, said the rotten garlic stocks served as fertilizer component. The carbonized rice hull was the fertilizer's brown, the source said.

Meat is a richer source of minerals for fertilizer, the source said, to explain the meat shipments.

The VGGI source denied reports that the facility was dumping garlic to manipulate market prices.

The office of the mayor inspected the VGGI compound on Aug. 10 to verify information from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) that six truckloads of meat were coming to the city, with VGGI as the alleged shipment consignee.

A city employee privy to the issue said the BAI tip was the first time the city government learned about VGGI's operations. The source asked not to be named as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

'Shabu' chemicals dumped along SCTEx

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx) has become a dumping ground for chemicals and equipment used in the manufacture of "shabu" (methamphetamines), a Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) official said on Monday.

Five dumps have been found by SCTEx personnel and policemen since Aug. 8, said Emerson Margate, PDEA director in Central Luzon.

Foul smell along Km 39+640 on the southbound lane of the expressway at Barangay Babo Pangulo in Porac, Pampanga province, led authorities to a

stash of chemicals, which lab tests identified as 38 liters of acetone and 7.7 liters of hydrochloric acid, which are considered essential in the production of shabu.

On Aug. 16, Porac police found chemicals which were submitted for lab tests.

Police in Concepcion town in Tarlac province stumbled on 10 gallons of containers, 12 bottles, clear reagent bottles, 15 zip-locked transparent bags containing unknown powder, seven transparent plastic bags containing the residue of suspected shabu and 15 bottles of chemicals identified as pyri-

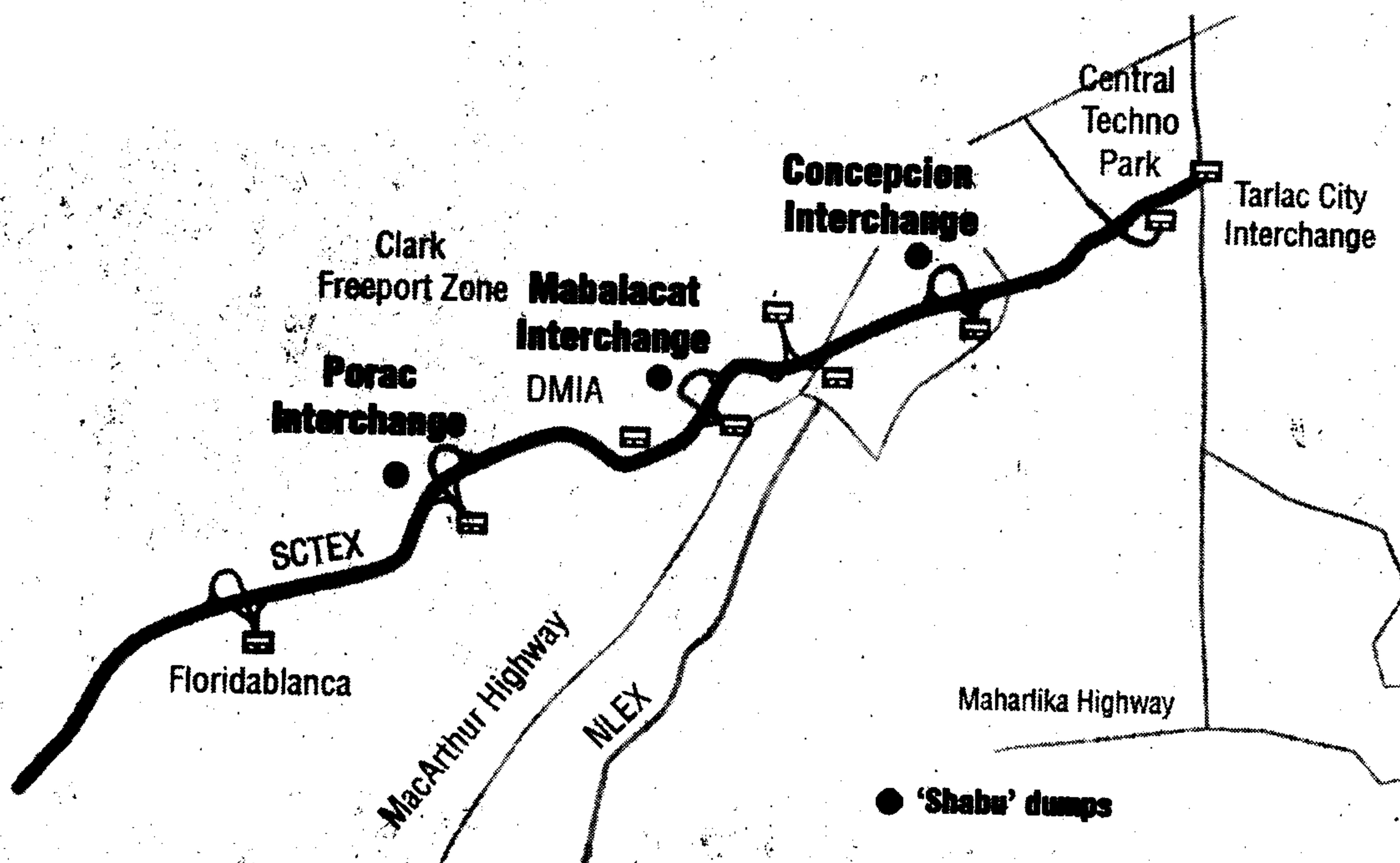
dine, ethanol, acetone and hydrochloric acid.

Packages of chemicals and equipment were also found along Km 64+420 at Barangay Sapang Balen in Mabalacat City, also in Pampanga.

Margate said the chemicals and equipment found in Porac were similar to those seized in Concepcion and Mabalacat.

"PDEA is retracing the likely movement of the recovered chemicals and equipment... because there is a possibility that these came from one source," Margate said in a statement.

Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lopez to check effects of aerial spraying on banana plantations

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

E NVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has vowed to look into the adverse effects of aerial spraying on banana plantations in Mindanao.

The move is in response to complaints on the alleged adverse impact of aerial spraying of pesticides to human health and the environment.

According to the Department of Agriculture (DA), banana is the leading fruit grown in the Philippines and a consistent top dollar earner.

Persistent infestation by pests and diseases continue to threaten to wipe out the \$1.14-billion banana export industry.

Aerial spraying of pesticides is a common practice in banana plantations, owing to its fast application and efficacy. It also covers more areas than ground spraying.

However, the practice is strongly opposed because it poses various risks to people and the environment.

