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03 MAR 2016

DENR

IN THE NEWS

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Environment Secretary Ramon Paje unveils the Elephant Monumental Sculpture, partly made from the ashes of over four tons of elephant ivory tusks, during the celebration of World Wildlife Day at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife in Quezon City yesterday. Right photo shows Girlie, a Philippine Eagle blinded in one eye by a slingshot projectile. Unable to return to her habitat, she is the park's most popular resident and poster bird in the fight to preserve all endangered species in the wild.

BOY SANTOS / MICHAEL VARCAS

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Wildlife Day: Tusks turned into monument

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

A P400-million elephant sculpture made from the ashes of more than four tons of confiscated ivory tusks was unveiled yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City.

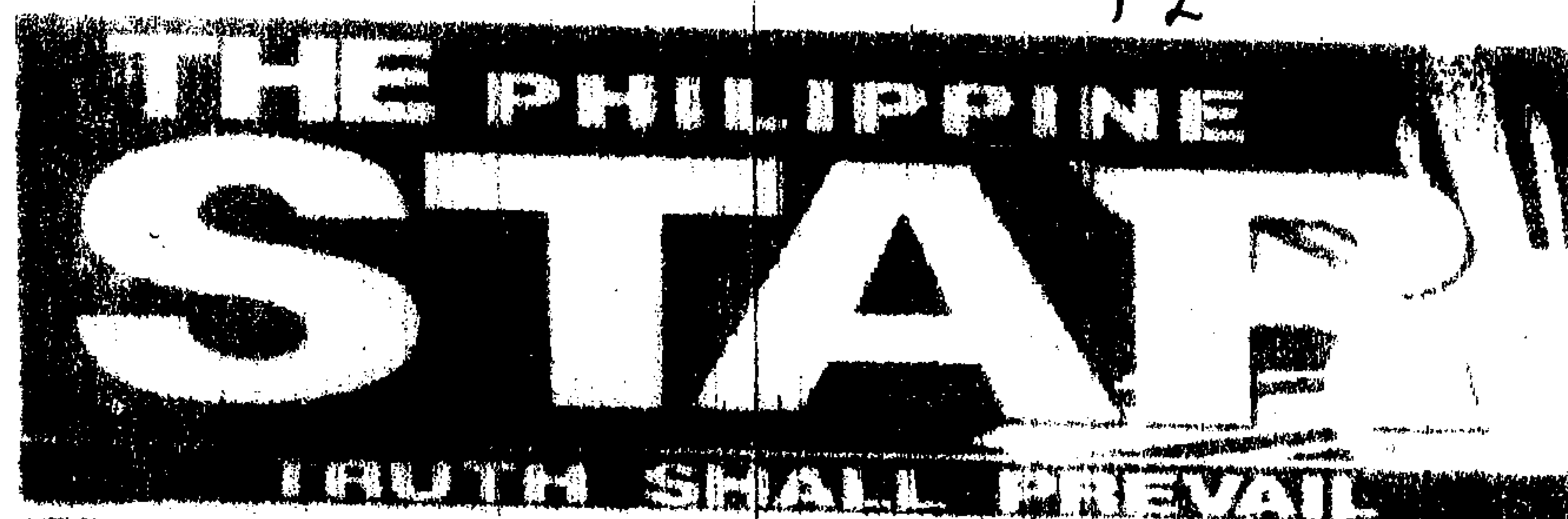
The sculpture will serve as a reminder of the internationally acclaimed action of the govern-

ment and its support for global efforts against elephant poaching and illegal ivory trade, according to Environment Secretary Ramon Paje.

The unveiling of the sculpture marked the global celebration of World Wildlife Day.

"The Philippines was the

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Wildlife From Page 1

first to have spoken out against illegal wildlife trade. The life-size structure means we will not tolerate it," Paje said.

The Philippines was the first non-elephant country to destroy a huge stockpile of illegally traded ivory with an estimated value of around P450 million.

Since then, a dozen countries such as China, France, Hong Kong, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and the US have followed suit.

He said the country's war against illegal wildlife trade has been successful and it highlighted the importance of biodiversity.

Paje said the sculpture represents the natural position of a mother African elephant protecting her calf.

"The upper circles representing their faces symbolize the quest for the continuation of life of these creatures. The dark color, contrasting the natural off-white ivory tusk, embodies the Philippines' support for global efforts against elephant poaching and illegal

ivory trade," he said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources chief said the super-imposed tusks, which are almost as high as the pachyderm's body, represent the beauty of the creatures with their tusks intact.

The sculpture is made of concrete and ashes of the tusks that the authorities burned in June 2013.

It was made by Janus Nufiez, a Fine Arts graduate of the University of the Philippines.

To fight the illegal trade, the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory (POGI) and Illegal Wildlife Trade was formed in 2013.

POGI was tasked to enforce Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

In less than three years, POGI conducted about 96 law enforcement operations; confiscated more than 24,000 wildlife specimens, 500 of which were endangered species, and filed 55 criminal complaints against 196 violators.

Nineteen persons have been convicted for violating RA 9147.

During yesterday's ceremony, the DENR cited individuals and officials from various agencies and local government units who helped support the agency's efforts.

About 75 men and women from law enforcement units, concerned agencies and courts were named wildlife law enforcement awardees.

The country's campaign against the illegal ivory trade was supported by the United States Agency for International Development.

The Philippines is among eight parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of wild flora and fauna that have been implicated in the illegal ivory trade, and considered among primary countries to watch for such illegal activity.

In March 2013, the CITES Standing Committee ordered these eight countries and eleven secondary countries to develop national ivory action plans to stop the illegal trade.

