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## **IN THE NEWS**

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# 'Trees can die from poster nails'

By RUDY FERNANDEZ

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna – If only trees could vote, millions would reject politicians whose campaign materials were nailed on them.

Like any living organism, a tree also suffers from wounds caused by sharp objects like nails and staple wires.

"Hammering nails and staple wires and hanging streamers on

trees harm the normal function and health of living trees," according to the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), an agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources based in the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

The wounds created on the trunks serve as the entry point of decay-causing microorganisms. "Through time, the nails and staple wires rust and create metal stains on the trunk of

trees. The rust and stains react with the tannic acid and other chemical compounds in the wood, resulting in the tree's decreased resistance to decay," the ERDB explained.

The agency also said the decay, or any damage on any part of a tree, hampers the flow of water and nutrients from the roots to the upper parts, and vice versa. The tree will not have enough supply of water and nutrients to sustain its needs. The health of the tree then suffers and it will lead to stunted growth or death.

The weight of posters is also

an added burden to a tree.

"Trees naturally shed off leaves, twigs and branches as a way of managing their weight burden and physiological processes such as transpiration and food manufacturing. Therefore, it is unfair to them if campaigns will make the trees carry the posters of candidates during the long campaign period," according to the advocacy paper of forest pathologist Marcelina Pacho.

Ecologically and materially, a tree can be worth as much as P8 million during its lifetime, according to ERDB retired forest scientist Leuvina Tandug.

Tandug explained that in half a century, one tree provides about P6.1 million (\$62,000) worth of air pollution control, produces \$37,000 worth of oxygen, recycles more than \$37,000 worth of water and provides \$31,000 worth of erosion control.

Two mature trees can provide the oxygen requirements of a family of four.

The shade from trees also help cool the Earth's temperature by cooling the air and ground around them. This helps reduce the greenhouse effect by absorbing carbon dioxide, Tandug added.

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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## Nationinbrief

### **BAM AQUINO URGES FIRMS TO PRACTICE RESPONSIBLE MINING**

**IBA, Zambales:** Sen. Paulo Benigno "Bam" Aquino IV on Thursday said mining companies in northern Zambales should practice responsible mining and ensure the protection and preservation of the environment or stop their operations. Here for the launch of Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) Negosyo Center, Aquino was asked to comment on the alleged destructive mining besetting the towns of Santa Cruz and Candelaria. "Mining operations are not necessarily bad and can help the country and the economy, but miners should be responsible and must make sure not to harm or destroy the environment during their operations," he said. **PATRICK ROXAS**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



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## COLLABORATING TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

P. 1

LAST Thursday, I attended the Shell Powering Progress Together (PPT) conference held at Manila Hotel. Since 2012, through the PPT, Shell has brought together some of the world's leading thinkers from business, government and civil society to engage in a dialogue on future energy challenges. The goal also is to trigger concrete on-the-ground action and cooperation to implement solutions to these challenges. This year's Asia PPT had for its theme: "Collaboration for a sustainable future."

During the PPT last Thursday, I joined a panel on "Energy Transitions and the Climate Challenge" with David Hone, Chief Climate Change Adviser, Shell International Ltd; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group 1 Co-chair, Dr. Edwin Aldrian from Indonesia; and Philippine Department of Energy Secretary, Hon. Zenaida Y. Monsada.

In our panel, I shared my thoughts about the Paris Agreement and what it meant for the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific region. I started by acknowledging how we are all feeling the heat with the world getting warmer every year; in fact even monthly temperatures, like that in February, has been breaking records.

Just a few weeks ago,

Fiji recorded the strongest storm in history, displacing Haiyan/Yolanda which previously held the record. In the new normal, it will not be long before Fiji would have to yield that record to another unfortunate country. But never mind the storms; the impact of climate change can be more insidious when subtler. Examples are the drought that is causing havoc to our agriculture sector right now, the coral bleaching destroying precious marine resources all over the world, and the public health crisis that is exacerbated by climate change. What makes climate change so unjust is that, even as it spares no one, its biggest impact is on poor countries and poor communities who have contributed the least to the problem.

