

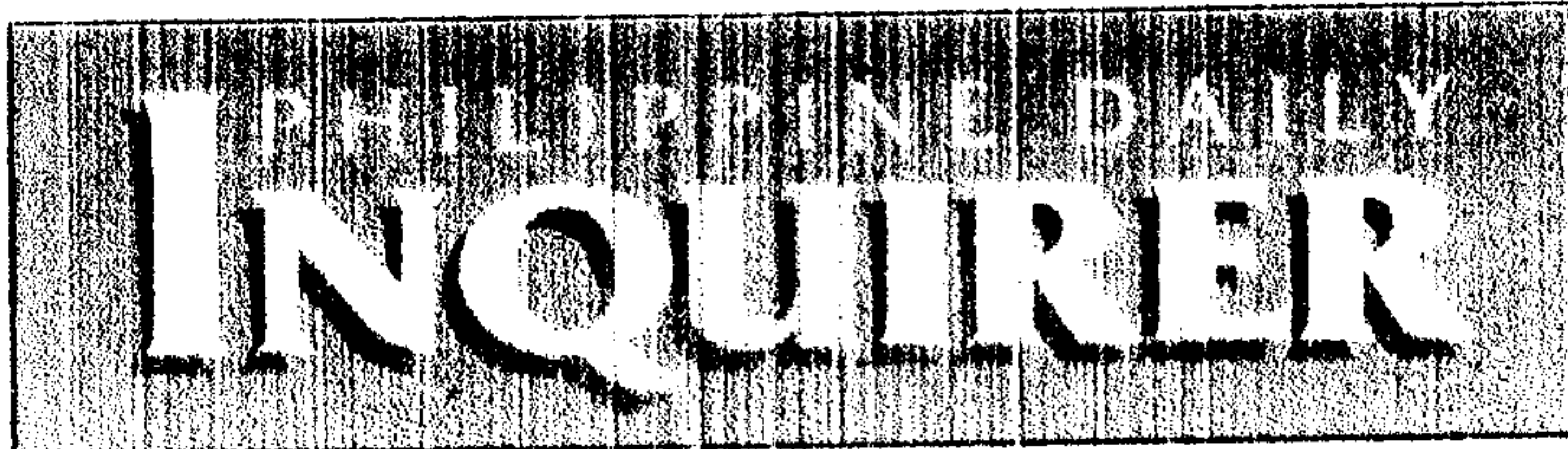
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 26 AUG 2016

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# DENR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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## *Mining firm taps into potential of 'biochar'*

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MARCVENTURES Mining and Development Corp. (MMDC) said it was adopting a soil enhancement technology to foster agroforestry near its nickel project site in Surigao del Sur.

In a statement yesterday, the firm said the initiative to use activated biochar was in line with the new policy direction of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to provide sustainable livelihood programs for host communities of mining operations. Biochar is plant material turned charcoal and, according to the International Biochar Initiative, can be useful in increasing food security

and cropland diversity.

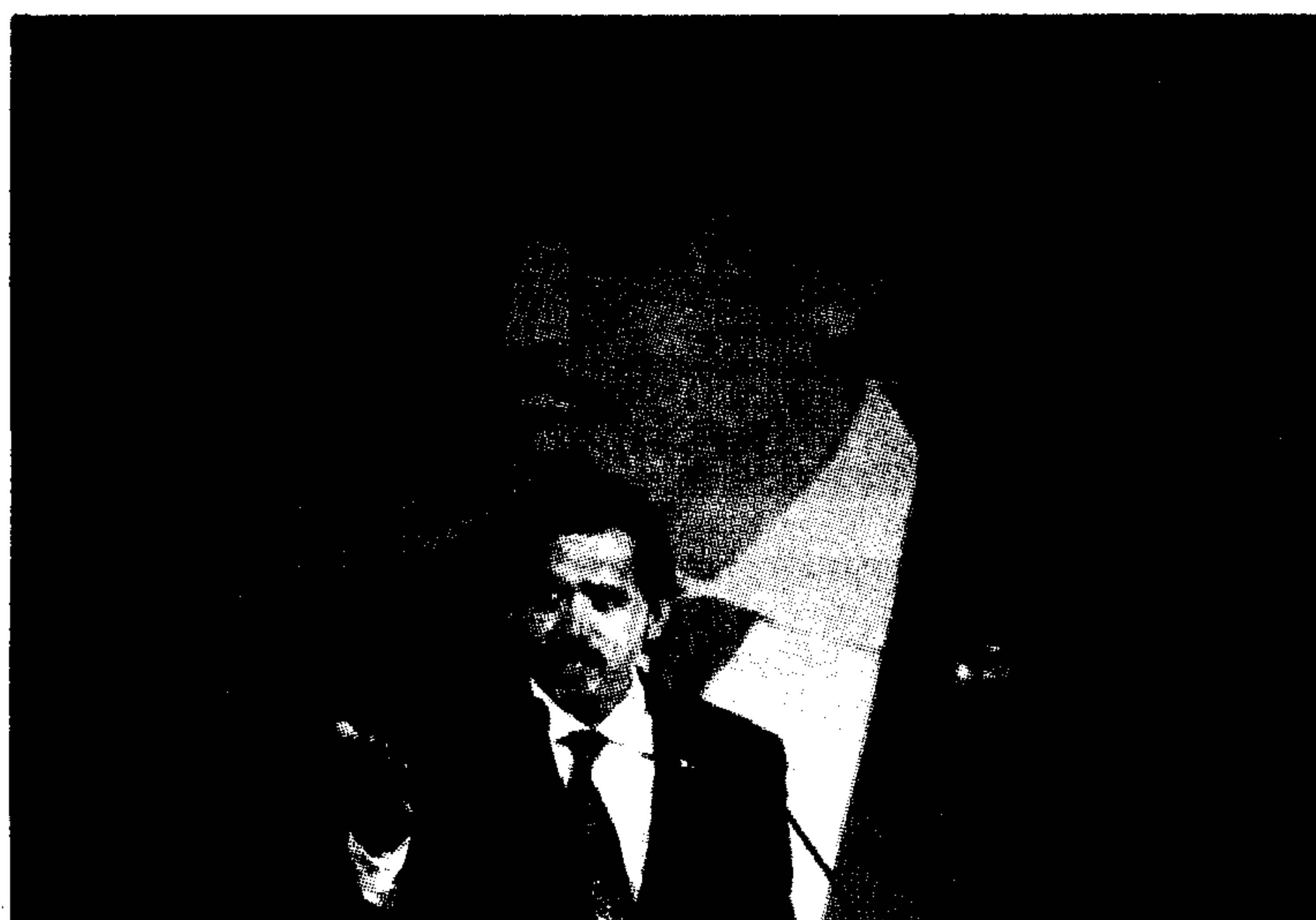
MMDC entered into an agreement with the Philippine Biochar Association (PBiA) to advocate the extensive use of biochar.