- With Ted Torres

Daily Tribune

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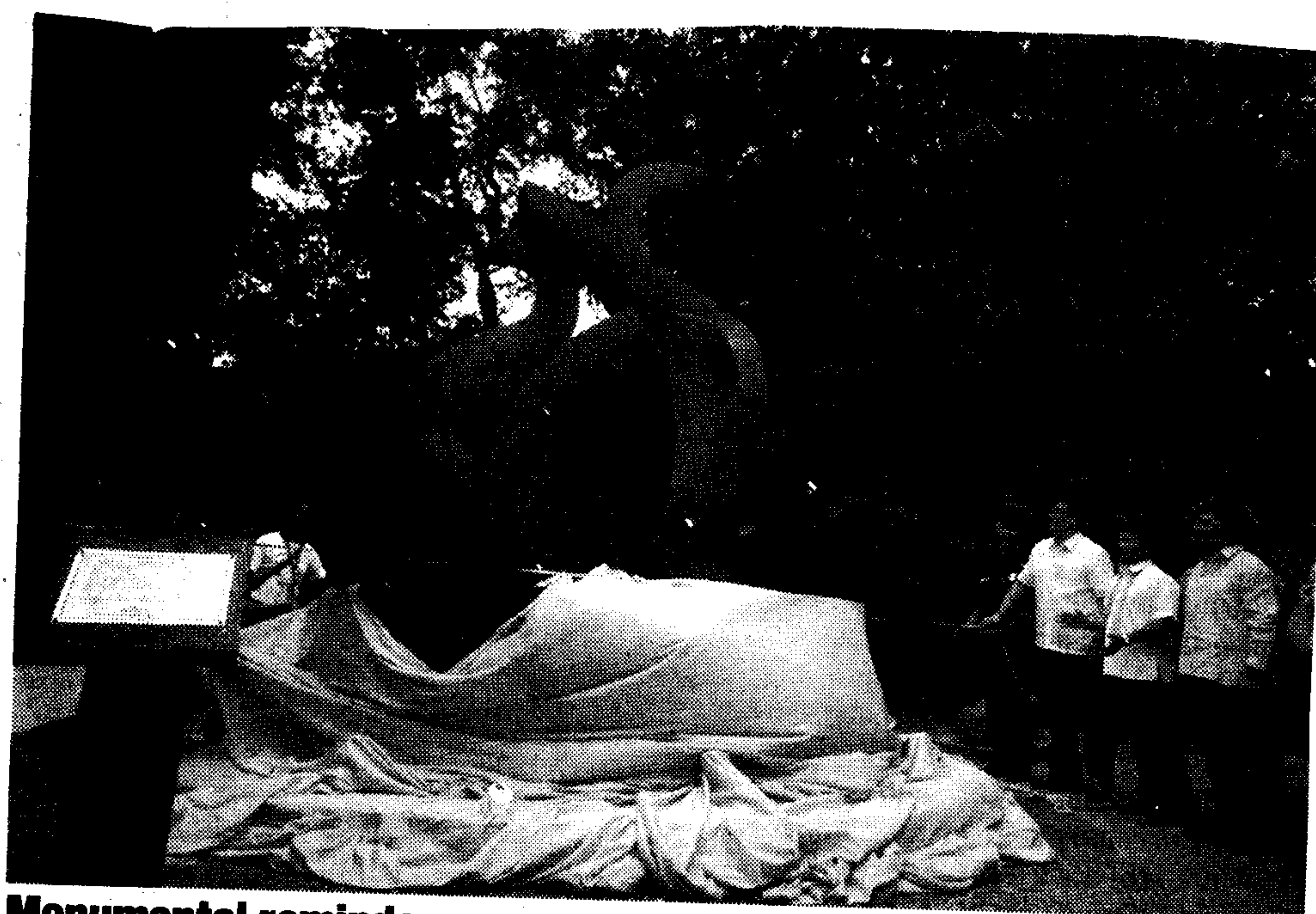
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Monumental reminder The Department of Environment and Natural Resources leads the ceremonial unveiling of the Elephant Tusk Monumental Sculpture made of ash remains of more than four tons of elephant ivory tusks that were destroyed by the government in 2013 during the 3rd World Wild Life Day held at Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife in Quezon City yesterday. The sculpture aims to serve as a reminder of such bold step taken by the Philippines to fight illegal ivory trade. ANALY LABOR

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Sculpture from seized tusks is monument to Wildlife Day

BY EVAN ORIAS

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday unveiled a life-size sculpture depicting two elephants made from ashes of smuggled tusks in observance of the World Wildlife Day.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said at least five tons of smuggled elephant tusks were destroyed in 2013, a landmark action against illegal ivory trade.

The pulverized tusks were later on cremated at a government animal incinerator to ensure complete destruction. The tusks were reduced to two tons of ashes after being incinerated.

Paje said the sculpture, conceptualized by University of the Philippines Fine Arts graduate Janus Nuñez, represents a mother

elephant and her calf.

The art work can be seen at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City, which serves as the headquarters of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau.

"The actual value of this sculpture is priceless, because we cannot put a value to the thousands of elephants that were killed for their tusks," Paje said, adding the sculpture will remind the public of the country's support for global efforts against elephant poaching and illegal trade.

The DENR also commended 97 individuals with the Wildlife Law Enforcement Awards for supporting its campaign against wildlife trade that resulted in the rescue or confiscation of around 2,270 different species and the filing of charges against wildlife law violators.



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KAMPANYA VS ILIGAL NA BENTAHAN NG HAYOP PINAIGTING

PINANGUNAHAN ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pagdiriwang ng World Wildlife Day kasabay ng pagpapakita ng isang istatwa na gawa sa abo ng pangil ng elepante.

Ang mga dinurog at sinunog na pangil ng elepante ay mula sa may P400 milyong halaga ng ivory tusk na nakumpiska ng mga awtoridad na tinangkang ipasok at ilabas ng bansa, may dalawang taon na ang na-

kalilipas.

Ayon kay DENR Secretary Ramon J. P. Paje, ang istatwa ay magpapaalala sa pagsuporta ng bawat isa sa kampanya ng pamahalaan laban sa pagpatay sa mga elepante at sa iligal na pagbebenta ng pangil ng mga ito.

"The actual value of this sculpture is priceless because we cannot put a value to the thousands of elephants that were killed for their tusks," ani Paje.

Sinabi ni Paje na para makuha ang pangil ng elepante ay kailangan

itong patayin.

Aniya, sa programang ito ay ipinakikita ang komitment ng Pilipinas sa Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) na masugpo ang iligal na bentahan ng wildlife species.

Ang skulturang istatwa ay ang pigura ng isang inang elepante at anak nito pinag-iingatan ang kanilang pangil para sila ay mabuhay at makikita ito sa may Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center

sa Lungsod ng Quezon at itinuturing na headquarters din ng Biodiversity Management Bureau ng DENR.