Vulnerable countries, like the Philippines, have committed to contribute significantly to mitigate the problem even if our emissions are low. Taken together, of course, these emissions would still add up and increase the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. We also cannot be on high moral ground and ask other countries to reduce their emissions while we refuse to take action. We must not contribute to our own destruction if we expect other countries to help us when we are faced with cata-

strophic climate events.

I emphasized that Paris was not just a culmination of six years of hard work to find a good way to move forward, globally, on climate change. In fact, Paris stands out because it is the first climate change agreement where every country bound itself to contribute to solve the problem. That's why last Dec. 12, 2015 when French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius announced that the agreement had been adopted, there was pandemonium, even jubilation. Those of us from the Philippines who were in that hall when the announcement was made—Secretary Manny de Guzman, Secretary Neric Acosta, diplomat Angela Ponce, and myself—were up on our feet, cheering, embracing each other.

One hundred ninety-six countries agreeing on a legally binding road map to mitigating and adapting to climate change is huge. That's all countries of the world, minus the Vatican which usually does not become a party to a convention like this. The Church was, however, very active though in Paris, spreading the message of Pope Francis' Laudato Si, urging the world's leaders to have moral courage in addressing climate change.

President Aquino; in his statements and the

positions he ordered the Philippine delegation to take in Paris, definitely showed moral courage and leadership. That delegation led by Secretary De Guzman, vice chair of the Climate Change Commission, composed of both veterans and next-generation climate workers, were one of the most effective in Paris. We were everywhere, in almost all the issues, shaping the agreement, always advocating the interests of our people and of vulnerable countries. Civil society recognized the delegation three times in two weeks in Paris with "Ray of the Day" awards for being a strong voice for strong climate action.

It must of course be said that the Paris Agreement is not a perfect, certainly not ambitious enough to avoid catastrophic climate change. There is also not enough support—especially climate finance—made available in the agreement.

But there are two reasons why Paris is an important step forward: First, to get 196 countries to agree to the maximum possible agreement and not to the least common denominator is beyond expectation. Second, the Paris Agreement has two important mechanisms for the future—first, a self-improvement mechanism which allows us to increase

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

COLLABORATING TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE p.2

ambition every five years; second, a loss-and-damage mechanism that allows countries in the region to get compensation and support for loss and damage arising from climate change.

The Philippines and other vulnerable countries worked hard for a global target of limiting global temperature increase to a maximum of 1.5 Celsius degrees. We got that, even if it is only aspirational. Now, we must aim to make that number the mandatory target as early as possible.

Against all odds, we succeeded

in getting strong language on human rights and ecosystems integrity into the Paris agreement. Responding to climate change should not be just about carbon but people and nature must be at the center of it.

Citizens must make their governments accountable to legal commitments they made in Paris. For the Philippines, we committed to a 70-percent reduction of business-as-usual emissions by 2030, the achievement of which we made conditional on the support of partners.

To the best that I can estimate, taking into account our forests

which makes us a net sink today, this Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is a 10-percent reduction from current levels. That's still ambitious because we are expected to grow our emissions in the next few years, with new coal power plants in the pipeline. But it is doable and it is equivalent to most of our neighbors' commitments.

New laws are needed to mandate a more diverse energy mix, among others capping coal, and to ensure that externalities are incorporated into energy decisions. Putting a price on carbon, whether through a carbon tax or

other economic instrument, is a good option to consider moving forward.

Protecting and enhancing our forests and transforming our transportation system are key areas to prioritize if we are to meet our target.

The private sector must accelerate investment in renewables and, through the collaboration of academe, foster innovation so we can adapt better and mitigate more efficiently. Citizen and activist organizations must hold government and private sector accountable for their actions and commitments. And finally, com-

munities, families and individuals must look at the way they live and transition to a less carbon intensive lifestyle.