The Mamamayan Ayaw sa Aerial Spraying (MAAS), a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals who oppose the practice, said they would appeal anew to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) chief for compassion in behalf of those severely affected by the practice.

Mary Ann V. Fuertes, executive director of Interface Development Interventions Inc. and one of the organizers of MAAS, said they would seek an audience with Lopez to present their case against the use of aerial spraying of pesticides.

MAAS has been campaigning to ban aerial spraying, particularly in Davao City and other parts of Mindanao, for the protection of people in affected communities against

3.2 km

The average range of area reached by chemicals during aerial spraying as studies cited

chemical poisoning. The group is pushing for the passage of a measure that would effectively ban aerial spraying as a method of applying chemicals and similar substances on agricultural crops in the Philippines.

Thousands of farmers continue to suffer the effects of what opponents of the method described as "poisonous rain" every time agricultural companies spray pesticides using aircraft.

Agricultural companies running cavendish banana plantations practice aerial spraying to eliminate the Sigatoka fungus. It allows the companies to spray more areas of plantation in less time.

"Aerial spraying showers down poisons indiscriminately from the sky, hitting only the target pests, but also anything, man or nonhuman, within the range of toxic fallout," Fuertes said.

The group cited studies that toxic dust reaches 3.2 kilometers on the average.

Farming communities complain that the practice makes them suffer various ailments, from skin infections to respiratory

illnesses, nausea, blindness and a host of other ailments, including goiter, neurodevelopmental delays in children and various forms of cancer.

They said people's water resources are sprayed and contaminated. Livestock, well as other crops, like lanzones, coconuts and durian trees, die, the group claimed.

Instead of aerial spraying, MAAS is urging agricultural companies to use various ground-spraying methods, such as truck-mounted or manual spraying. Ground spraying, they said, would at least lessen the toxic drift and protect more people and the environment from pesticide contamination.

During the recent Mindanao Environmental Summit, Lopez committed to use the power of her office to stop aerial spraying of pesticide and assured NGO leaders of action on their petition.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lopez to check effects of aerial spraying
on banana plantations p.2

"I am against anything where people suffer. It is the government's duty to safeguard people's welfare. And I am committed to this," Lopez told the BUSINESSMIRROR in a text message.

Lopez expressed concern over the health and well-being of affected banana-plantation workers and their families, as well.

"I am concerned about the complaints of communities about the effect on their health," she said.

Lopez sought the help of members of the media and other stakeholders to provide the DENR with more details about effects on aerial spraying in communities near banana plantations.

An environmental advocate, Lopez said she is willing to meet with concerned stakeholders to talk about the issue and how it affects the environment and cause suffering to people in the communities. She said she would ask Senior Environment Undersecretary Leo L. Jasareno, her designated point man for mining and environmental management, for appropriate action.

Incidentally, just last week, the Supreme Court (SC) has struck down the

Davao City ordinance banning aerial spraying of pesticides. The measure was passed during the term of then-mayor and now President Duterte.

The SC decision favored the Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association Inc. (PBGEA) to declare the Davao City Ordinance 0309-07, series of 2007, invalid. The SC ruled the ordinance "unconstitutional."

Section 5 of the ordinance bans aerial spraying three months after the ordinance took effect on March 23, 2007.

The SC decision said the ordinance violated the equal-protection clause in the Constitution when it prohibited aerial spraying regardless of the substance or the level of concentration of the chemicals to be applied and imposed the 30-meter buffer zone in all agricultural lands in Davao City regardless of the size of landholdings. The SC order also pointed out that the ordinance violated the rights of banana growers.

According to Fuertes, the SC decision said the three months transition time is oppressive on the part of the plantation owners.

However, she argued that at the deliberation in the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in Davao City, no less than the expert witness of PBGEA testified that shifting to ground spraying is possible and can be immediately done.

Fuertes said laws, including Presidential Decree 1144, which created the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), needs to be revisited, because it appears the law and FPA appear to be a "toothless tiger" when it comes to regulating fertilizer and pesticide application in agriculture.

"In so many dialogues with FPA, they said their mandate is so limited—review of registration application of pesticide and fertilizer manufacturers/distributors wanting to sell the chemicals in the Philippines," she lamented.

She noted that it was only during the height of the MAAS campaign that they came up with a guideline on aerial spraying.

The Manila Times

DATE

B3

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR issues ground rules for waste recycling centers

A NEW administrative order providing the ground rules for establishments keen to open and manage a waste-to-energy (WTE) facility for municipal solid wastes has been released by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) over the weekend.

The rules are contained in National Solid Waste Management Commission Resolution (NSWMC) 669 entitled "Adopting the Guidelines Governing the Establishment and Operation of Waste to Energy Technologies for Municipal Solid Wastes," signed on June 9 by the NSWMC and adopted by the DENR.

NSWMC Resolution 669 aims to protect public health and the environment and sets guidelines and targets for minimizing solid wastes through measures such as composting, recycling, reusing, recovery, green charcoal process, and others before the wastes are collected and disposed of.

A WTE facility is defined as an area where waste-to-energy operations are housed. "Waste-to-energy" refers to the process of converting non-recyclable waste materials into usable energy such as heat, electricity, or fuel.

The resolution lays down the registration and permit requirements, standards, and procedures for establishing and operating commercial-scale WTE technologies for managing municipal solid wastes.

It covers the WTE facility's pre-operational phase; waste delivery, quality, and operational control; pollution abatement; environmental monitoring; documentation and monitoring; social safeguards;

and decommissioning or closure.

Under the guidelines, all necessary permits, registrations, and other legal documents must be secured and an environment/health risk assessment conducted before the facility can be constructed and operated.

Because they will be a source of air pollution, WTE facilities are also required to register beforehand with the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

They must also submit to the NSWMC a certified true copy of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC); all permits, plans, and legal documents required by the ECC; business permit from the local government where the facility is to be located; and Commission resolutions on the approval of the 10-year solid waste management plan of the host and of those intending to provide feedstock to the facility.

The order prohibits the use of non-segregated municipal solid wastes and hazardous wastes as WTE materials.

Once the WTE facility is operational, it is required to submit quarterly self-monitoring reports, document all aspects of operations and make all records available for inspection, and maintain a billboard containing updated information on its air emissions and wastewater effluents, among others.