"The idea is to apply biochar and convert mined-out lands into arable lands that can be planted with renewable cash crops, which then gives livelihood ... to the communities especially indigenous peoples," Marcventures vice chair Isidro Alcantara said.

MMDC would be putting up a 50-hectare pilot farm in Surigao del Sur, where there are plenty of organic materials like rice husks that may be turned into biochar. PBiA estimated a 50-ha plot would generate about P8 million in revenues for communities involved.



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



CHAMBER of Mines of the Philippines President Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez gestures as he delivers remarks at a business conference.

### EO 79 'not needed', now under review: MGB head

THE CHIEF of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said the 2012 executive order (EO) that detailed changes to the country's mining policy and effectively stalled the issuance of new permits, is not necessary.

"I'll be put in hot water for this but EO 79 is something I believe is not needed. [It seems] somebody did not want to act on anything," MGB Concurrent Director Mario Luis A. Jacinto said yesterday.

Mr. Jacinto said his agency is set to review the order, which former President Benigno S. C. Aquino III signed in July 2012. EO 79 was aimed at ensuring a more responsible industry and getting a larger share of the sector's revenues. It halted the issuance of mineral agreements until a new revenue sharing scheme is passed into law.

The Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) — the Malacañang-created body tasked to implement EO 79, filed its version of the revenue scheme with the last Congress. The bill provided that the government, as owner of the country's minerals, will get each year 10% of a miner's gross revenues or 55% of "adjusted net mining revenues," whichever is higher; and 60% of any windfall profit. However, the proposal did not move past the committee level.

"We are looking into the key provisions... What has it (EO 79) accomplished in the years that it has been in place? The intention... we're looking now into the minutes of the meetings of the Mining

Industry Coordinating Council," Mr. Jacinto said.

"Is it really needed? What would be the immediate recommendations so far as EO 79 is concerned? Will there be effective monitoring or moratorium on the issuance of new permits is really the best interest of the country?" the MGB chief added.

Mr. Jacinto's view jibes with that of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), which has been calling for the repeal of the law.

"I think the view of the industry has been very well known, that we believe that the tax rate in the Philippines is already very challenging already," said COMP President Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez during the second day of the annual mining summit.

Under the current revenue-sharing scheme, the government gets a 50% share in profits of foreign miners operating in the Philippines under financial or technical assistance agreements, and a 2% excise tax on actual market value of output under mineral production sharing agreements with local companies.

Mr. Romualdez added that miners do not only contribute to mining communities by way of tax partitions, but also through social development programs that are mandated under existing laws.

"If government looks at taxation, how can they make it more responsive as an incentive for companies to take the financial risk in the area?" — **J.C. Lim**



## Mining crackdown to continue: Lopez

THE Philippines could suspend more mines in a crackdown on environmental abuses that has halted operations of 10 miners, Environment and Natural Resources secretary Regina Lopez said, dismissing a claim by mineral producers the review was a "demolition campaign" against them.

"Yes," Lopez said when asked if there was a risk of more mines being suspended.

Lopez launched a review of all mines on July 8 and has suspended 10 so far, eight of them nickel ore producers.

The move, and the risk of more being shuttered in the world's

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### MINING

top nickel ore supplier, has lifted global nickel prices to a one-year high above \$11,000 a ton.

Miners believe the crackdown is a "demolition campaign" against them and are seeking to meet with President Duterte, Benjamin Philip Romualdez, president of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, said.

"What I have seen with the mines that we have suspended is that the quality of life of the present and future generations have in fact been jeopardized," Lopez said, citing silt buildup in rivers and destroyed farmlands around mining sites.

"And any succeeding mines that we will suspend will only be for that reason," she said.

Lopez reiterated she was not against the mining indus-

try and was following the rule of law in conducting the review expected to be completed this month.

"When mines are suspended because rivers are silted, farmlands are gone and fish ponds have disappeared, that's not a demolition campaign," she said.

"That's a statement of fact backed by science, by lab tests."

Lopez, an environmentalist who thinks open-pit mining is "madness", spoke after a Senate hearing tackling the 2017 budget of the environment agency.

Her stance on mining is backed by Duterte who has previously warned miners to strictly follow tighter environmental rules or shut down, saying the nation could survive without a mining industry. - Reuters

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## Miners to use biochar to rehabilitate degraded sites

NICKEL mining companies Marcventures Mining and Development Corp. (MMDC) and Benguetcorp Nickel Mines, Inc. (BNMI) said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) granted them authority to pursue mine rehabilitation projects using activated biochar soil amendment technology.

This will promote agroforestry on mined out areas as well as provide livelihood to host communities.

Biochar is a charcoal produced from plant matter which is used as a soil enhancer that can hold carbon to help soil retain nutrients and water.

The companies said the project was approved in a meeting with DENR senior undersecretary Leo Jasareno and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) regional directors AliloEnsomo and Lope Cariño Jr.

MMDC and BNMI also signed

an agreement with the Philippine Biochar Association. The group has developed inoculants including nitrogen-fixing, root-enhancing, rock-drilling microbes, among others, that are fed into the biochar to promote microbial growth in heavily degraded surfaces, such as mined-out areas in Zambales and Surigao where the companies operate.