Samantala, nanawagan si Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Director Mundita Lim sa publiko na ipagbigay-alam sa mga awtoridad kung may mga iligal na bentahan ng hayop sa kanilang mga lugar.

Ang lalabag sa wildlife law ay may parusang 20 taong pagkakulong at multang milyong piso.

MONCHET LARANO

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Eco group pushes ban of cadmium in products

THE environment-advocate group EcoWaste Coalition has urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to formulate a regulation that will prevent and reduce cadmium pollution.

The group asked Secretary Ramon Paje to initiate the crafting of a Chemical Control Order (CCO) for Cadmium and Cadmium Compounds, which belong to the Philippine Priority Chemicals List.

"We make this proposition in response to the dangerously high concentrations of cadmium detected in some items through the chemicals screening it conducted using a portable X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) device," wrote Sonia Mendoza, president of EcoWaste Coalition.

The group cited the results of its chemicals screening on plastic tarpaulins, fashion accessories and jewelry, coffee mugs and toys to justify its proposal.

The 300 pieces of election campaign tarpaulins seized by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and donated to the group for recycling purposes were found to be laden with cadmium ranging from 697 to 1,921 parts per million (ppm).

The EcoWaste Coalition also found eight types of bracelets from fashion jewelry vendors in Divisoria and Quiapo were found positive for cadmium in the range of 15 percent (or 150,000 ppm) to 32 percent (or 320,000 ppm).

The group noted that the levels of cadmium found in the jewelry and tarpaulin samples were way above the European Commission Regulation No. 494/2011 cadmium limit of 0.01 percent (or 100 ppm) for jewelry, plastics and brazing sticks.

"Cadmium exerts toxic effects on the kidney, the skeletal and the respiratory systems, and is classified as a human carcinogen," according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which has listed cadmium among the "10 chemicals of major public health concern."

According to UNEP Final Review of Scientific Information on Cadmium, products containing cadmium are not typically collected separately from the general waste stream in developing countries.

Cory Martinez

Daily Tribune

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Joint venture to launch Sicogon tourism project

Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) and Sicogon Development Corporation (SIDECO) will launch Sicogon Island Tourism Estate development within the first half of 2016.

The ALI-SIDECO joint venture is expected to drive economic progress in Western Visayas and the entire region as it serves as a tourism hub for surrounding or nearby destinations like Gigantes, Bantayan and Concepcion islands.

The 1,100-hectare Sicogon Island will feature a balanced mix of developments, such as a resort town center, hotels and resorts, as well as commercial and residential establishments, supported by an on-site airstrip.

The ground breaking of the airport runway is scheduled for the second half of the year.

"The initial development will concentrate on building the airport and runway, to ensure accessibility to the island," said Jose Emmanuel Jalandoni, ALI senior vice president and group head of Commercial Business.

"The 1.3-kilometer runway will allow immediate access from Manila and Cebu to the island development," he added, saying further that test flights to Sicogon are being targeted for the first quarter of 2017.

The project is supported by public, private and community organizations, and government bodies alike because of the potential economic benefits it will

bring to the region. A framework agreement was signed by ALI, SIDECO and the Federation of Sicogon Island Farmers and Fisherfolk Association (FESIFFA) in 2014 to pave the way for the sustainable development of Sicogon Island.

The group has been assisting the local community through skills training and livelihood programs to make them active partners in the development.

"We strongly believe and hope that poverty alleviation will be achieved through tourism projects. These will give us various job opportunities and help us improve farming and fishing methods," said Raul Ramos, president of FESIFFA.

Jalandoni stressed that sustainability will be a main focus of the project. Aside from allocating more than 50 percent of the development for open green space, ALI will also work with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to continue stewardship of Sicogon's forested area and work on coastal protection and marine life rehabilitation in support of sustainable development.

"More than becoming a premier tourist destination and a tourism hub for the region, Sicogon is envisioned to provide inclusive growth and economic development through long-term recovery and livelihood programs and job creation," said Jalandoni.

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ALI starts work on Sicogon island resort development

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ALI estimates that the Sicogon Island development will provide 20,000 jobs either directly or indirectly with increased tourism, and approximately P1 billion in earnings for the community through business opportunities that will come from the retail and commercial establishments.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

AIM, ADEC to review, improve PPP program

BY KRISTYN NIKLA M. LAZO
REPORTER

ADEC Innovations Foundation and the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) have forged an agreement to do case research and studies and working papers on improving the country's public-private partnership (PPP) program.

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed late Wednesday covers the setting up of a "PPP Research Laboratory" within the AIM facilities.

The research lab would trace the development and achievements of the PPP program since it was established under the Philippine Build-Operate-

Transfer Law in the 1980s.

"The establishment of the PPP Research Laboratory is crucial in studying the efficient delivery of projects related to the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and in determining how they can have a direct, tangible and positive impact across the world," James Donovan, ADEC chairman, said.

Former National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Director General Arsenio Balisacan said earlier that the Philippines is focused on

addressing three out of the 17 SDGs "applicable to us."

These are poverty reduction, universal healthcare and sustainable education.

But Manuel de Vera, AIM executive director, said the PPP Research Laboratory is not necessarily aimed at PPPs on health.

The first working paper is going to be released "early next year." The agenda is to trace the developments and achievements of the PPP since the 1980s.

De Vera said the group can

convene with government agencies in coming up with laws, programs and projects to improve the PPP system.

The 17 SDGs are: ending poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; conservation of life below wa-

ters; conservation of life on land; peace justice and strong institutions; and partnerships for the goals.

ADEC is a global group devoted to provide environmental, social and governance solutions and expertise, data management and technology services.

It is now working with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (Un-ece) and hosting the International Specialist Center of Excellence for PPP in Health aimed at addressing some goals of the UN's SDGs.

Business World

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E-vehicle industry enters talks to supply Thai counterparts

By Daphne J. Magturo
Reporter

THE PHILIPPINE and Thai electric vehicle sectors yesterday announced the potential for trade links between the two countries, with Manila ready to export "bulky" vehicle parts as early as this year to take advantage of zero tariffs within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community.