If the establishment is to be decommissioned or closed, it has to file an abandonment plan at least a year before, which should include rehabilitation and remedial measures, cleanup activities, and proposed alternative projects in the area. **RAADEE S. SAUSA**

23 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B6
PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Century Communities defends ECC compliance

By MADELAINE B. MIRAFLORES

On the risk of losing environmental clearance, Century Communities Corporation, a subsidiary of listed property developer Century Properties Group, Inc. (CPI), has further tightened its grip on its environmental compliance certificates (ECC), saying it has fully complied in all of its conditions.

In its response to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources's (DENR) Notice for its Novaliches project, Century Communities stated that it has continuously complied with all the requirements set forth by the ECC.

The housing project is within the La Mesa Eco Park, a 33-hectare natural park in Quezon City.

Even before becoming the DENR Secretary, Gina Lopez has been a known advocate of the development and preservation of the park and the watershed surrounding it.

"As required by the ECC, [the company] has submitted prior a social development plan and has already appointed a pollution control officer for the said project," Century Communities said in a statement.

It also said some of the requirements recently being asked of them are something that they can't produce yet since they haven't started construction yet.

"Certain requirements, such as the monitoring of actual project impact versus the predicted impacts, are not applicable since the company has never commenced construction nor development on the subject property," it specified.

But then the company also swore to cooperate with the DENR regarding the project.

"The company is looking forward to working hand in hand with the DENR, including partnering with government agencies, to further safeguard public interest," Century Communities further said.

It was in early August when the DENR ordered the temporary suspension of the company's ECC.

As a response, Century Communities stated that despite the issuance of the ECC for the Novaliches project, the company has not yet commenced any development to date and is looking forward to partnering with government agencies.

"The company has not proceeded with any development over 1 year from when the ECC was issued... As such, we not only will await guidelines from DENR and local government for the land's best use, but also look forward to working hand in hand with the DENR, including partnering with government agencies, to further safeguard public interest," the company said.

DATE

PAGE

UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

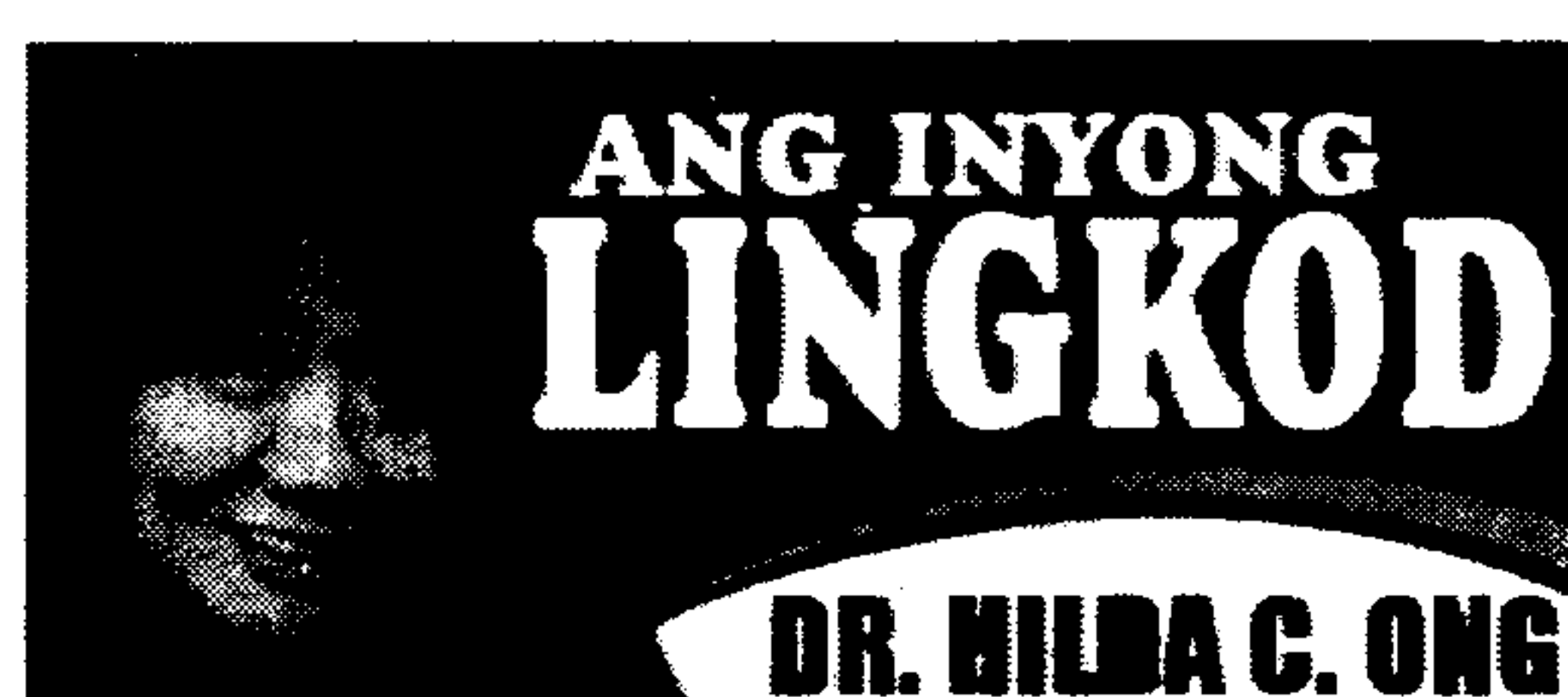
MARTES 23 AGOSTO 2016

REMATE 9

LUMAGDA sa isang Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) kamakailan ang mga ahensyang ito sa pamamagitan ng kani-kanilang kinatawan, sina Secretary Regina P. Lopez ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Secretary Ismael Sueno ng Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Secretary Arthur P. Tugade ng Department of Transportation (DOTr), undersecretary Eduardo del Rosario ng Department of National Defense (DND), Police director general Ronald M. dela Rosa na higit na kilala bilang si "Bato", at admiral William M. Melad ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG). Kabilang din sa task force ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sa pangunguna ni chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Visaya.

Pangungunahan ng DENR ang National Anti-Environmental Crimes Task Force (NAECTF) na siyang mangunguna sa pagpapatupad ng mga environmental law mula sa "deterrence, investigation, arrest, searches, prosecution and enforcement of judgments" na may kinalaman sa illegal natural resources extraction, degradation, at protection of environmental quality.

Bahagi ng nilagdaang MOA ang "Declaration of Cooperation" na nagsasaad ng dagliang pagresponde ng mga ahensya sa verified reports of large-scale environ-



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

NATIONAL ANTI-ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES TASK FORCE

BINUO NI DENR SEC. LOPEZ

mental violations.