The agreements also involve the construction of 50-hectare pilot farms to be started immediately in both provinces where there are plenty of organic materials like rice husks, a key input to biochar.

Isidro Alcantara, MMDC vice chairman, said the project is developed not only to comply with government requirements of final mine rehabilitation but also to provide sustainable, organic and environmentally enhancing livelihood activities.

"The idea is to apply biochar and convert mined-out lands into arable lands that can be planted to renewable cash crops which then gives livelihood that is continuing to the communities especially indigenous peoples," Alcantara said in a statement.

The companies also said the biochar will be produced by the communities, estimating that each 50-hectare plot will generate around P8 million revenues for the communities.

MMDC added it plans to tap companies that engage in contract growing of cash crops like coffee to partner in the project.

MGB said as of last year, MMDC produced 1,894,207 dry metric tons of direct shipping nickel ore worth P1.2 billion and 19,426 metric tons nickel content of ore, while BMNI had zero output as its operation is still suspended by the DENR.



# Gov't eyes new mining laws, road map

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FAR FROM being unfair to law-abiding miners, the government is pushing the industry forward through major reforms such as crafting a road map for strategic metallic minerals and pushing for the passage of a new fiscal regime and revenue sharing arrangement, according to an official of the National Economic and Development Authority.

Mercedita A. Sombilla, director of Neda's agriculture, natural re-

sources and environment staff, yesterday said the government was also promoting responsible mining by completing an ongoing audit of all operating mines.

Sombilla was a keynote speaker at the Mining Philippines 2016 conference organized by the Chamber of Mines (COMP).

She said the government was also pushing for the passage of new laws that define a new fiscal regime and revenue sharing arrangement in mining.

Citing data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Sombilla said that in the past 10 years, taxes, fees and royalties from mining hit a low of P6.4 billion in 2006 and a high of P32.8 billion in 2014.

The figure went down to P25.8 billion in 2015 and hit only P931.9 million as of the first half of 2016.

Over the same period, the industry's output represented only 1 percent of the domestic economy at best. In

2006, mining accounted for 0.7 percent of gross domestic product and, as of the first half of 2016, the figure was the same.

Citing data from the Board of Investments and the Department of Finance, Sombilla said the government's tax take as a percentage of gross revenue from mining was only 12.7 percent.

This was the lowest when compared to 17.2 percent in Australia, 17.6 percent in Papua New Guinea, 20.3 percent in Indonesia, 20.4 percent in Canada, 21.5 percent in South Africa, 22.1 percent in Peru, and 23.1 percent in Chile.

Sombilla said the proposed new fiscal regime and revenue sharing arrangement—for large-scale metallic mining alone—was for a government share of 10 percent of gross revenue or 55 percent of the "adjusted net mining revenue," whichever was higher.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros backed by environment and human rights advocates filed what was called the Alternative Minerals Management Bill.



## 2 nickel miners get go-ahead to start project on mine rehab technology

By MADELAINE S. MIRAFLORES

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has granted authority to Surigao nickel miner Marcventures Mining and Development Corporation (MMDC) and Zambales' Benguetcorp Nickel Mines, Inc. (BNMI) to embark on a project using soil amendment technology called Activated Biochar aimed at agro-forestry.

BNMI is one of the country's suspended nickel mining firms, while MMDC just went through the ongoing audit being led by DENR and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

The project, according to a statement, was in line with the new policy direction of the DENR to provide sustainable livelihood programs for host communities of mining operations, especially on the rehabilitation of mined-out areas for other beneficial land uses during and after mine life.

The project was forged in a meeting among the companies, DENR Senior Undersecretary Leo Jasareno, and MGB Regional Directors Alilo Ensomo and Lope Cariño Jr.

MMDC and BNMI have also entered into an agreement with the Philippine Biochar Association (PBIA) to advocate the extensive use of Biochar which has proven effective in soil enhancement and environmental protection and maintenance.

PBIA and its affiliates, Sambali Beach Farm and Microbial Technology Solutions, have meanwhile developed specific inoculants (nitrogen-fixing, root-enhancing, rock-drilling microbes, among others) that are fed into the Biochar to activate it for optimum performance in assisting and facilitating plant and life-giving microbial growth in heavily degraded surfaces, such as mined-out areas in Zambales and Surigao.

Marcventures Vice Chairman Isidro Alcantara said this project is not only to comply with requirements of final mine rehabilitation but is complementary to the company's initiatives of providing sustainable, organic and environmentally enhancing livelihood activities.

"The idea is to apply Biochar and convert mined-out lands into arable lands which can be planted to renewable cash crops which then gives livelihood that is continuing to the communities especially indigenous peoples," Alcantara said.

Marcventures plans to tap companies that engage in contract growing of cash crops like coffee to help in this activity.

MMDC and BNMI signed agreements to each put up 50-hectare pilot farms to be started immediately in both provinces where there are plenty of organic materials like rice husks, a key input to Biochar.

# BusinessMirror

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Mining bill seeks taxes, heavy fine for erring firms

BY BUTCH FERNANDEZ [@butchBM](#)

**S**TRICT mining rules are needed, because the extraction of minerals can have adverse impacts on the surrounding environment, according to neophyte Sen. Ana Theresia Hontiveros, who filed a bill seeking to ensure the protection of communities by setting limits on mining operations.

Hontiveros filed the alternative minerals-management bill on Thursday, saying the remedial legislation seeks to ensure protection of communities and the environment "through taxes and heavy fines."

She explained that the proposed remedial legislation also aims to "rectify the failure" of Republic Act 7942, also known as the mining law, passed in 1995 to govern mining ventures.

In a statement, the senator asserted the need to "overhaul our current mining policy to ensure the proper management and utilization of our mineral resources."

Lamenting the "low return and high costs of mining," Hontiveros cited the industry's "0.7 percent contribution" to the Philippines's GDP, even as it incurs "high costs in terms of environmental degradation, loss of livelihood and human-rights violations."

The senator suggested that the government factor climate change in its mining-policy framework by imposing an "environmental tax" and establishing a so-called calamity and human-rights fund.