In conclusion, climate change challenges the government, the private sector, civil society, peoples, communities, families, and individuals to change (pun intended). Only in transforming the way we live, which includes collaborating better for sustainable solutions, will we be able to overcome this great, some say greatest, challenge of today and the future.

Facebook: [tonylavs5](#) or Dean  
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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

# UN to review Albay's CCA-DRR, sustainable development strategy

By JOHNNY C. NUÑEZ | *Philippines News Agency*

**L**EGAZPICITY—United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson will visit the Philippines shortly and will take a brief Albay sortie on March 8, to personally review the province's multiawarded disaster-risk reduction (DRR) and climate-change adaptation (CCA) programs.

Albay's innovative DRR strategy toward sustainable development continuously gains

world recognition and acclaim. Eliasson's visit forms part of the preparations for the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul, Turkey, on May 23 and 24, where the Philippines will be presented as sole global model for DRR-CCA, featuring Albay's pioneering strategy.

Albay Gov. Joey Salceda will brief Eliasson and other UN officials and guests during their visit on Albay's innovative approach in linking up DRR and CCA with

sustainable development. Expected to be with Eliasson are Haoliang Xu, assistant secretary-general, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau of Asia Pacific; Ola Almgren, UN Philippines resident coordinator; Titon Mitra, UNDP country director, Philippines; Mark Bidder, OCHA Head of Office, Philippines; Subinay Nandy, Asia-Pacific Division chief; Rebecca Page, special assis-

tant to the DSG; and Sophie Nuon, OCHA Humanitarian Affairs officer.

Cedric Daep, Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office head, said Salceda's briefing will also touch on Albay's successful rehabilitation strategies after Typhoon Reming hit Albay hard in 2006, which enabled the province to rise and get back on its feet in a few years.

The UN executive will also visit the Albay Climate Change Academy, the first of its kind in Asia, serving as a training center on DRR and CCA, for local government officials and many coming from other countries, said Daep.

The UN Humanitarian Summit is a "global call to action by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon," the first of its kind, according to the WHS web site.

It is scheduled at the Istanbul Congress Center and the Lutfi Kirdar Convention and Exhibition Center in Istanbul, Turkey.



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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### 'Review sustainable dev't strategy'

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The Albay Climate Change Academy (ACCA)-Disaster Risk Reduction Management Training Institute (ACCA-DRRM TI) has been created by law. As a training institution, it is among the innovations UN Sec. Gen. Eliasson will look into during his March 8 visit.

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## Air pollution, climate change kill millions of people every year

GENEVA (PNA/Xinhua)—Each year more than seven million deaths worldwide could be attributed to air pollution, and climate change caused tens of thousands of deaths annually from other causes, Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), warned Thursday.

Speaking during the UN Human Rights Council's panel discussion on the relationship between climate change and health, Chan said that by 2050, experts predicted that climate change would cause an additional 250,000 deaths each year, just from malaria, diarrhea, heat stress, and under-nutrition.

"Droughts, floods, wildfires and heat waves claimed human lives. The world could not afford not to take open action. Holding countries accountable for their climate policies was also a matter of fairness," she noted, adding that for public health, climate change had become the defining issue for the 21st century.

Since the impact of climate change

was universal, unpredictable, and sometimes contested, she said, human beings were unquestionably the most important species threatened by climate change.

The World Meteorological Organization figure has showed that the year 2015 was the hottest year since records began in 1880, and this year was predicted to be even hotter.

"Droughts threatened already perilous food supplies, especially in poor countries where subsistence farming was rain-fed," Chan stressed.

According to the UN official, the scale of this threat was immense. In some countries more than 70 percent of the population depended on subsistence farming for livelihood. Outbreaks of cholera thrived under too much or too little water. Insects and other carriers of disease were very sensitive to heat, humidity and rainfall. Climate change had given dengue a vastly expanded geographical range and could do the same for malaria.