"We see a potential for collaboration between the Electric Vehicle Association of Thailand (EVAT) and Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines (EVAP) as both are strong trading partners and are neighbors," EVAP Presi-

dent Rommel T. Juan said during a joint media briefing on Manufacturing Expo 2016 at the Dusit Thani Manila in Makati City.

Asked for a target timetable to start exports, EVAT President Yossapong Laoonual said in the same venue: "We just started discussions today and we will see how we can work together. We'd like to introduce more of the Thai companies and also invite the academe side from the Philippines to work together with us."

Mr. Laoonual said his group sees an "opportunity to take advantage of the zero tariff base which will enable automakers in ASEAN to penetrate markets in neighboring countries," as well as accelerate the sector's growth in the bloc.

The Philippines plans to manufacture the "bulky parts," while Thailand can produce "power trains including the motors," according to EVAP.

Bangkok's industry is still "young" as EVAT started operations just last year, but Manila-based manufacturers are now "ready" to export should the need arise.

"It can be started this year, we just have to find the market first. The companies in the Philippines are ready if the market requires it," Mr. Juan said in an interview after the event.

This is the first time the Philippines has partnered with a fellow ASEAN member state for electric vehicle exports. It is also in talks with Japan and Taiwan for similar deals.

While Mr. Juan said there is an opportunity in the ASEAN bloc's "single market and elimination of tariff barriers," he also acknowledged that Thailand may have an advantage over the Philippines.

"The Thai automotive industry is more advanced. They have bigger factories, high tech facilities and lower utilities," he explained. "It might be challenging to compete with them."

EVAP said it is on track to meet its target of deploying one million electric vehicles on the road by 2020, and the partnership with Thailand can help "accelerate" its progress.

At present, five foreign companies have set up shop in the Philippines to cash in on the growing local electric vehicle sector.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Farmers find no protection in land titles

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MARAMAG, Bukidnon—Farmers in Barangay Base Camp here waited 16 years to become holders of titles to the land they are tilling.

It was all just on paper, however, as the farmers, who had been tilling the land since the Marcos regime, continue to live in fear amid cases of harassment by an armed group that supposedly wants the farmers driven out to pave the way for the entry of an agro-industrial company.

The farmers said the armed men, identified with a politician, set up camp on a portion of the 720-hectare land here, which was covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), and began harassing occupants by firing shots and brandishing high-powered weapons since late last year.

They alleged that a big-time politician in Bukidnon is behind the entry of the armed men, although one of the guards insisted that a tribal leader is the one who hired them to secure the area.

The tribal clan, they said, has

claimed the area to be part of its ancestral domain.

Irene Sanchez, president of the Bukidnon Landless and Actual Tillers Association (Buklata), said the land ownership documents that the farmers possess are authentic. She showed copies of the certificates of land ownership award (Cloa) and receipts issued by the provincial treasurer's office of Bukidnon showing payment of realty taxes.

"If our Cloas are fake, they would not have accepted our payment and issued us receipts," said Sanchez.

Buklata is a group of former employees of Bukidnon Farms Inc. (BFI), reportedly owned by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., but which was taken over by the government in 1986. Most BFI members had worked as tillers.

236 beneficiaries

In 1990, Sanchez said the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) began screening land claimants and after 16 years of waiting, 236 beneficiaries were given Cloas. The farmers were awarded with a hectare of farm each.

Other Buklata members are still waiting.

A certification signed by Nida Acuna, Maramag municipal agrarian reform program officer, dated March 2, 2015, showed the 236 Buklata members as new owners of the BFI land. Most of it is now planted with rice.

Buklata member Ifraim Alayon said since the distribution of the Cloa, farmers have been tilling the land in peace, and had even taken the initiative of marking boundaries, saving the DAR and other government agencies time and resources.

Farmer shot dead

The trouble started when a farmer, Larry Algora, was shot dead inside his home in October 2015. Algora was not a Buklata member but was one of the CARP beneficiaries. His killing is believed to have been carried out by hired guns.

On Feb. 13, 2016, a Bobet Odtuhan, 48, who was employed as harvester in a farm lot in the Buklata homestead, was shot several times, according to a Maramag police report.

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Farmers find no protection in land titles

Odtuhan survived.

He recounted to the INQUIRER that he was with three others when armed men in blue uniforms approached them and began firing AK-47 assault rifles from a few hundred meters away.

"When the shooting started, all my companions dropped on their bellies, but I remained standing and tried to see their (shooters) faces. That's when I saw they were using AK-47s," he said.

Odtuhan was certain the assailants had intent to kill but added that he was not afraid to die and continued to work in the fields.

No police action

Base Camp residents claimed police have not acted on reports of violence in the area.

Maramag police chief, Insp. Erwin Naelga, could not be contacted for comment.

When approached by journalists during an on-site inspection of the area, a man who identified himself as Benito from Maguindanao, who represented the group of AK-47-

wielding guards, said they were hired by the Daguiwa-as clan to protect the area from intruders.

A few moments later, when asked again if the armed men were working for a Bukidnon politician, he replied in the affirmative.