She asserted, "It is time for mining companies to ensure that their operations do not harm the environment and are a source of contribution to the community," adding that the proposed remedial legislation should provide for "super-heavy fines and revocation of licenses to operate for mining companies that violate the law."

Her proposal also seeks to limit the areas of operations of mining companies, and protect watersheds, key biodiverse areas, critical habitats and geohazard areas as "no-go zones" for mining companies.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



**FROM COAL TO R.E.** The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMJ), headed by National Coordinator Ian Rivera (standing, center), calls for the country's immediate shift from dirty coal to renewable-energy (RE) sources during a news conference at the Kamay Kainan on Kalayaan Avenue in Quezon City on Wednesday. The PMJ marked the day as the start of a nationwide campaign calling for the phaseout of coal and immediate shift to RE. PNA/JOHNNY D. GUEVARRA

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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

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# Citinickel mulls legal action vs DENR

Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., a subsidiary of listed Oriental Peninsula Resources Group Inc., may file legal action against the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) following the agency's suspension order prior to the actual mining audit.

"We will pursue all actions necessary to prove to the DENR that the suspension order issued was unwarranted and even pursue legal action should this be necessary to protect the interest of the shareholders of ORE and Citinickel," Citinickel president Caroline Tanchay said.

"ORE and Citinickel are exerting all administrative and legal efforts to have the suspension order lifted. We are optimistic the MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau) shall reasonably appreciate the validity of the contentions of Citinickel and that the suspension order shall be lifted at the soonest possible time," she said.

In a statement, Citinickel said the suspension order from the MGB last month "was prematurely and improperly issued as there was no prior audit conducted on the operations of Citinickel."

Citinickel is the sole claim owner of Pulot Mine and Toronto Mine in Sofronio Española and Narra in Palawan.

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Last month, Environment Secretary Gina Lopez ordered the audit of all mining firms in the country as part of the government's thrust of implementing responsible mining in the country.

"Without prior audit therefore and any legal basis for a finding of any such violation of environmental and mining laws, the immediate imposition of the penalty of suspension was improper," Tanchay said.

The mining company said that if nickel ore prices in the world market become competitively attractive again, Citinickel would not be able to make its shipments should the suspension order remain in effect.

"This will prevent Citinickel from generating any revenue, which ultimately has a negative effect on the financial condition of the company on consolidation," she said.

The company said the government has no reason to issue the suspension as it slowed down operations and held shipments due to low prices of nickel ore in the world market.

Citinickel said that as of now, the order has no direct effect on the financial condition of the company and that a possible decline in sales would be attributed to low price of nickel ore and not because of the suspension order.

Citinickel said their mines are compliant with the rules, regulations and mandate of the Philippine Mining Act 1995 and other environmental laws, as well as the obligations and restrictions imposed under the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA).

The company said DENR finished its audit on Citinickel last week and no issues, irregu-

larities or violations on mining and environmental laws were highlighted against the company during the exit meeting.

"We are confident the findings will enlighten the DENR that Citinickel is compliant with the rules, regulations and mandate of the Mining Act and other environmental laws as well as the obligations and restrictions imposed on us under the MPSA," it said.



## Citinickel asks DENR to lift suspension order

Listed Oriental Peninsula Resources Group, Inc. (ORE) are now exerting all efforts for the suspension order on its Palawan mines to be lifted because failing to do so will prevent the company to generate revenues and may thus incur negative impact on its shareholders.

ORE was recently ordered by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to disclose the effect of the suspension of its subsidiary Citinickel Mines and Development Corp.'s (CMDC) mining operations on the overall financial condition and earnings of the listed firm.

The listed company responded to this on Thursday, saying the suspension prevents CMDC from generating any revenue, which ultimately have a negative effect on the financial condition of the company on consolidation.

It also pointed out that even if the market conditions improve, such that the price of nickel ore in the world market become competitively attractive, CMDC will still not be able to make its shipments should the suspension order remain in effect.

"Hence, the Company and CMDC are exerting all administrative and legal efforts to have the suspension order lifted," ORE told the SEC and Philippine Stock Exchange.

CMDC has exclusive right to explore, develop, and commercially utilize nickel and other associated mineral deposits in a 2,176-hectare area situated in Narra and Sofronio Española in Palawan.

But even before these mines were actually audited by the Department of Environment and

Natural Resources (DENR), the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) already suspended the company several times over the years for different grounds.

In July, MGB suspended CMDC for alleged violation of DENR Memorandum Circular 2016-01, which called for an audit on all mining firms and imposing a moratorium on new projects.

According to CMDC, MGB's order was "prematurely and improperly issued" as there was no prior audit conducted on the operations of the company.