"More than half of the world population lived in an area where *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, the principal vector for Zika, dengue, and chikungunya, were present. The warming temperatures threatened to expand this geographical range even further," Chan warned.

All these consequences for health made the first global climate change agreement reached in Paris last year not just an environment but a health treaty as well, and human rights obligations, standards and principles had the power to shape policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation, she said.

According to her, one of the biggest barriers that stood in the way of realizing the right to health was poverty.

"The poorest households in the world were forced to rely on the most polluting energy sources just for everyday cooking. Use of these energy sources, which caused heavy indoor air pollution, was associated with more than 3.5 million deaths each year," she said.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Australia turns its back on climate science

*The New York Times editorial*

For decades, Australia has run the most advanced and comprehensive atmosphere and ocean monitoring programs in the Southern Hemisphere, providing critical information not only for a nation that is already the driest on earth and fast getting drier, but also for a world in urgent need of such data to search for ways to cope with climate change.

Last month, to the dismay of climate scientists around the world, Australia's federally financed science agency — the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, or Csiro — announced plans to shift its focus to commercially viable projects and cut or reassign 350 researchers. The decision, as more than 3,000 climate scientists have declared in an open letter to the Australian government, demonstrates a deplorable misunderstanding of the importance of basic research into what is arguably the greatest challenge facing the planet.

Larry Marshall, a Silicon Valley technology entrepreneur and venture capitalist who returned to Australia in January 2015 to take charge of Csiro, explained the change in the agency's

mission by saying that climate change was now a settled question "and the new question is what do we do about it and how do we find solutions for the climate we will be living with." The decision did not come entirely out of the blue: Australia's national climate policy has been in political flux for more than a decade, and in May 2014, Csiro's budget was severely cut and almost 1,000 positions were eliminated. But climate scientists were stunned by the severity and illogic of Dr. Marshall's decision.

Certainly there are good reasons for research institutes like Csiro to cooperate with industry in the search for ways to adapt to a warming planet. But to do this at the expense of research and monitoring — undermining the search for commercially viable solutions that Csiro proposes to join — makes no sense. Long-term research on carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, and on changing ocean and weather processes, is essential to learn what lies ahead and how to prepare for it. Moreover, as the open letter from the scientists put it, Australia is a "canary in the climate change coal mine," spanning different climate zones

and experiencing steady decreases in rainfall.

The cutbacks could also obstruct Australia's role in supporting the landmark climate agreement reached in Paris in December, which, among other things, calls on scientifically advanced countries like Australia to assist developing countries with advice and support.

Lead scientists from major United States organizations, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the NASA-sponsored Advanced Global Atmospheric Gases Experiment, have begun quietly urging the Australian government to reverse course. At the very least, the government should suspend the changes at Csiro and allow an independent review of whether they are in the best interests of Australia, the Southern Hemisphere or the earth.