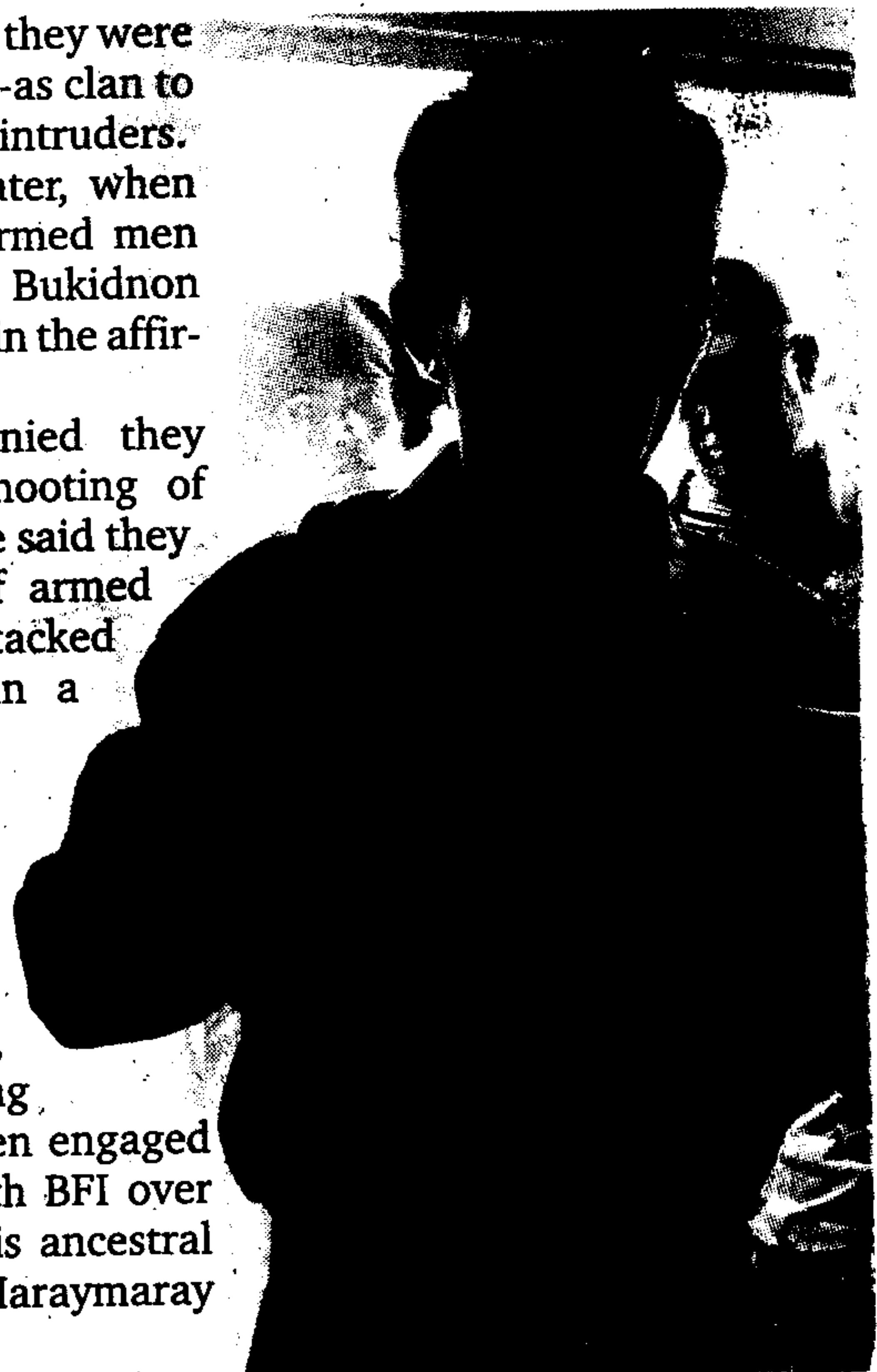
He, however, denied they were behind the shooting of Odtuhan although he said they engaged a group of armed men, who had attacked their detachment, in a gunfight.

Legal battle

Documents obtained by the INQUIRER showed that the Daguiwa-as clan, through Datu Piang Daguiwa-as, has been engaged in a legal battle with BFI over what the clan said is ancestral land in Barangay Maraymaray in Don Carlos town.

Buklata members have long suspected that the lumad were used only as a front by a politician, who wants to drive farmers away to lease the land to a multinational.

Jigger Jerusalem, Inquirer Mindanao



FARMER Bobet Odtuhan shows the scar of a bullet wound that he suffered when armed men fired at him and three other farmers as they were harvesting rice in their farm in Barangay Base Camp.

JIGGER/JERUSALEM/INQUIRER MIND

The Standard

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World Wildlife Day. A crocodile jumps out of the water for some food from a caretaker of the Malabon Zoo, owned by Manny Tangco.
MANNY PALMERO

PEOPLES JOURNALS

Everybody's Newspaper

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SAVE FARMERS FROM EL NIÑO

By Ryan Ponce Pacpaco

SENATORIAL candidate Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez yesterday strongly urged the government to conduct cloud seeding operations in places affected by El Niño phenomenon and extend loans to the troubled farmers as an immediate act of "malasakit" (compassion) for farmers.

Romualdez, a lawyer and president of the Philippine Constitution Association (Philconsa), said the national and local governments should work double time and unite to mitigate the impact of El Nino on the agriculture sector.

"We have to prevent further damage to the agriculture sector now," said Romualdez, who ran unopposed in the last polls

and is a former chairman of the House Committee on Ethics and Privileges, as he called on the government to extend loans and other aid such as cloud seeding operations through the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bureau on Soil and Water Management (BSWM).

"The national government and LGUs (local government units) should assist farmers not only with food supplies but also with loans to tide them over while the drought has yet to abate, apart from possible cloud seeding operations in affected areas," Romualdez, head of the House Independent Bloc and a three-term congressman who is running for the Senate under a platform anchored on compassionate governance, stressed.

The Leyte opposition leader issued the statement

following reports that the country has already lost more than P4.7 billion worth of crops due to the weather phenomenon since February last year.

"The administration should show genuine compassion or malasakit for farmers who face hunger and the dire prospect of sinking deeper into poverty because of El Niño," said Romualdez, a shared senatorial candidate of Vice President Jejomar "Jojo" Binay, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte and Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago who are both running for president and who has been endorsed by the 40-man Party-list Coalition Foundation Inc. (PCF).

DA statistics showed that the prolonged dry spell has affected 222,781 hectares across the country, causing damage to 349,620 metric tons of

crops or P4.77 billion in losses from February 2015 to February 2016.

For 2016, the damage was posted at P1.343 billion, covering a total of 76,593 hectares in eight regions.

A total of 54,619 farmers have suffered a production loss of more than 119,000 metric tons (MT), the DA said.

Romualdez lamented the extensive crop damage in the various regions including Northern Mindanao (Region 10) which took the brunt of the drought with damage worth P358.4 million, followed by Western Visayas with P356.56 million; Soccsargen with P232.89; ARMM with P214.6 million; Mimaropa with P154.19 million; Zamboanga with P14.02 million; Ilocos with P10.27 million; and Caraga with P2.99 million.



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PERMANENTE ANG PINSALA NG EL NIÑO SA BAHURA NG GREAT BARRIER REEF, ISANG WORLD HERITAGE SITE

NAHAHARAP ang ilang bahagi ng Great Barrier Reef sa Australia sa permanenteng pinsala kung hindi pa maiibsan ngayong buwan ang tindi ng pananalasa ng umiiral ngayong El Niño, na isa sa pinakamatinding naranasan sa mundo sa nakalipas na dalawang dekada.