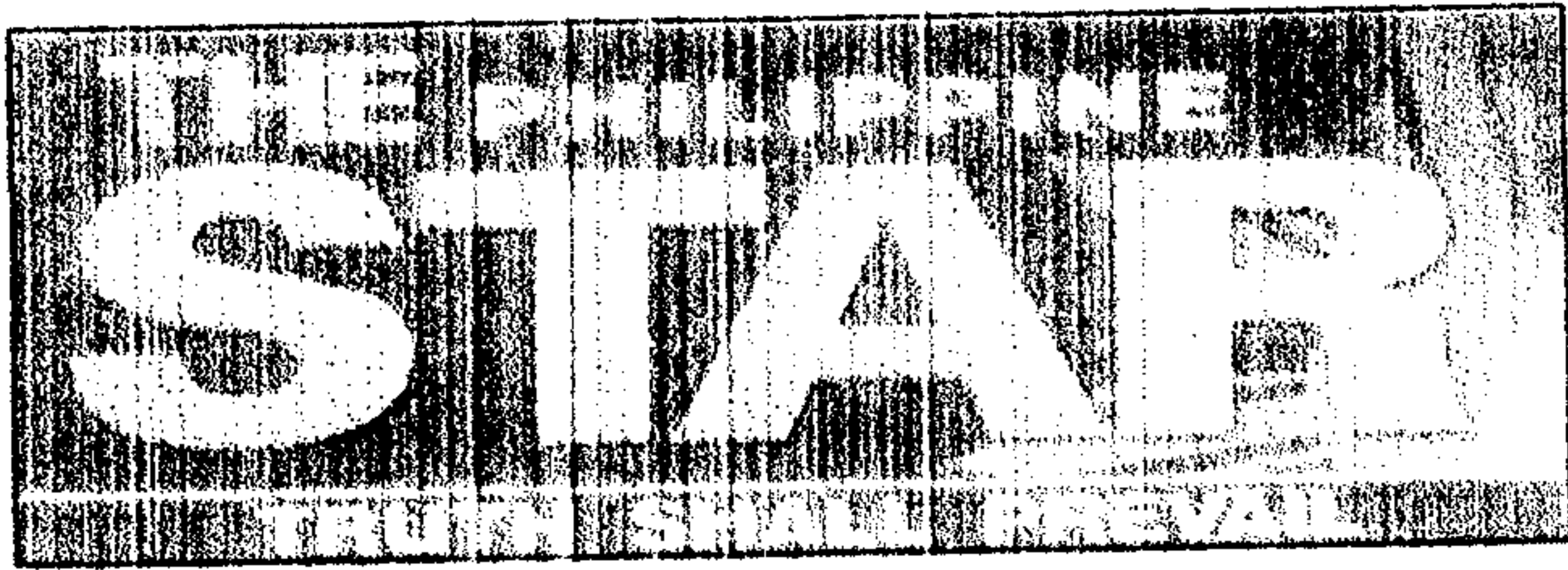
"Without prior audit therefore and any legal basis for a finding of any such violation of environmental and mining laws, the immediate imposition of the penalty of suspension was improper," ORE said.

"In view of the above, we will pursue all actions necessary to prove to the DENR that the suspension order issued was unwarranted and even pursue legal action should this be necessary to protect the interest of the shareholders of ORE and Citinickel," it added.

It was just last week when the audit of DENR Mine Audit Team on CMDC's operations actually wrapped up.

"On the exit meeting [of the audit], no issues, irregularities or violations on mining and environmental laws were found or highlighted against us. We are confident that the findings of this DENR Mine Audit Team will enlighten the DENR and the public that Citinickel is compliant with the rules, regulations and mandate of the Philippine Mining Act and other environmental laws as well as the obligations and restrictions imposed on us under the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement," ORE pointed out.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Groups conduct own mining audit

Concerned environmental groups have launched their own version of the mining audit being conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The groups led by the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (PNE) said they will facilitate a "People's Audit"

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

of mining tenements across the country.

The non-government organization together with its local networks yesterday began with a mass assembly in Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

"Environment and people's organizations will be conducting people's audits parallel to the

initiative audits of the DENR. We fear that corrupt officials in the agency are sabotaging the Duterte administration's drive to close down irresponsible large-scale miners. Our effort is aimed at preventing the attempts of these corrupt officials of

the DENR. It is our duty to expose the violations and criminal records of destructive and militarized mining projects in the country," said Clemente Bautista, national coordinator of Kalikasan PNE.

The assembly in Sta. Cruz led by the MOVE Now! Zambales and the Diocese of Iba Advocacy Desk aims to gather past and present people's testimonies as well as technical findings regarding the repeated incidences of environmental pollution and destruction incurred by the DMCI Corp. and four other companies operating in the province.

"The people of Zambales are wary of the current status of the government's review of operating mines in their province as this has already happened before. The charade of temporarily suspending these mines and then subsequently reinstating their commercial operations has already happened twice in the past few years," noted Bautista.

Previously, local networks of Kalikasan PNE in the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Masbate reported anomalies in the audit process. "In Nueva Vizcaya, DENR's audit team was reportedly blaming the massive riverine pollution on small-scale mining and swidden farming activities of displaced grassroots communities, instead of the open-pit mining of the OceanaGold Corp.," Bautista said.

"Independent scientific investigations and fact-finding missions showed that OceanaGold mining operations have concretely caused massive environmental degradation and pollution to the ecosystems in their host community Didipio village. Government agencies and independent fact-finding bodies have recorded a string of human rights violations linked to the mining project. We thus find it suspicious why the audit results on OceanaGold are still not publicized when the evidence is apparent," he added.

The audit process on the Filminera Resources Co. in Masbate, meanwhile, reportedly failed to let local people's organizations and civil society participate. A second audit is said to have started within the week.

"Filminera has previously been found guilty by the Commission on Human Rights-Bicol of illegally detaining small-scale miners who protested the company's destruction of their homes and properties. Various observer missions have also noted the extent of its pollution of waters and agricultural lands. It would be problematic if this would not reflect in the outcome of Filminera's second audit," said Bautista.

"The Zambales 'People's Audit' is an initiative that should be replicated by people of other provinces where DENR mining audits are taking place. We know very well that the bigger mining companies and their partners are hiding under the deceptive branding of 'responsible mining' to push through with business-as-usual mining. We call on the people, the DENR, the government to be vigilant over attempts of large-scale miners to sabotage attempts at environmental reforms in the mining industry," he added.



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Indonesia replacing PH nickel ore

LAUNCESTON - Is nickel's current rally sustainable or is the metal merely having a strong run because market participants are more focused on the environmental crackdown in top ore miner the Philippines, rather than on the surge in Indonesian ferronickel exports?

No doubt nickel is one of the strongest commodity performers this year, with benchmark London futures rising 13.3 percent from the end of last year to the close on Wednesday.

The bulk of that rally has come in the past

three months as new Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and his hard-line environment secretary Regina Lopez cracked down on alleged environmental abuses by the mining industry.

At least eight nickel mines have been shut down in the Philippines this year, cutting around 10 percent of the country's capacity.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines has called the closure of mines a "demolition

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campaign", but Lopez appears undeterred, saying more mines will be shut if they are having adverse impacts on the environment.

Certainly, it seems that lower Philippine nickel ore exports are already showing up in the import numbers for China, the world's biggest buyer of the metal that is used mainly in the manufacture of stainless steel and electronics.

China imported 3.163 million tons of nickel ore and concentrates from the Philippines in July, down 35.9 percent from the

same month a year ago, according to customs data.