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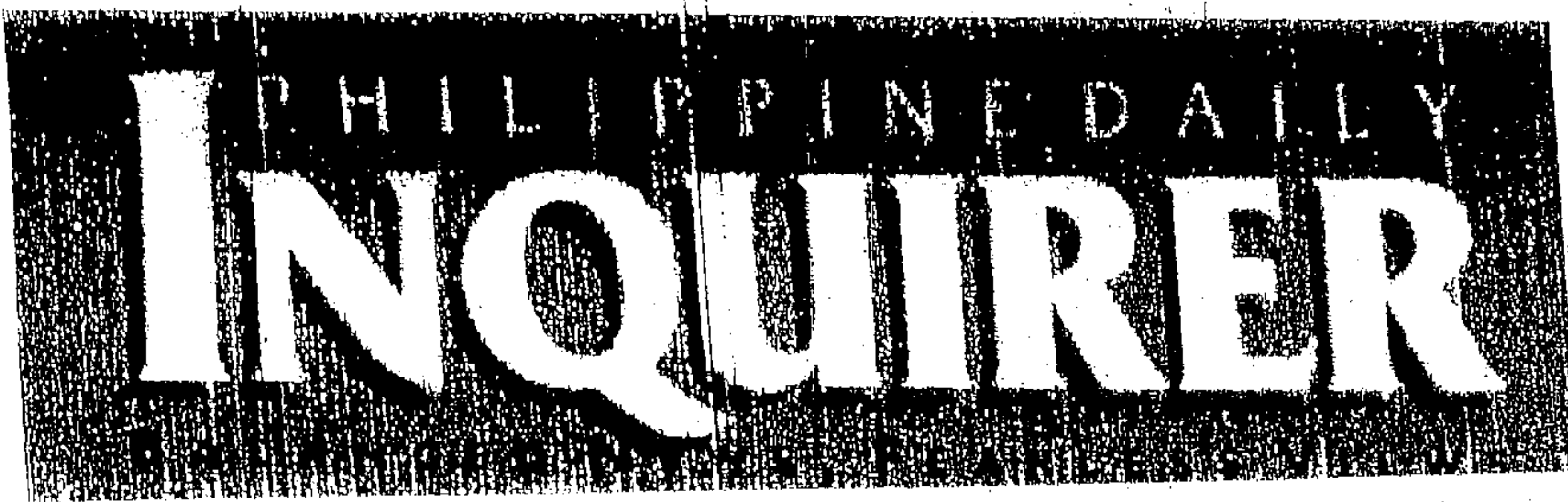
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*Burning issues affecting the Philippine real estate sector P. 2*

of Filipinos now have access to the Internet through their smartphone, based on industry estimates. It has allowed the rise of property portals, which reveal that investors are also looking beyond congested Metro Manila for property investment.

#### Real estate opportunities

The Thomson Reuters Foundation reported that real estate loans in the country hit a record high of P1.23 trillion (\$25.69

billion) in the third quarter of 2015, per data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. It reflects a growing confidence in the

property sector as a whole, as well as the tremendous support given by the banking and lending industries in the Philippines.

Secondary cities such as Iloilo and Cebu have become more popular BPO hubs, with the latter being named the country's second-largest (and eighth biggest worldwide) outsourcing center, per Michael McCullough, managing director of KMC MAG, an international affiliate of Savills.

Putting these secondary cities on the global investment map is the next step for developers, who are increasingly using social media to reach and educate

first-time and even experienced buyers or renters.

#### Low-cost housing segment

Although there are many exciting investment opportunities in the Philippines, there are concerns regarding affordability of residential properties. To date, industry experts estimate that the country lacks some 5 million housing units, and that number can only grow as prices soar in the coming years.

The Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Associations Inc is advocating through its five-point housing agenda, "A Home for Every Filipino." The organization is also pushing for the establishment of a "Department of Housing and Urban Development" in the country as a necessary reform to address the housing situation in a time when a real estate bubble is always a probability.

#### Learning from one another

A meaningful and informative discussion with the country's industry and market leaders together with similar-minded professionals can find solutions to address these burning issues. While the future is sunny for the Philippine real estate sector, an open discussion featuring experts and peers can become an effective way to discover new ideas to improve the industry and promote change.

In line with this, PropertyGu-

ru, Asia's leading online property portal group with 14 million monthly users, will be holding the Property Report Congress Philippines 2016, a high-level conference to discuss the past, present and future of the country's real estate industry.