Hiningi ng DENR ang tulong ng mga ahensyang nabanggit dahil sa mandato nito na bigyang proteksyon ang kalikasan at kapaligiran, "ang laban kontra sa mga nang-aabuso at mapang-abuso sa ating likas na kayamanan ay kinakailangang tapatan ng buong puwersa ng pamahalaan.

Ang laban para sa ating Inang Kalikasan ay laban ng buong pamahalaan", ani DENR Secretary Lopez.

Simula nang maupo bilang puno ng DENR, pitong minahan na ang sinuspinde dahil sa hindi pagsunod sa mga umiiral na batas gayundin sa safety standards. "Ang mga kumpanyang ito ay pumatay ng mga ilog at sapa. Nagdulot ito ng ibayong paghihirap.

Kinakailangan ang rehabilitasyon. Ito ang tinatawag nating hustisyang panglipunan" dagdag pa ni Secretary Lopez.

Katulad ng sinabi ko kay

secretary Lopez, sana ay maisama sa super task force na ito ang Department of Justice (DOJ), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) at Bureau of Customs (BOC) upang masiguro ang mabilis na pagsasampa ng kaso laban sa mga environmental violator.

Sa ating mga mambabasa, maaaring iparating ang anomang sumbong sa DENR Hotline 0917-552-9344 o (02) 920-621, agad ito ipararating sa NAECTF para sa mabilis at karampatang aksyon.

TANGKILIKIN ang programang **"HEALTH & Travel @ SERBISYO PUBLIKO**, sa DWBL 1242 kHz (8:00-9:00 a.m.) Monday to Friday at DWSS 1494 kHz (9:00-10:00 a.m.), Saturday & Sunday. Mababasa ang kanyang mga article sa Dr. Hilda Ong FB fan page.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

NGOs ring DENR leadership: Miners

BY JED MACAPAGAL

MINING stakeholders said NGOs ring the leadership of Regina Lopez, DENR secretary and that she needs more science-based assistants and that she be open for changes.

The miners said that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) would be an effective agency under Lopez.

"I admire Gina Lopez' advocacy and we need somebody like that, someone who is very passionate, who believes strongly on responsible mining. Maybe it's about time that we have somebody with that passion. But she is now the secretary which is different when she was just an advocate," Philex Mining Corp. senior vice president of corporate affairs, Mike Toledo told reporters yesterday.

Lopez, he said, must now listen to all sides of various issues and base decisions on scientific data and evidences. Toledo also pointed out there may be a need for the country to review the structural reform of the DENR.

"In the U.S., you have the DENR but you also have a separate Environmental Protection Agency. Here in the Philippines, maybe they can review it since the MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau) is under the DENR. There is a conflict in the present set-up since MGB is supposed to promote the mining industry while DENR is supposed to regulate. It will be difficult if the one promoting investment is also the one regulating," Toledo said.

He also mentioned that the congress can also study if tax shares of host communities from mining operations can be submitted directly to the local government instead of remitted to the national treasury so that the benefits can be instantly felt.

Carlo Arcilla, director of the University of the Philippines' (UP) National Institute for Geological Sciences said that the DENR is now surrounded with NGOs with good intentions but lacking experts. He also said that mining is not aesthetically appealing but it does not mean that it is not being responsible.

"There is no smoke without fire. There



Arcilla said that mining is not aesthetically appealing but it does not mean that it is not being responsible.

are really complains and they should be answered. There are really problems in the mining industry. But the thing is, mining is not over until the land is fully rehabilitated. It's like a construction site which will only look good unless it is already completed. When you are extracting soil, it really doesn't look good. The problem comes in when the miner don't rehabilitate," he explained.

Arcilla also mentioned that while it is true that the share of mining to the gross domestic product (GDP) is a mere 0.7 percent, it is not right to identify it as something that is not contributing to the community.

"Even if it's just (around) one percent, it might mean 100 percent to the involved communities. Mining is a complicated business, it's easy to condemn but it can do a lot of good provided that it is regulated, the environment be protected and the government is willing to listen to experts," he said.

UP economics professor, Ramon Clarete meanwhile shared that the country must also

have consistent and stable policies since it will greatly affect inflow of investments in and out of the mining sector.

"There's a lot of improvements that we can do especially on the enforcement of mining laws. It could be the chance to shake up and wake up the industry to the fact that they cannot just bypass regulations. It is important however that mining firms must stick to their rehab plans since what is giving the industry a bad name is when irresponsible firms leave their sites without rehab," he explained.

The DENR said earlier that the audit conducted to all operating mines in the country is expected to be completed within the month.

"We are not political, we are not witch hunting. Its large scale, small scale mining, everything. Because its the Filipino resources so we have to make sure that it is well utilized... We are evaluating all existing permits and ECCs (environmental compliance certificate) not only of any particular kind," Lopez recently explained.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Neda backs DENR drive vs 'irresponsible' miners

BY CAI U. ORDINARIO @cuo_bm

THE National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) remains unfazed by the closure of mines under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' clampdown on violators of mining laws.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and Neda Director General Ernesto M. Pernia said that, while there will be workers affected by the closure of these mining companies, mining contributes only less than a percent to the gross domestic product (GDP).

"The contribution is only less than 1 percent," Pernia said. There's always a way for these workers to shift to gainful employment."

Based on the April 2016 Labor Force Survey, around 2.9 percent, or 115,564, workers of the 39.916 million employed were in the mining and quarrying sector.

Apart from the risk of closing mines, the Neda said various domestic concerns could hamper the country's medium-term economic growth.

Pernia said logistics bottlenecks could constrain economic activity in the same way that port congestion in 2014 caused the slowdown of the country's export and overall economic growth.

Two years ago the city of Manila imposed a truck ban that caused the

slow inflow and outflow of goods within and outside of Metro Manila.

Further, other risks included delays in government infrastructure and reconstruction projects, and weather shocks such as La Niña toward the end of the year.

"Weather shocks, including a potential La Niña toward the end of the year, could work both ways—it could increase agricultural production but could also result in floods in urban areas," Pernia said.

On the external front, Pernia said the weak economic growth of the country's trade partners, such as Japan, China and even the European Union, could negatively affect the country's economic growth in the medium term.

The Neda chief added that the "knock-on effects of the Brexit" and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and West Philippine Sea (WPS) could negatively affect the country's economic growth in the next six years.

"We will also continuously monitor the monetary policies in the major developed economies and the knock-on effects of the Brexit. Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the

extended period of low oil prices could also affect OFW [overseas Filipino workers] jobs and remittances. There is also the maritime dispute in the WPS," Pernia said.