Imports in the first seven months totalled 13.84 million tonnes, a drop of 27.3 percent from the same period last year.

This is significant as the Philippines is by far and away the largest supplier of nickel ore to China, accounting for almost 96 percent of the total for January-July.

This means that if there is a sustained drop in supply from the Philippines it will be hard for Chinese nickel pig iron producers to source replacement material.

This is especially true as nickel ore cargoes from Indonesia, which used to be China's top supplier, remain unavailable as part of that country's ban on the export of certain unprocessed minerals, such as nickel and bauxite.

Indonesia's shipments of nickel ore came to an abrupt halt in early 2014 after the Southeast Asian nation enacted a mineral export ban as part of efforts to ensure investment in domestic downstream processing plants.

It may also be that this effort is starting to show up in China's import figures, with a large jump in shipments of ferronickel, an intermediate stage of the metal that contains both nickel and iron.

China's imports of ferronickel from Indonesia were 74,493 tons in July, more than five times taken in the same month a year earlier.

Likewise, year-to-date imports from Indonesia have surged more than four-

fold to 390,706 tons, giving the nation a 70 percent share of Chinese imports of ferronickel.

This surge in imports of ferronickel is significant as it shows that the way China gets its nickel is changing.

Indonesian nickel producer PT Antam says on its website that it extracts about one tonne of ferronickel from between 70 and 80 tonnes of nickel ore.

If these figures are assumed to be representative of Indonesia's ferronickel production as a whole, it means the country's ferronickel exports to China in the first seven months of the year are roughly equivalent to 27.3 million tonnes of nickel ore.

This is more than double the amount of nickel ore exported to China from the Philippines, providing proof that China isn't importing less nickel, but is changing the form in which it imports the metal.

The Indonesian ore export ban of early 2014 led to a 50 percent spike in London nickel prices from January to a peak of \$21,625 a ton on May 13 that year.

But as the market came to realize that there was sufficient nickel ore elsewhere to compensate for lost Indonesian output, prices slumped to a low of \$7,550 a ton on Feb. 12 this year.

While the current disruptions in the Philippines have no doubt tightened the market for nickel ore, it's more than likely that the ramp up of ferronickel exports from Indonesia are more than sufficient compensation for the overall nickel market.

The difficulty in sourcing nickel ore is certainly a problem for China's nickel pig iron producers, but their problems don't necessarily translate into a shortage of nickel in the global market, especially if Indonesia is back in the market as a ferronickel supplier. *Reuters*





### Editorial

## Isunod ang mga corrupt sa DENR

**H**INDI lamang sa LTO, LTFRB, BOC at BIR may corrupt na opisyal, maski sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ay may-roon din at nabibilang na ang kanilang araw, ayon mismo kay Sec. Gina Lopez. Isasailalim na sa imbestigasyon ang mga corrupt sa nasabing tanggapan at kapag napatunayan, masisibak sila sa puwesto.

Maraming environmentalists at mining advocates ang nasiyahan at natuwa sa ipinakitang tapang ni Lopez para magsagawa ng reporma sa tanggapan. Sabi pa ni Lopez nang magsalita sa mga environmentalists sa DENR Central Office sa Quezon City noong Miyerkules na aaksiyunan niya ang lahat nang reklamo laban sa mga corrupt sa tanggapan. Isa sa mga inirereklamo ng mga environmentalist ay ang dating Mines and Geosciences Bureau director na si Leo Jasareno.

Marami nang sinira ang mga illegal miners at walang ginagawa ang mga dating namumuno sa DENR. Hinayaang masira ang mga bundok. Halimbawa sa mga ito ay ang kabundukan sa Compostela Valley at ilang bahagi ng Davao Oriental. Dahil sa illegal na pagmimina, butas-butas na ang mga bundok sa mga nasabing lugar. Parang sungkaan ang tuktok ng mga bundok.

Hindi malilimutan ang sinabi ni Secretary Lopez, makaraang hirangin ni President Rodrigo Duterte na pamunuan ang DENR, "I don't like mining, the foreigners and the rich are the only ones benefitting from it but the farmers and the fishermen suffer."

Nasisira ang kapaligiran dahil sa ginagawang pagmimina. Hinuhukay at binubutas ang mga bundok nang walang pakundangan. At ang ugat ng mga nangyayaring ito ay hindi masawatang corruption sa tanggapan. Pero ngayong nangako si Lopez ng reporma, maaaring mawakasan na ang corruption.

Imbestigahan din sana ang nauna nang report ng Commission on Audit, na P7-bilyong pondo para sa tree-planting project ng DENR ang nasayang. "Unsuccessful" umano ang nangyaring tree-planting project na dapat sana ay gagawin sa 10 rehiyon sa bansa. Pero dahil kulang sa sistema at walang pag-monitoring sa project ang DENR, nasayang lang ang malaking pondo.

Isunod na ang mga corrupt sa DENR.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## 2 mining firms to use new soil technology for mine rehab

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has allowed two mining companies to use activated biochar, a soil amendment technology, to develop agro-forestry in their host communities.

The DENR has granted authority to Marcventures Mining and Development Corp. in Surigao del Sur, and Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines Inc. in Zambales to convert agricultural waste into a soil enhancer that can hold carbon,

boost food security, increase soil biodiversity and discourage deforestation.

This is in line with the new policy direction of the department to provide sustainable livelihood programs for host communities of mining operations, especially on the rehabilitation of mined-out areas for other beneficial land uses during and after mine life.

"The project is not only to comply with the requirements of final mine rehabilitation but is complementary to the com-

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

pany's initiatives of providing sustainable, organic and environmentally enhancing livelihood activities," Marcventures vice chairman Isidro Alcantara said.

According to the International Biochar Initiative biochar is found in soils as a result of vegetation fires and historic soil management practices and is an important tool to increase food security and cropland diversity in areas with severely depleted soils, scarce organic resources, and inadequate

water and chemical fertilizer supplies.

It also improves water quality and quantity by increasing soil retention of nutrients and agrochemicals for plant and crop utilization. The carbon present resists degradation and can hold carbon in soils for hundreds to thousands of years.