Ito ang babala ng mga siyentista laban sa tuluyang pagkasira ng kilalang world heritage site.

Ang El Niño ay dulot ng pag-iinit ng karagatan sa kanlurang Pasipiko – ideyal na kondisyon para sa coral bleaching, na tinatanggal ng bahura ang mga nabubuhay na algae, na nagreresulta para ito ay mag-calcify o maging solido na parang bato. Maaari lamang mabuhay ang bahura sa tamang timpla ng temperatura ng dagat.

Ayon sa mga siyentista, dumadanas ang mga apektadong bahagi ng Great Barrier Reef ng pinakamatinding pagkamatay ng bahura sa nakalipas na 15 taon.

Ang mga bahura sa paligid ng Lizard Island sa labas ng siyudad ng Cairns ay dumadanas ng pinakamatindi at pinakamalawak na coral bleaching, umaabot sa 80 porsiyento ng bahura nito ay namutla na sa pagkabilad sa napakatinding sikat ng araw, sinabi ni Dr. Anne Hoggett, director ng Lizard Island Research Station, sa Reuters.

“Bleaching is a clear signal that living corals are under physiological stress. If that stress is bad enough for long enough, the corals can die,” paliwanag naman ni Dr. Russell Reichelt, chairman ng Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

“What happens now will be entirely dependent on local weather conditions,” dagdag ni Reichelt.

Sinabi ng mga siyentista na kailangan ng Great Barrier Reef ang pansamantalang pamamahinga mula sa kondisyon ng El Niño, kahit na ilang linggo lang, upang matiyak lang na maisasalba ang mga lugar ng bahura.

Sa huling forecast ng Australian Bureau of Meteorology, nanawagan ito ng pagpapatuloy ng kondisyon ng El Niño.

Ang taon na ito ang magiging pinakamainit sa kasaysayan, at mas magiging mainit pa ang 2016 dahil sa El Niño, ayon sa World Meteorological Organization.

Ang Great Barrier Reef ay may 2,000 kilometro (1,200 milya) sa hilaga-silangang dalampasigan ng Australia at ang pinakamalaking buhay na ecosystem sa mundo. Humahakot din ito ng bilyun-bilyong dolyar kada taon sa larangan ng turismo.

Mayo ng nakaraang taon nang nabigo ang World Heritage Committee ng UNESCO na maibilang ang Great Barrier Reef sa listahan nito ng “in danger”, ngunit nagbunsod ito ng pangmatagalang pangamba tungkol sa kasasapitan nito dahil na rin sa climate change.

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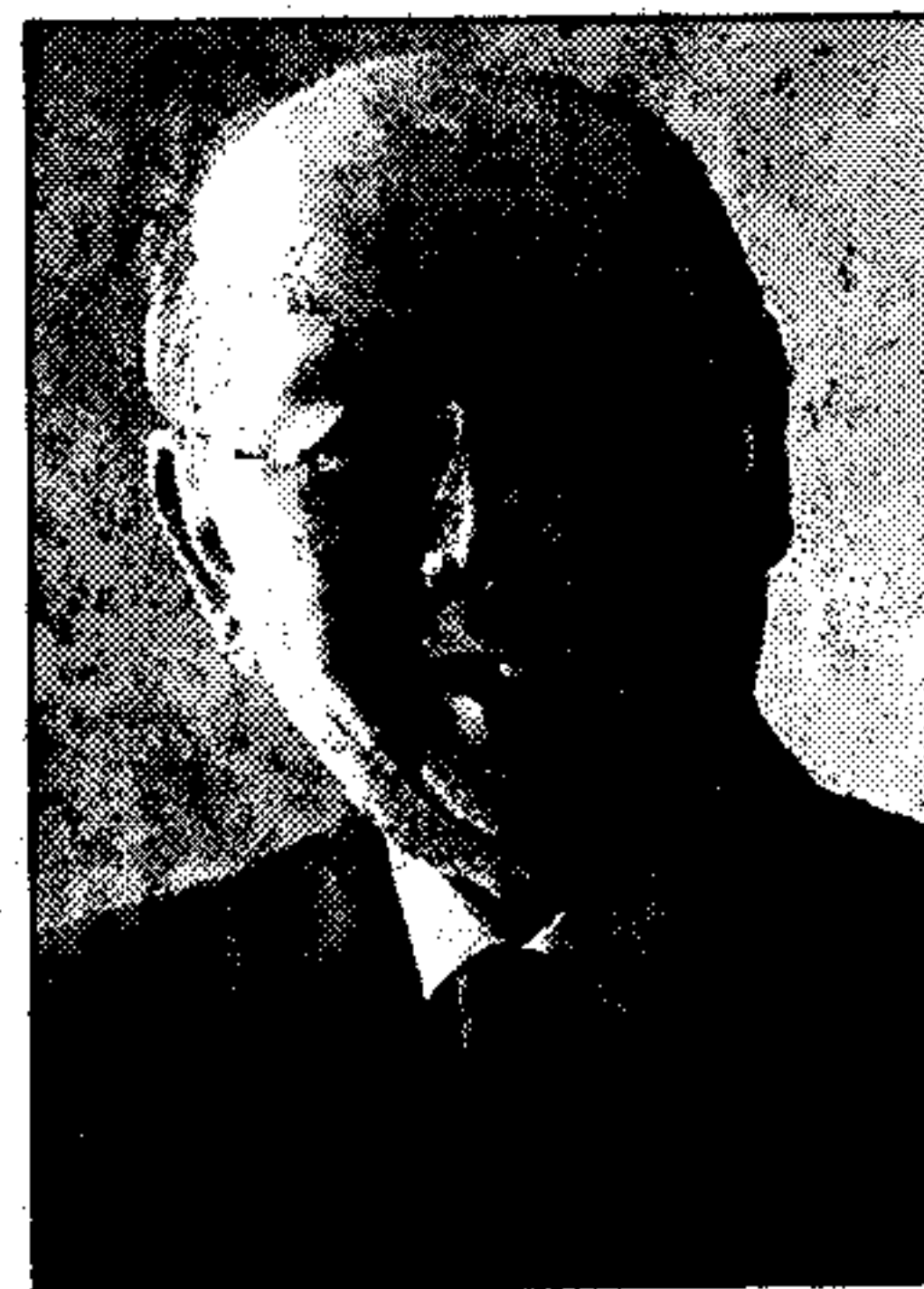
FILIPINO WORLDVIEW

By **ROBERTO R. ROMULO**

Agriculture: Disaster & climate change resilience

(This is the condensed version of the speech I presented at the Arangkada Philippines Forum on March 1.)