He added that these threats will be met head on by the economy through growth drivers, such as the Asean economic integration, a peaceful transfer of power under the Duterte administration and the resumption of peace talks with the communist-led National Democratic Front.

The Asean Economic Community, Pernia said, will provide new sources of capital, technology and markets, which, he said, augurs well with the government's efforts to expand its export markets, import sources and diversification of Philippine exports.

He added that the country's hosting of the Asean meetings next year bodes well for the country's tourism sector and overall economy.

"Integration with our Asean neighbors will be reinforced with our hosting of the Asean meetings next year. As our experience with our Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation hosting last year has shown, we expect our Asean hosting to boost our tourism sector," Pernia said.

These growth drivers will enable the economy to grow 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent next year and 7 percent to 8 percent annually starting 2018 until President Duterte steps down in 2022.

"As you may infer from the numbers, we are quite optimistic. We are keen on taking advantage of opportunities for economic growth while remaining vigilant of the risks," Pernia said.



23 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mining firms ask for chance to prove worth

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Mining stakeholders are appealing to Environment Secretary Gina Lopez to give mining companies a chance to do their business and to continue to contribute to the growth of the economy amid the government's intensified crackdown on irresponsible mining.

"Let's give mining a chance. We have the laws and the provisions are very strict. The industry is asking to just let them do their business," Philex Public and Regulatory Affairs senior vice president

Mike Toledo said in a briefing yesterday.

UP National Institute of Geological Sciences director Carlo Arcilla said the industry should not be set aside despite its measly one percent contribution to the country's gross domestic product.

"Even if it's just one percent, it might mean 100 percent to the involved communities. Mining is a complicated business, it's easy to condemn but it can do a lot of good provided that it is regulated, the environment is protected and the

government is willing to listen to experts," Arcilla said.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said mining could become a better industry if the government would be able to properly separate responsible firms from the irresponsible ones.

"There are already projects that have been lined up in the coming years. These are already approved and just need some pushing," COMP executive vice president Nelia Halcon said.

Mining stakeholders also

called on Lopez to distinguish her role as an environment advocate and as a current government official.

"I admire her advocacy and we need somebody like that. But now that she is a secretary, every time that a decision has to be made, she has to listen to scientific data, evidence and other information, then make a decision," Toledo said.

Toledo also noted that there might be a little conflict between the mandate of the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR) and its attached agency, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

"MGB is supposed to promote the mining industry while DENR is supposed to

regulate. It would be difficult if the one promoting investments is also the one regulating. There might be a need for some structural reforms," he said. — With Mary Grace Padin

23 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR vows to stop Leyte sand quarrying

By NESTOR L. ABREMAITA

TACLOBAN CITY — Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Eastern Visayas have vowed to stop the illegal sand quarrying on the beaches of Tolosa and Dulag towns in Leyte.

The sand is used in the manufacture of hollow blocks.

DENR 8 Regional Director Leonardo R. Sibbaluca said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), an attached agency of the DENR, will investigate the reports that sand is gathered by hollow block makers in Barangay San Roque and Telegrapo in Tolosa and Barangay San Jose in Dulag.

Sibbaluca said the new MGB 8 Regional Director Raul Laput texted to tell him that an investigation is underway.

He said he recalled that the former regional directors Alilo Emsomo and Nenita Caquioa have noted the illegal practice during their terms.

The Manila Times

DATE

B3

PAGE

UPPER HALF

✓

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mining audit is fair, says nickel miner

NICKEL producer SR Metals Inc. (SRMI) has described as "tough but fair" the current mining audit ordered by the government to weed out irresponsible mining companies.

The company was given the chance to answer all the queries, said SRMI tenements manager Alfredo Belen Jr., noting the company submitted 145 different documents for the technical audit.

It was another story when it came to the social audit. The audit team from various civil organizations, were "independent" when they interviewed the local community within the mining area.

"We did not accompany them. They went out to the local community. The rules were very strict, they were not allowed to ask if the respondent was pro or anti-SRMI. The question was, 'If the people benefitted from the mining operations?'" Belen noted.

"They asked around. And the questions and observations, they put it down on paper. They gave it to us and asked us to comment," Belen said.

The company operates the Tubay Nickel Mining Project in La Fraternidad, Tubay, Agusan del Norte. Its Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) covers more than 1,000 hectares.

The company's revised MPSA in

2015 is good until 2033, and allows it to mine for nickel, cobalt, and iron.

SRMI was earlier accused of destroying the environment in its area of operations. But Agusan del Norte Governor Angel Amante-Matba himself belied the allegations, saying the company has been a "responsible" miner.

Matba is joining the majority of local residents in asking the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to let SRMI continue operating because of the benefits the province has been getting from the mining operations.

"Suspending the operations of SRMI would be a big burden to the local government," he said. The people relied heavily on the LGUs for employment and financial support, the company started mining in the area.

"Before, the province was so laid back. The people had no jobs and ... would really go to politicians, but we cannot accommodate them all. You cannot accommodate a growing population, that's impossible," said Matba.

Matba placed the workforce of SRMI at 1,700. The taxes paid by the company totaled more than P 23 million last year.

"I've seen it myself ... If you ... ask me, their operations have been a great help to the community. If you say that

mining does not contribute, I don't know where that's coming from," Matba said. "You don't just look at the number of people employed, you also have to look at the multiplier effect.

"If they are compliant, why should you close it?" he added.

"Not all mining companies are bad. I would understand if you close the companies destroying the environment, but if companies are following the rules of the country, why will you close it?"

"How will the DENR secretary help me accommodate all those people who would be displaced? I will be the one answerable to them, because I am the leader here," Matba said.

The Indigenous People (IP) affected by the operations of SRMI also urged the mining audit team and Environment Secretary Regina Lopez to be "fair in making decisions."

"It will be very unfair if they suspend the operations of SRMI. What will happen to us? Farming and fishing alone could not sustain us. We are appealing to the government to be fair," said Matbanwa Datu Bebruar Manlatan.

"Those IPs claiming that they are one of us are fake. The IPs here support the company, because we can see that they are responsible," Manlatan added.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Philex expresses confidence Padcal mine will pass audit

By Janina C. Lim *Reporter*

LISTED Philex Mining Corp. said it is confident that its Padcal mine in Benguet will pass the mining audit set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"We are confident that the audit is, of course, will be done objectively and fairly. And we are confident that we will pass the audit," Michael T. Toledo, Philex Mining's senior vice-president for public and regulatory Affairs, told reporters at the sidelines of a forum on Monday.