The Philippine Biochar Association (PBiA) said extensive use of biochar has proven effective in soil enhancement and environmental protection

and maintenance.

The plan is to use biochar and convert mined-out lands into arable lands which can be planted to renewable cash crops which will eventually provide livelihood to the communities.

Based on the agreements, both companies will put up 50-hectare pilot farms to be started immediately in both provinces where there are plenty of organic materials like rice husk which is a key input to biochar.

PBiA estimated that each 50-hectare plot would generate about P8 million in revenues for the communities and would result in renewable and continued income-generating cash crops and species of trees.

The DENR emphasized there is a need for mine rehabilitation programs to have a continuing livelihood component and that mining companies should not wait for the end of mine life, but undertake such activities even during the mine life.



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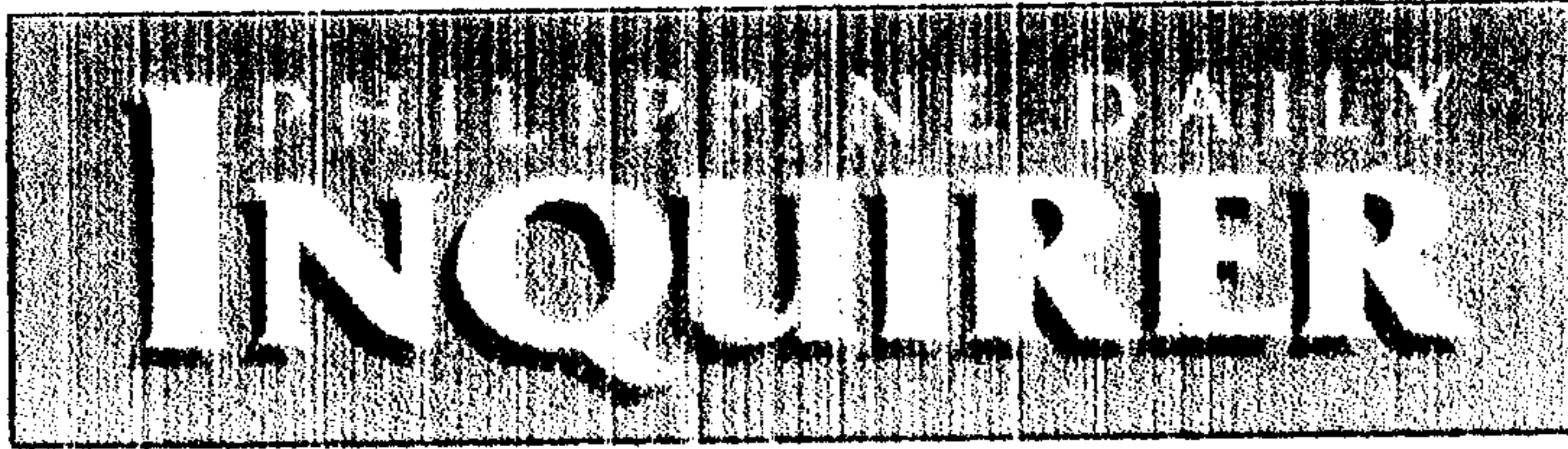
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

• **P5-million lumber  
seized in W. Visayas**

ILOILO CITY — In just three years, almost P5 million worth of illegally transported lumber and charcoal have been seized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Western Visayas. DENR Regional Director Jim Sampulna said 342,295 board feet of lumber and 2,878 sacks of charcoal were confiscated in Panay and Negros Islands from 2013 to 2016. Sampulna said lumber traders from Antique, Capiz and Negros Occidental provinces failed to secure proper permits from DENR for transporting lumber and charcoal for trading purposes. "While the process of securing transport permit takes time, it is necessary to keep track of the source of forest products and ensure environmental conservation and protection," he said. DENR field offices in Western Visayas are closely working with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and local governments to strengthen the implementation of the Revised Forestry Code. (Tara Yap)





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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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## 50 LGU execs probed for open dumps

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Office of the Ombudsman is investigating officials of at least 50 local governments in Central Luzon for violating the law mandating them to shut down open dumps in their areas.

The office has directed these officials to attend hearings as it investigates local governments that still operate open dumps, which have been banned since more than 10 years ago by Republic Act No. 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Act of 2001.

The hearings held in the region since Aug. 22 had been attended by the mayors, vice mayors and councilors of Abucay in Bataan; Paombong and Hagonoy in Bulacan; San Simon in Pampanga; Bongabon, San Isidro and Jaen in Nueva Ecija, ac-

cording to lawyer Myla Teologio of the Office of the Ombudsman's environmental ombudsman program.

The environmental ombudsman team presented sets of evidence that local officials had failed to enforce RA 9003, during these closed-door hearings, said Ombudsman for Luzon Gerard Mosquera.

"Material recovery facilities are actually open dump sites. The garbage was not segregated," he said in a news briefing.

Despite notices of violations, the officials have not introduced changes to comply with the law, Teologio said.

"They are recalcitrant. They are stubborn. They flaunt that they are already compliant or have closed dump sites. They have not submitted their 10-year solid waste man-

agement plan, which is in violation of the law," she said.

She said officials cited the lack of funds and politics as reasons for failing to comply with RA 9003.

But Mosquera said their reasons were unacceptable. He said the officials were ordered to close the dumps in three months and to execute their safe closure and rehabilitation plan in six months.

Officials who do not fulfill these requirements face criminal and administrative complaints, he said.

The National Solid Waste Management Commission had prepared 350 complaints against local governments. The complaints were trimmed down to 50 involving the most blatant violations, Mosquera said. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Resorts World's recycling activity pushes environmental awareness



Employees of Resorts World Manila turn over recyclabled materials to Tzu Chi Foundation volunteers during the company's '12 Months of Green' monthly recycling activity.

RESORTS World Manila's (RWM) Live and Love Green program has succeeded in developing an environmentally conscious workforce.

Part of the company's initiatives is its monthly recycling activity dubbed 12 Months of Green, a platform that has helped recover over 10 tons of recyclable materials through the first half of 2016 alone.