The Philippines is the 13th most climate-vulnerable out of 186 countries, according to the 2016 Climate Change Vulnerability Index. At least 85 provinces are now experiencing severe drought as we are in the middle of the worst El Niño event to hit the country in the last 20 years. Mindanao will be the hardest hit by changes in climate averages and extremes. By 2030, 1.4 million Filipinos will be at higher risk of hunger due to lower agricultural production caused by climate change. One should note farmers are the lowest paid sector in the country. Farmers' poverty incidence of 38 percent has remained unchanged since 2006.



Despite the abundance of academic papers on the role of agriculture in our economy and the fact that every administration has launched programs, we have not made progress in moving the agriculture sector forward. Agriculture yielded the lowest productivity and lowest incomes with an average growth of 1.3 percent in the last five years.

The sector is not just stagnant, it is deteriorating.

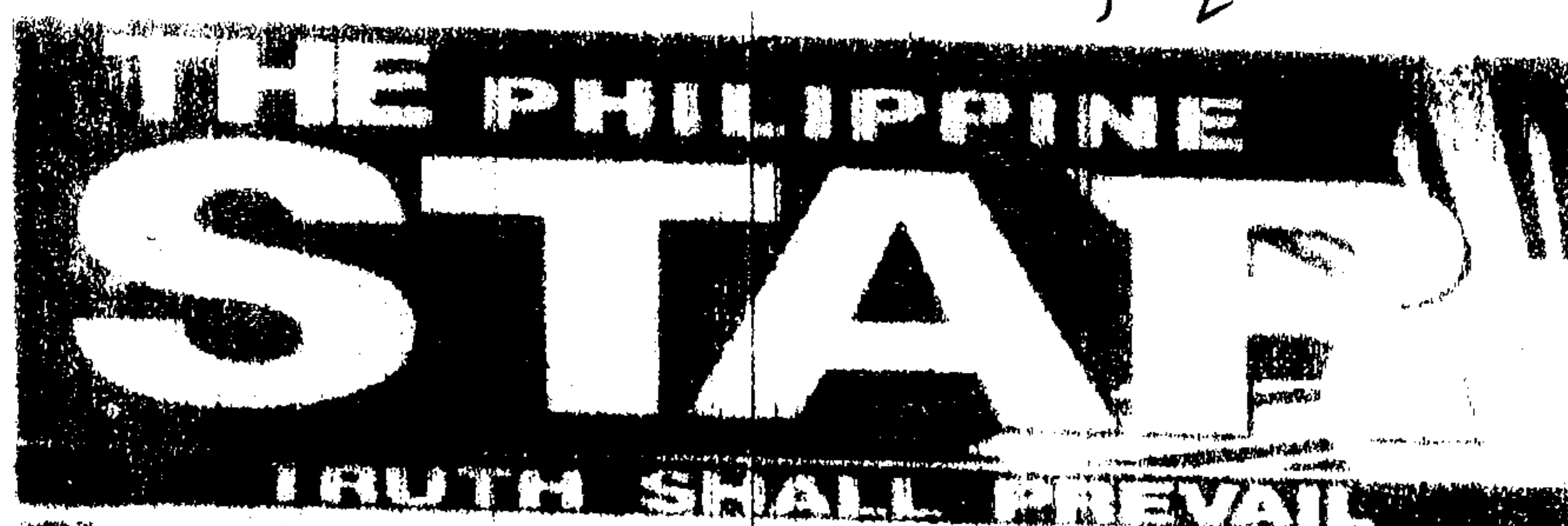
I would like to share with you the experience of the Zuellig Family Foundation in the health sector. Like health, agricultural services have been devolved to local government. However, programs and projects continue to be designed at the central level with local governments having limited capability to influence the strategic directions and design of these programs.

What ZFF has done is to empower local governments by providing technical assistance—building their capacity to address the unique gaps in their local health system through better governance and leadership.

I believe the Department of Agriculture should do the same – provide more technical assistance – and financial grants to local governments to make their agricultural services more responsive to the needs of their specific area. This may be a departure from the centralized agricultural plan downloaded to the local regions, but I see it as absolutely essential. If mayors and governors can raise agricultural productivity and increase farm incomes, then, I believe, an immediate reduction in the poverty level in the rural areas can be achieved. To support this, one of the priority actions of the next government is to revisit the role of local government in agriculture.

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*Agriculture: Disaster and climate
change resilience*

Each successive administration has launched programs to address bottlenecks to agricultural and rural development. But much more needs to be done. There has been no shortage of ideas and solutions, but how come we have not made progress in moving the agriculture sector forward?

Since I am a process and systems person, I would like to focus on the implementation of these policies and programs. Otherwise, they remain just ideals.

More than any other sector of our economy, agriculture is the most vulnerable to the vicissitudes of nature. We cannot do much to prevent nature from taking its course, but much can be done to mitigate its negative impact. Failure to do so will have devastating impact on our well-being.

Addressing agriculture today—both large-scale and small-holder—means addressing the most visible and most pressing manifestations of poverty: lack of livelihood, sustainable food supply, hunger and malnutrition, and even urban migration. A strong agricultural sector also prepares us for the impact of natural hazards and climate change, making us more disaster-and climate-resilient.

Plans are underway to establish a multi-stakeholder alliance to help bring agriculture to the forefront of our national development agenda.

The experience of ZFF in improving maternal and infant health, in partnership with local government units and subsequently with the Department of Health, offers useful lessons on how such an alliance for agriculture can operate. The key lesson is to encourage local ownership and leadership for improving local outcomes and help build the capacities of mayors and governors to deliver needed services.