Mr. Toledo cited the company's International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification, saying this is "one of the most difficult things any company will get for environment safety management."

Philex Mining is also secured a certification for Integrated Management System (IMS) from technical services provider TUV Rheinland, covering its environmental management system and safety management.

Mr. Toledo said the team from the DENR conducted an audit of the Padcal mine for three days, ending with an exit conference.

He confirmed that the audit team brought up the previous accidents that occurred in the copper-gold mine.

In August 2012, Padcal's tailings facility suffered a break due to heavy rains, causing more than 20 million metric tons of mine waste to drain into nearby bodies of water. After an investigation, the DENR slapped a P1-billion fine on Philex Mining over violations of the Mining Act of 1995.

"The real responsible mining is not only when things are well. It's when accidents happen and it is how the company reacted when an accident did occur," said Mr. Toledo, noting that Philex Mining paid the fine, made necessary remedial responses, and coordinated openly with the government to resolve past accidents.

"In fact, the DENR said we have raised the bar as far as standard is concerned," he added.

Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez signed her first memorandum order dated July 8 directing a nationwide audit of metallic mines.

Since the audit started, 10 mines have so far been suspended, nine of which are nickel ore producers that make up about 8% of the country's total nickel output.

A REFORESTED AREA in Padcal, Benguet in this 2012 photo.



PHILEXMINING.COM.PH

While he admires Ms. Lopez's advocacy for responsible mining, Mr. Toledo reminded her of the difference between being a mere advocate and a head of a regulatory body.

"Now that you are a secretary, every time that a decision has to be made, you also have to listen to all, you also have to listen to scientific data, evidence, and other information, then you make a decision," said Mr. Toledo.

For his part, Carlo A. Arcilla, director at the National Institute for Geological Sciences of the University of the Philippines, also voiced the same sentiment.

"Secretary Lopez has a very good heart but she has to be informed," Mr. Arcilla said during the forum on Monday.

"There are really problems in mining, but the thing is, mining is not over until the land is fully rehabilitated. It's like construction of a building, there's no construction site that looks good. When you are extracting soil, it really doesn't look good. The problem comes in when the miner doesn't rehabilitate," he added.

The UP professor said mining would benefit people and the economy to a wide extent "provided that it is regulated, the environment be protected and the government is willing to listen to experts."

Shares of Philex Mining closed Monday at P8.70 apiece, 0.46% down from Friday's close.

Philex Mining is one of three key Philippine subsidiaries of Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being Metro Pacific Investments Corp. and Philippine Long Distance Telephone, Inc. (PLDT).

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary Media-Quest Holdings, Inc., has a majority stake in *BusinessWorld*.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Semirara questions DENR show-cause order

SEMIRARA Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) raised several issues with the Environment department's show-cause order, saying the monitoring team's report showed it met the conditions under its environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

"The company clarified and explained to the DENR-EMB (Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau) that the Company has complied with said ECC conditions," the Consunji-led company told the stock exchange, referring to the "notice of adverse findings" issued by the agency.

Semirara cited the multipartite monitoring team's report, covering April to June 2016, which stated that

the company had complied with the ECC conditions.

"Stockpiling and disposal of materials generated from the project site were properly and systematically complied," the report said, according to SMPC.

The DENR on Aug. 12 issued the show-cause letter directing the company to explain within seven days from receipt why its ECC should not be canceled.

The DENR had alleged Semirara did not conduct proper stockpiling and disposal of materials removed from the settling ponds, among others, at the Molave Coal Mine Expansion Project in Caluya, Antique.

Semirara also said the notice did not provide enough information on violation allegedly committed by the

firm, particularly on "the specific details on how and where the violation was committed."

The DENR did not bring up the alleged violations during an inter-agency debriefing session on June 29 to discuss the results of the May 23-27 field visit, the miner said.

Semirara also questioned the date of the issuance of the notice, saying under existing regulations it should have been given to the proponent within 72 hours from the fact-finding/field visit.

According to the company, it received the notice only on Aug. 15, more than 60 days after the field visit ended on May 27.

Shares in Semirara rose 1.52% to close at P113.70 apiece on Monday.

— **Janina C. Lim**

The Manila Times

DATE

BA

PAGE

✓
UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Benefits of mining go beyond revenues-Philex

PAGE 1/2

BY JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ

THE mining sector's contribution may have dropped to less than a percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) but its benefits stretch far beyond the mine site, providing valuable employment and opportunities to the countryside, a high-ranking official of Philex Mining Corp. said.

Atty. Michael Toledo, Philex Mining senior vice president for Public and Regulatory Affairs and head of the MVP Group Media Bureau, said the industry's contributions to the economy go beyond revenue from the mineral extracted from the mine sites, citing the sector's indirect contributions in community development and nation-building.

"In addition to taxes paid to government, mining projects spend part of their operating budgets on social development and management projects, which translates to billions of pesos in health, hospitals, education, livelihood, training, and enterprise development that goes beyond the host communities," Toledo said during the Pandesal forum in Quezon City.

The Manila Times

DATE

B4

PAGE

✓
UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PHILEX -

PAGE 2/2

He said this is on top of the billions of pesos spent by mining companies on roads, bridges, power supply in remote areas with a prevalence of poverty and where government does not exist.

This infrastructure development is proof of responsible mining's multiplier effect, both regionally and nationally, he said.

"None of these mining communities, usually out of reach by the government, will have these amenities without min-

ing," he said, debunking Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez's claims that mining the money would not ultimately benefit the Filipino people

Lopez earlier said that the Duterte government does not mind if some investments expected in the mining sector over the next 10 years would not take place at all, saying the country will get minimal benefit from the projects anyway.

The DENR chief also noted that the state receives only 18 percent of revenues from mineral extraction while the rest goes to the mining companies.

Lopez also claimed that people are poor in a large number of places where mining is active.

P10-B taxes paid in 5 years

Toledo countered by saying that areas with mining operations are usually first and second-class municipalities, citing Baguio City and the gold-rich provinces of Benguet and the Cordilleras, which were built on the backs of miners.

In the case of Philex Mining, Toledo said the company has made significant contributions in community development in its area of operations in Itogon

and Tuba, Benguet—contributing over P10.12 billion in regular and mining-related taxes to government coffers between 2011 and 2015.

Philex, which now only has Padcal for its operating mine, paid 100 percent of the required regular taxes amounting to P6.6 billion as well as the P3.5 billion in mining-related taxes in the five years to 2015.