"We remain fully committed to becoming an environmentally sustainable organization that values the importance of conserving resources and preserving nature for the next generation to appreciate," said Owen Cammayo, RWM director for Corporate Communications. "More than establishing an eco-friendly workplace, it is equally vital for us to share our advocacy to our employees for them to observe these eco-friendly practices at home."

Since making its Earth Day pledge back in April 2013, RWM has collected over 63 tons of recyclables such as cartons, used papers, aluminum cans, PET bottles, tarpaulins, and old tires all donated to Buddhist organization Tzu Chi Foundation Philippines.

The foundation transforms these materials to items such as shirts and blankets to be used in disaster relief drives.

Apart from its recycling day efforts, RWM has also participated in eco-awareness activities at the La Mesa Nature Reserve in Quezon City in cooperation with ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, Inc.'s Bantay Kalikasan Program.

Volunteer employees joined in on green activities including a trek through the watershed, a lecture on local environmental efforts, and hands-on soil potting and germinant planting.

The efforts produced 200 germinant plants of endemic species of trees which will be transferred later within the year during a tree planting activity on a hectare of land the company will adopt and help grow.

These initiatives are part of RWM's League of Volunteer Employees (LOVE) Program designed to create a culture of volunteerism aligned with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) thrusts of promoting Philippine tourism and the arts, social development and environmental sustainability.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### *Manila revives cleanliness drive*

As road clearing operations in Manila continue, Mayor Joseph Estrada called on its 1.7 million residents yesterday to help keep the capital city clean and be part of his revived extensive cleanliness campaign.

Estrada ordered all concerned city hall departments to again strictly enforce the city's 1994 anti-littering ordinance.

He said residents could support the campaign by merely practicing proper waste disposal and garbage segregation.

With a population of 1.78

million, Manila produces 8,700 tons of garbage everyday, with 30 percent or roughly 2,610 tons ending up on the streets and in drainage pipes and waterways, Estrada lamented.

Manila is one of the world's most densely populated cities with 42,857 people per square kilometer, or 111,002 people per square mile. Tondo is the most populous, accounting for 38 percent of the total population, followed by Sampaloc (20.7 percent) and Santa Ana (10.7 percent).

"You can just imagine, with this burgeoning population, the amount of garbage the city produces everyday," Estrada said. "Cleaning up the city is such a very difficult task, something everyone should be involved (in) if we want immediate results."

Of the six districts of Manila, District 3 remains the "dirtiest" in terms of the volume of garbage being collected daily, according to Belle Borromeo, head of the Department of Public Services (DPS).

District 3 is composed of Binondo, Quiapo, San Nicolas and Sta. Cruz, comprising a total of 126 barangays. With a land area of 6.24 square kilometers, it has a 2015 population of 221,780.

They collect 10 truckloads of garbage everyday from District 3 alone, Borromeo said.

"That's about 40 to 50 tons a day," she said as she echoed Estrada's call to city residents to observe discipline in waste disposal.

- Jose Rodel Clapano



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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### Villar nagpaalala sa DENR officials na pangalagaan ang kalikasan

Pinaalalahanan ni Sen. Cynthia Villar ang mga opisyal ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at attached agencies na isantabi muna ang "conflict of interest" sa pagtupad sa kanilang tungkulin na pangalagaan ang kapaligiran.

Sa pamumuno sa organizational meeting ng Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, sinabihan ni Villar ang mga opisyal na, "let the economists take care of the economy; be the environmentalists who take care of the environment".

Bagama't ito ang

unang pagkakataon ni Villar, chair ng Committee on Agriculture and Food noong nakaraang Kongreso, na pamunuan ang environment committee, hindi naman bago sa kanya ang mga bagay na may kaugnayan sa kapaligiran at likas na yaman.

Binanggit niya ang Sagip Ilog o ang River Rehabilitation Program sa Las Piñas City kung saan inayos ang Zapote River at Las Piñas River. Nanalo ang proyektong ito ng United Nations-Water Best Practices Award noong 2011.

Dahil sa pagsisikap na ito, hindi lamang nalinis

ang mga ilog, nagbigay din ito ng mga pangkabuhayang proyekto sa mga residente sa siyudad.

"We will study the Greening Program and find ways how we can improve it. I will also look into the the implementation of relevant laws such as the Solid Waste Management Act," pahayag ni Villar.

Tiniyak din ni Villar na magpapatuloy ang kanyang adbokasiyang pagtulong sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda na naging competitive sa pamamagitan ng Villar SIPAG farm schools sa Las Piñas at San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.





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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# DAR orders distribution of Tadeco land in Luisita

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) ordered yesterday the distribution of 358 hectares of land owned by the Tarlac Development Corp. (Tadeco) in Hacienda Luisita to qualified farmer-beneficiaries.

DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano said the eight parcels of land in Barangays Balete and Cutcut in Tarlac City have been left idle since Tadeco filed a protest against the land's coverage under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

"The notices of coverage over the land remain valid," Mariano said.

Tadeco is owned by the family of former president Benigno Aquino III.

Mariano directed the DAR-Tarlac office to proceed with the land distribution in line with Section 30 of Republic Act 9700 or CARP.

He said the DAR regional office should "do all acts and things necessary, including but not limited to securing assistance from appropriate law enforcement officials to ensure that...Tadeco and, or any person acting on its behalf comply with the order."

He said all ancillary motions filed by Tadeco had been denied for lack of merit.

Luis Meinrado Pagulayan, DAR undersecretary for legal affairs, said the landholding has been declared an agricultural land since 1988, contrary to the claim of Tadeco.

Joseph Canlas, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas chairman, welcomed the DAR order, saying it would serve as "an added weapon for farmworkers against the Cojuangco family's continuing scheme to evade land distribution."

"Ka Paeng (Mariano's) order is a challenge to the Cojuangco family's resistance to change," Canlas said.

Meanwhile, Marcos Risonar Jr., DAR undersecretary for field operations, said it would take at least six months for DAR to screen potential beneficiaries. — With Ding Cervantes