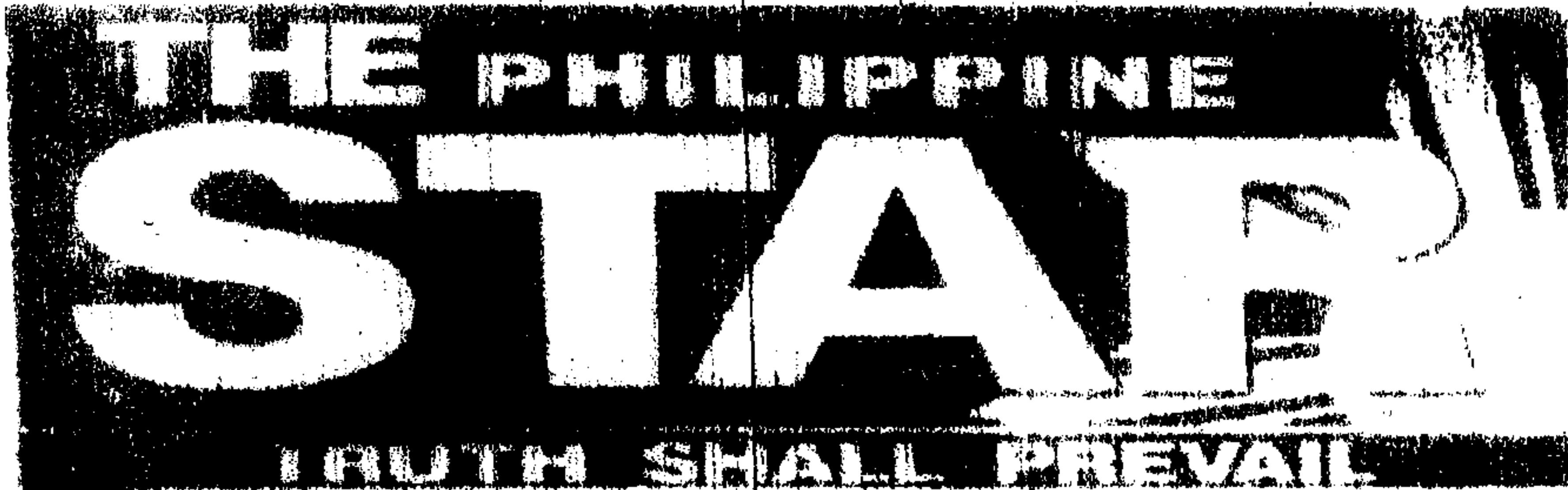
While there is a clear need for bold solutions to guide the resurgence of agriculture in this country, especially those relating to market access, finance, infrastructure, and other critical inputs, those who have the most at stake, those who have the greatest motivation to act in developing agriculture, should be in the driver's seat.

The concept of this alliance for agriculture with the vision of advancing pro-poor, climate and disaster-smart solutions that will revitalize the agriculture sector has been shared with a number of businessmen in Mindanao and Manila, and already, support in the private sector for this initiative is evident.

A good example of locally-led climate-smart agriculture is in Dumangas, Iloilo, where farmers and rural folk undergo climate change adaptation training in a climate field school -- the first in the country -- that has resulted in a 30 percent increase in rice production.

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Agriculture : Disaster

Mindanao, as the bread basket of the country, is the ideal place to pilot this initiative. No area is more vulnerable to climate change than Mindanao where agriculture contributes 65 percent to its economy. While climate change is affecting the entire country, Mindanao has been and will continue to be the hardest hit. Given its complex human security and development challenges, a resilient agriculture sector can potentially serve as a catalyst for growth and stability for the entire region.

In the coming weeks, we intend to consult with experts, national and local government representatives, business and civil society organizations on the feasibility of launching a Multi-Stakeholder Alliance for agriculture. We hope that the outcome of those discussions will be an agenda that will advance and accelerate agricultural development in our country.

Finally I urge all who have a vested interest in agriculture to join us in this endeavor. It is also my hope that the next administration will adopt agriculture as a priority policy.

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BusinessMirror

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

EU sees climate targets as priority after Paris deal

THE European Union (EU) should focus on enacting rules to meet existing climate targets for 2030, rather than move to stricter goals in immediate reaction to a global pollution-reduction agreement reached last year, according to the EU regulatory arm.

The 28-nation bloc may consider a review of climate ambitions as a part of international talks to be held in 2023 on how to deepen greenhouse-gas reductions, the European Commission said in a policy paper published on Wednesday.

Under a deal reached in Paris in December, almost 200 countries agreed to work toward capping global temperature increases since pre-industrial times to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

"We have the deal. Now we need to make it real," EU Climate and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Canete said in a statement. "For the EU, this means completing the 2030 climate and energy legislation without delay, signing and ratifying the agreement as soon as possible, and continuing our leadership in the global transition to a low-carbon future."

EU member-states remain divided on how strict the region's emission policies should be, with Germany and France leading a push for tougher rules and Poland opposing deeper cuts of heat-trapping gases. A decision on climate targets requires unanimous support from the bloc's governments. Environmental lobbies have called on policy-makers to step up ambitions, saying that the existing

targets are not enough to prevent drastic climate consequences.

Global deal

THE global deal acknowledges the need to strive for limiting the temperature growth to 1.5 degrees, a key demand of the countries most vulnerable to warming, including island-states imperiled by rising seas. UN climate envoys are due to meet in 2018 for "facilitative dialogue" and then in 2023 for stock-taking.

"The EU should participate in the first facilitative dialogue, which will take place in 2018 to take stock of the collective ambition and progress in implementing commitments," the commission said. "In this respect, the EU will take part in the first global stock take in 2023, which is relevant for considering progressively more ambitious action by all Parties for the period beyond 2030."

The European Commission will provide input for scientific work carried out internationally and will prepare an in-depth analysis of economic and social changes needed to step up pollution-reduction efforts to feed the discussion among EU governments, the European Parliament, companies, experts and non-governmental organizations. The EU aims to cut emissions by at least 40 percent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels and has a political goal of reducing pollution by 80 percent by 2050.

The Paris agreement should be signed and ratified by EU member states as soon as possible, according to the commission. By 2020, they should communicate their mid-century strategies on how to shift to low-carbon economies. *Bloomberg News*