He said that P38.6 billion or 69 percent of the P56-billion gross revenue of Philex Mining over a five-year period ending in 2015 was shared by various stakeholders such as employees, contractors and suppliers, while 18 percent or P10.12 billion went to government for taxes and contributions, and 13 percent or P7.3 billion was net income.

"The Padcal mine takes pride in its host towns becoming two of the four first-class municipalities in Benguet, primarily due to the significant economic impact of Philex Mining operations," he said.

The nine other Benguet towns listed under third, fourth, and fifth economic classes are all into agriculture, he said, while three of the four first-class municipalities are predominantly mining communities.

Nearly \$1-T mineral potential

Ramon Clarete, economic professor at the University of the Philippines, said that mineral development, if done properly, could add an additional 1 to 2 percent to the Philippine economy over and above the current levels of 0.7 percent.

With nearly one trillion dollars' worth of mineral potential for copper,

gold, nickel, and iron, the Philippines stands head and shoulders above other mineralized countries in the world. But these mineral resources are usually in the most remote areas of the country where majority of the poor country folks reside.

Carlo Arcilla, director at UP-National Institute for Geological Sciences, said that Secretary Lopez has a "good heart, but she was misinformed."

"Even if it's just one percent, it might mean 100 percent to the involved communities. Mining is a complicated business, it's easy to condemn but it can do a lot of good provided that it is regulated, the environment is protected and the government is willing to listen to experts," Arcilla said.

Toledo echoed Arcilla's sentiments, adding that Lopez now has the backing of the entire government arsenal of experts to make proper decisions on the various environmental and technical issues concerning mining.

"I admire Gina Lopez's advocacy and we need somebody like that, someone who is very passionate, who believes strongly in responsible mining. Maybe it's about time that we have somebody with that passion, but it is important that now, being already the Secretary, iba kasi yung advocate ka lang, iba na yung ikaw ay isang kalihim [it is different when you are still an advocate, and now that you are already the secretary]," he said.

"Now that you are a secretary, every time that a decision has to be made, you also have to listen to all, you also have to listen to scientific data, evidence, and other information, then you make a decision," he added.

23 AUG 2016

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Miners seek okay of LGU share bill

By Rio N. Araja

THE mining industry urged lawmakers on Monday to prioritize the approval of the revenue-sharing bill that would directly give the local government units a bigger tax.

At the Pandesal Forum in Quezon City, Michael Toledo, Philex Mining Corp. senior vice president for public and regulatory affairs, said amid the huge "excise taxes, other types of taxes, royalty fees, social development projects and infrastructure expenses," miners nationwide welcome the review of the revenue-sharing scheme to benefit the areas of the mining operations and even the entire province.

"For one reason or another, it [bill] was not passed. The [past]

government did not give [much] importance on revenue-sharing," he said.

"We are open to revenue-share scheme," he said, adding mining plays an important role in the development of the rural areas.

"Let's not forget that if there is no mining in an area, there is no government. What do I [mean] if there is no government? There are no roads, water, electricity, livelihood [opportunities], schools and hospitals where there is no mining," he said.

"Where there are mining operations, there are developments. I am saying this not because we want to enhance and expedite the business, but it is stated in the law. We cannot evade the law."



23 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

B-5
PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Semirara Mining stands firm on compliance

By DANESSA RIVERA

Semirara Mining and Power Corp. stood firm it was compliant in its obligations under environment compliance and has highlighted several issues in the alleged violations of its Molave project raised by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

This was the company's response after the DENR required it to explain why its environment compliance certificate (ECC) should not be cancelled.

Based on the Revised Procedural Manual for DENR Administrative Order 30, Semirara said the Notice of Adverse Findings should have been given within 72 hours after the Inter-Agency Fact Finding/Field visit held last

May 23 to 27, 2016.

"In this case, notice was received by the company only on Aug. 15, 2016 or more than 60 days after the May 2016 fact finding/field visit," it said.

The company also said the Notice of Adverse Findings also "did not state or provide specific details on how and where the violation was committed" and was also not brought up during the Inter-Agency Debriefing Session held on June 29.

In its previous disclosure, Semirara said results of the fact finding/field visit showed the company allegedly failed to comply with one of the conditions provided in its ECC for its Molave Coal Mine Expansion Project.

ju

Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

23 AUG 2016

DATE

8

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mining benefits underestimated – FNI

One of the leading mining firms in the Philippines yesterday lamented that the benefits from mining are presently underestimated, thus preventing the public to appreciate the industry.

Global Ferronickel Holdings, Inc. (FNI), which operates in Claver, Surigao del Norte, said there are at least five major contributions of the mining industry in the economy which benefits not only the national government but also the people.

"The industry provides, among others, in a number of ways," Dante Bravo, president of FNI, adding that these are government revenue from taxation, employment, development of communities and local government units concerned, particularly in less developed areas, particularly in terms of infrastructure development, livelihood education and health.

Even promotion of religious practices is provided by some mining firms. Bravo said they put up churches and contribute to their programs in places where they operate.

Another benefit is development of indigenous people through royalty payments, employment and various financial, health, education, livelihood, housing and technical assistance and environment protection through progressive and final rehabilitation programs under strict government standards.

This benefit ensures that environmental disturbance is completely rehabilitated and even enhanced after mine life.

However, the president of the mining firm said such benefits are severely underestimated by the public, particularly its financial contribution to the economy.

"I think so because the industry has no effective information and education campaign about the benefits of mining," he explained.

Earlier, the official said the mining industry contributes about two percent to the gross domestic product (GDP). This amount is approximately P140 billion per year as yearly GDP is around P7 trillion.

The official also earlier said investments in mining are so big that each of the hundreds of mining firms in the country has a minimum capital expenditure of at least \$50 million.

For FNI, he said their initial investment in the country was about \$100 million. Majority of the amount were used in equipment, mine development, mine facilities and exploration.

FNI, which extracts nickel for export to other countries, is one of the two listed mining firms. Another source from the mining industry said the growth of mining industry in the country will further improve if unnecessary intervention of LGUs is prevented.

"Mining has never been an investment priority because of legal challenges, foreign ownership restriction, unnecessary LGU intervention, regulatory issues, security issues and anti-mining sentiment brought about by the effect of severe climate change," the source explained.

Ed Velasco

THE STANDARD

23 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

31

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Miners bullish over \$34-b project pipeline

THE Philippines mining crack-down will separate good companies from bad ones and the industry is optimistic over prospects for \$4 billion in projects to be developed in the next six years.