The summit will feature the country's top industry experts, including opening keynote speaker Lindsay J. Orr, chief operating officer of Jones Lang LaSalle Philippines, who will give the "State of the Market" address, and John W. Mims, chief connector and managing partner of The Hunting Ridge Group, who will lead a workshop called "Driving revenue through social media engagement: Strategies that work"; and panelist Dr. Francisco G. Dakila Jr., managing director, Monetary Policy Subsector of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The whole-day conference, which will be held between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at Fairmont Makati, will also feature expert panel discussions moderated by McCullough ("The road ahead: how Manila should address its infrastructure problems"), Rufino ("Going, going, gone green in the Philippines"), Jarabata ("Branding the Philippines: the rise of branded real estate"), ANC anchor David Celdran ("We need to talk about the bubble, or do we?") and Property Report magazine's editor in chief and brand director Liam Aran Barnes ("Looking beyond Metro Manila: the Philippines' emerging markets").

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## Group wants cadmium regulation

By Joel E. Zurbano

*ENVIRONMENTAL group Ecowaste Coalition on Friday called for regulations to reduce and prevent cadmium pollution. Cadmium is found in abundance in plastic tarpaulin used as campaign materials.*

The group earlier warned that thousands of people working for politicians are in danger of being exposed to toxic levels of cancer-causing cadmium.

In a letter sent to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the coalition requested Secretary Ramon Paje through the Environmental Management Bureau to initiate the crafting of a Chemical Control Order 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," said Ecowaste president Sonia Mendoza.

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

For example, all of the 300

pieces of 2016 election campaign tarpaulins seized by the Metro Manila Development Authority and donated to Ecowaste for recycling purposes were found to be laden with cadmium ranging from 697 to 1,921 parts per million.

Another example: eight types of bracelets obtained by the group in 2015 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). In 2013, the group found cadmium up to 165,300 ppm in 26 out of 50 samples of cheap fashion accessories and jewelry.

Ecowaste noted that the levels of cadmium found in the jewelry and tarpaulin samples cited above 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, which has listed cadmium among the "10 chemicals of major public health concern."

"As a chemical safety and zero waste advocacy group, we are deeply concerned with the environmental pollution from cadmium, particularly in relation to the unregulated disposal of cadmium-containing waste materials in disposal sites," Mendoza said.

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

"Therefore cadmium discards will end up in municipal waste and disposed of in landfills, incineration, open burning or indiscriminate dumping. Some of the cadmium in these products will be released to the environment, the extent of which depends on disposal method, control technologies applied and other factors."

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Editorial

## *Panagutin ang bgy. officials sa maruruming estero*

**I**SANG malaking basurahan ang mga estero sa Metro Manila. Nakakadiring tingnan ang lulutang-lutang na mga basura. Meron na ba kayong nakitang malinis na estero sa lungsod. Iilan lang. Halos lahat ng mga estero ay namumutiktik sa basura.

Pinakamaraming estero sa Maynila ang halos hindi na umaagos ang tubig sapagkat punumpuno ng basura. Umaalingasaw ang mga estero sapagkat bukod sa mga plastic na supot, botelya, cup ng noodles, sachet ng shampoo, coffee, pati dumi ng tao ay sa estero na itinatapon. Isang malaking basurahan at kubeta ang mga estero sa Maynila. Habampanahon na ang mga plastic na basura sa estero sapagkat hindi natutunaw ang mga ito. Hindi mareresolba ang pagbaha sa Maynila sapagkat umaapaw ang mga estero sa basura.

Pero may ginagawang kampanya ngayon ang Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) sa mga estero. Nililinis nila ang mga estero at tinawag nila itong "Estero Blitz". Ang mga tauhan ng MMDA Flood Control and Sewerage Management Office ang nangangasiwa sa "Estero Blitz".

Una nilang sinampolan noong Martes ang paglilinis sa mga estero sa Maynila. Dalawang estero --- ang Estero Kabulusan sa Pritil, Tondo at ang North and South Antipolo open canal - ang kanilang nilinis. Nahirapan ang mga tauhan ng MMDA sa pag-alis ng mga basura sapagkat ang mismong estero ay tinayuan ng barung-barong. Hindi makadaan ang backhoe para mahukay ang mga basura. Nang matapos ang paghalukay, nakakolekta sila ng 20 truck ng basura.