Most of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines' 20-plus members meet international standards and comply with the country's environmental regulations, executive vice president Melia Halcon told a briefing in Manila Monday.

In terms of the pipeline, "these projects have been approved and it's only a matter of pushing their development," Halcon said, referring to ventures that include the \$5.9-billion Tampakan copper-gold project in South Cotabato province and Philex Mining Corp.'s \$900-million Marikina project in Surigao del Norte. "We're always hopeful," she said.

President Rodrigo Duterte

tasked Environment Secretary Gina Lopez with leading an audit of the nation's mining industry for environmental compliance, and she has suspended at least eight nickel-ore miners that failed to meet standards.

Lopez said in July that she won't allow Tampakan to start operations, while earlier this month she said the developers of the project must explain why its environmental permits shouldn't be suspended for alleged violations.

Mining can do a lot of good if the government regulates the industry and listen to experts, University of the Philippines National Institute for Geological Sciences director Carlo Arcilla said Monday.

Arcilla said while mining could do some environmental damage, the industry could also engage in responsible mining.

"Mining is a complicated business. It's easy to condemn,

but it can do a lot of good provided that it is regulated, the environment is protected and the government is willing to listen to experts," Arcilla said at Pandalan Forum in Kamuning, Quezon City.

The mining industry consists of 40 large-scale metallic mining companies, 65 non-metallic firms, and an estimated 300,000 small-scale and illegal operators throughout the country.

Environment Secretary Regina Lopez said, however, the capital-intensive extractive industry was not labor-intensive, employing only 250,000 Filipinos, or 0.6 percent of total labor force.

"This is how unsustainability manifests itself. Irresponsible mining has a perverse vicious cycle: mining businesses produce mining-related jobs for affected communities. Obviously, communities stay long after

mining operations close down. The people are not given sustainable livelihoods that outlive mining," Lopez said.

Arcilla said even if the industry was contributing only 1 percent to the local economy, "it might mean 100 percent to the involved communities."

"Secretary [Lopez] has a very good heart but she has to be informed. There is no smoke without fire. There are really complaints and they should be answered. There are really problems in the mining [industry]," Arcilla said.

"But the thing is, mining is not over until the land is fully rehabilitated. It's like construction of a building. There's no construction site that looks good. When you are extracting soil, it really doesn't look good. The problem comes in when the miner doesn't rehabilitate," Arcilla said. **Bloomberg, with Anna Leah E. Gonzales**

The Manila Times

DATE

PAGE

A7

✓
UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Group slams forged ancestral domain titles

A GROUP supporting indigenous tribes in General Santos City in South Cotabato has decried alleged connivance of some high officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 12 (DENR 12) in fraudulent titling of ancestral land domain.

Jonathan Jamir, chairman of Arise Christian Homeowners Association, told The Manila Times that thousands of hectares in General Santos under lease holding agreement were applied by wealthy persons for titling in agreement with indigenous tribes through the application of Republic Act 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Right Act (IPRA).

Jamir said the moneyed ones were taking advantage of the indigenous tribes, particularly the B'laan, by disguising

themselves as ancestral land domain claimants allegedly in connivance with some officials in DENR 12 who facilitate the claims through fraudulent means.

He revealed that facilitation for titling application and approval for a one-hectare property costs about P1 million with additional P3 million alleged grease money for the DENR 12 officials for every five hectares approved.

Meanwhile, DENR 12 Executive Director Tungko Saikol denied the accusations, saying they have reversion cases and cancellation before the Regional Trial Court and the Solicitor General's office of all land titles under the Forest Land Greasing Leased Agreement that were fraudulently titled.

JERRY N. ADLAW

23 AUG 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DA taps fisherfolk to guard coastal areas

To protect the coastal areas in the country, the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) taps local fisherfolk to serve as guardians of the waters and the seas through the BantayLaot Program.

In Davao Region, 600 fisherfolk, including members of the Badjao indigenous group, were tapped as partners of the DA-BFAR in guarding their waters particularly Davao Gulf.

As guardians, their role is to make sure that there will be no dynamite and cyanide fishing and their waters are garbage-free.

They will be issued an official identification card and a radio for easier communication with the coastguard in case they have monitored illegal fishing activities in their areas.

For three months, the fisherfolk will receive an allowance of ₱3000 each.

However, if there are reports of illegal fishing and presence of garbage in the waters, the allowance will be stopped.

In return, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol asked the Badjao fishers to send their children to school and get a proper education.

To intensify the program, Piñol said the DA will draft an official communication for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to stop the conversion of mangrove areas in Davao Gulf into resorts.

The Manila Times

DATE

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Global warming could reduce dengue risk

BY BEN KRITZ

THE risk of dengue fever could be reduced in a warmer climate in the future, contrary to current assumptions, researchers in Australia found in a new study.

The study, entitled "Projections of Increased and Decreased Dengue Incidence Under Climate Change," was published in the journal *Epidemiology and Infection* and led by Associate Professor David Harley from the Australian National University.

Focusing on the wet tropical areas of northeast Australia, the study found that despite previous assumptions that climate change would cause the potentially lethal mosquito-borne virus to spread more easily, the risk of dengue might decrease under "a high-emissions scenario," in which average temperatures increase by 2 to 3 degrees centigrade by 2050, due to mosquito breeding sites becoming drier and less favorable to their survival.

"There is significant concern in countries on the margin of the tropical areas where dengue is

mainly found, that with global warming dengue and other mosquito-borne viruses such as Zika will encroach and become common," Harley said. "While climate change generally poses a major threat to humanity, it also may reduce the incidence of dengue in some areas."

Dengue fever is a serious concern in the Philippines, with tens of thousands of cases resulting in a number of deaths each year. This year, as of August 6 this year, the latest date for which data is available, the Department of Health (DOH) reported that there have been 84,085 cases of dengue fever in the country. That is a 16-percent increase over the rate of infection in 2015, with 25,000 new cases being reported last month (July) alone. So far, 372 deaths have been attributed to the disease this year.

The researchers were careful



CLIMATE CHANGE MAY REDUCE DENGUE

Australian researchers have found that global warming might actually reduce the habitat for mosquitoes carrying the dreaded dengue fever virus. PHOTO PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

to point out, however, that climate warming is still generally considered bad news for people's health, and that impacts of global warming might differ from place to place.

"Generally, health and other impacts of climate warming

will be negative in Australia and elsewhere in the world," Harley said. "While we could see some reduction in dengue in far north Queensland in a future warmer climate; the disease is widespread elsewhere in the world where outcomes would be different."