Matapos linisin, kinunan ng pictures ang estero. Ayon sa MMDA ang pictures ang kanilang ebidensiya na nilinis nila ang estero. Isa-submit umano nila ang pictures sa Office of the Ombudsman at ito na ang bahalang magsampa ng kaso sa barangay chairman at mga opisyal dahil sa negligence. Ayon pa sa MMDA responsible ng barangay officials na linisin ang mga estero para hindi magkaroon ng baha.

Nararapat panagutin ang barangay officials sa pagdumi ng mga estero, kanal at iba pang daluyan ng tubig. Sila ang dapat mangalaga sa mga estero sa kanilang nasasakupan. Sampolan ang barangay officials na walang pakialam kahit umaapaw at umaalingasaw ang basura sa mga estero.



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## Basilan peasant-families finally awarded lands after 17-yr petition

COTABATO CITY — After 17 years, 54 peasant-families in Basilan have finally received official documents entitling them ownership of lands they have been cultivating for decades.

The Department of Agrarian Reform of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (DAR-ARMM) awarded to the 54 farmers certificates of ownership covering 153 hectares of

rubber plantation in Lamitan City and organizing them into a bloc named as Maloong-Canal Farmers Agrarian Reform Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

The awarding ceremony was held last Tuesday in Lamitan City. DAR-ARMM Secretary Amihilda Sangcopan said in a statement.

ARMM Information Bureau Director Amir

Mawallil said the awarded farms were derived from the long-defunct Basilan Agricultural Corporation (BATCO) where the 54 recipient farmers had been working.

ARMM Governor Mujib Hataman lauded the awarding of ownership certificates, describing it as a landmark victory for the landless peasants, Mawallil said.

Upon the closure of BATCO, the farmer-

workers filed a petition seeking to own parts of the plantation that they tilled for years.

However, lack of resources and support from the bureaucracy kept the petition in the back burner for 17 years.

But when the Supreme Court issued a decision in favor of the peasants, the DAR-ARMM swiftly moved to grant them ownership of the land. (Ali G. Macabalang)

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**MABILIS SA BALITA**

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**EDITORIAL EDITORIAL EDITORIAL**

## **Isang pagsaludo sa mga kababaihan**

Ginugunita natin ngayong Marso ang Buwan ng mga Kababaihan o Women's Month.

Tema ng selebrasyon ngayong taon mga "Kapananan ni Juana, Isama sa Agenda!"

Ito ay bilang panawagan para sa mas balanseng liderato at pamumuno para sa mga kababaihan sa parehong pampubliko at pribadong sektor.

Panawagan din ng tema ang pagtitiyak na kasama at isaalang-alang ang usapin ng kababaihan sa bawat desisyong gagawin kagaya ng pagsasanay at paghahanda sa mga babae sa pagtupad at pagkakamit ng kanilang ambisyon at pangarap.

Pero para sa amin higit na mahalaga ay ang pagpapahalaga pa nating lalo sa kalusugan at kaligtasan ng mga kababaihan lalo sa pagkakataong manganganak sila.

Pag-aralan dapat ng mga ahensya ng pamahalaan kung paano pa sila matutulongan sa mga pagkakataong nagdadalang-tao sila bukod pa sa mga benepisyo nilang natatanggap sa kasalukuyan.

Dapat tandaan na ang usapin ng kalusugan at kaligtasang ito ang nagbunsod upang magkaroon tayo ngayon ng International Women's Day at Women's Month tuwing Marso.

Kasabay ng nalalapit na halalan, bagama't bukas naman sa lahat ang pagkandidato, mas makabubuting mas maraming pagpipilian.

Simulan natin ang pantay na pagtrato sa kababaihan sa loob ng ating bahay upang lumaganap ito sa buong bansa.

