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Thursday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

PEOPLES JOURNALS

Everybody's Newspaper

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Paje's green report

DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Ramon J. P. Paje announced that 198 million seedlings were planted on some 334,000 hectares of denuded and degraded forests in 2015, exceeding the 300,000 target for the year.

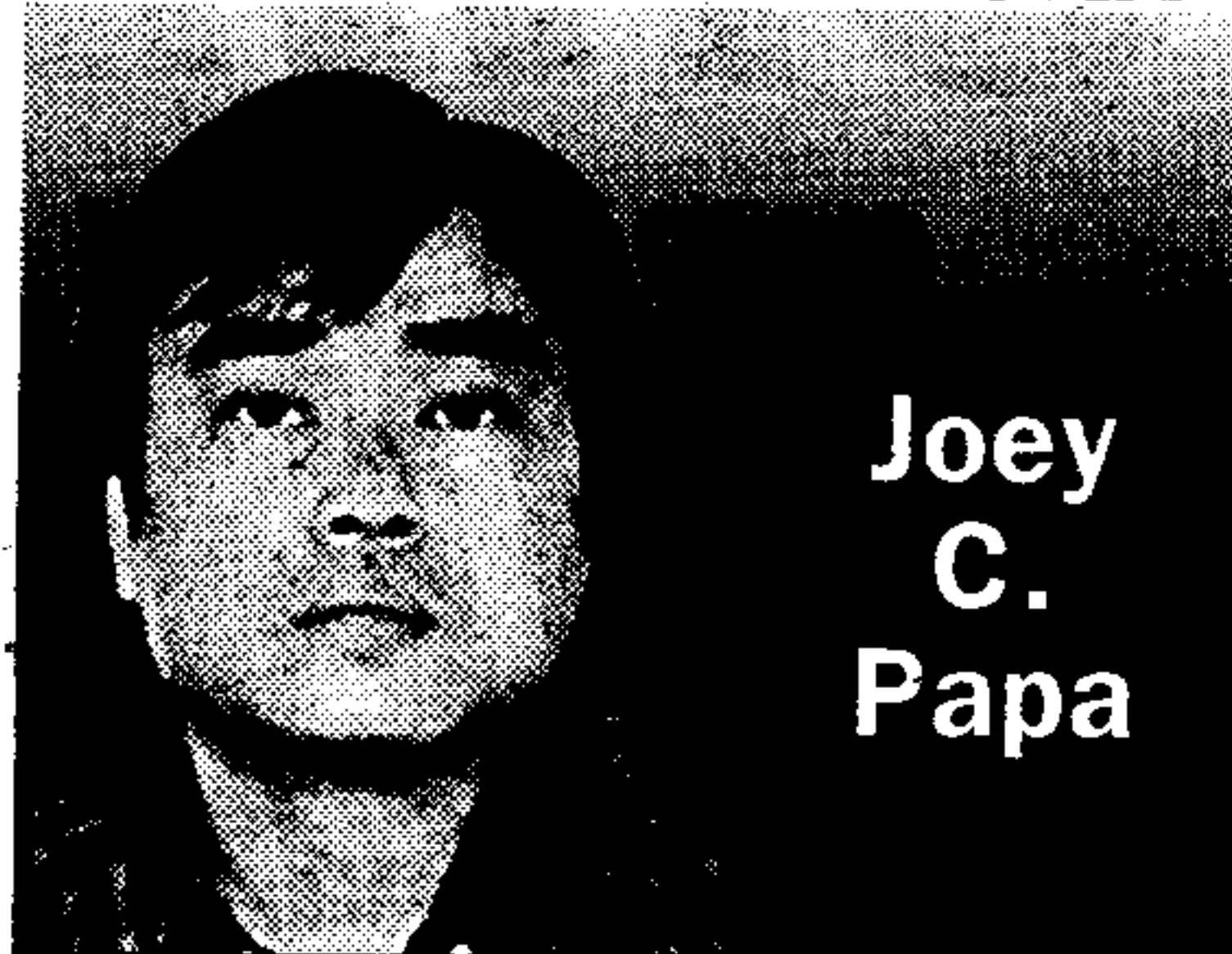
Paje said that for five years now, the National Greening Program established in February 2011 and implemented until this year, 2016 under Executive Order No. 26 has continuously exceeded its annual targets. From 2011 to December 2015, DENR reports that it has planted 915.3 million seedlings on 1,351,803 hectares of open, degraded, and denuded forests, increasing the country's reforested area from 6.8 million hectares in 2010 to 8.25 million hectares in 2015.

"This only shows that we have turned the ship around and are now sailing it in the right direction," Paje said, as he also gave credit to the administration's total log ban order. Thus, President Benigno S. Aquino III issued EO 193 in November expanding the program from 2016 to 2028 to reforest "all remaining, unproductive, denuded and degraded forestlands."

In its Global Forest Resources Assessment report, the Food and Agriculture Organization ranked the country on top five among the world's biggest gainers with an average annual rate from 2010 to 2015 to 240,000 hectares.

No doubt, massive reforestation would help sustain the ecological balance in the environment, conserve and enhance the country's rich biodiversity, and mitigate climate change as more trees will absorb carbon dioxide to reduce global warming. The program also seeks to address the prob-

BANGON KALIKASAN



Joey
C.
Papa

lem of poverty through food security and livelihood. In 2015, DENR data shows that the cash-for-work under the program produced 637,710 jobs. Since 2011, the program has produced 2,899,266 jobs.

It is worth noting that Paje has required all DENR regional offices to submit accomplishment reports from the field that are notarized to ensure that these reports are in order, in view of a number of criticisms in the way the program is being implemented in certain areas.

At this point, I would like to mention my favorite topic in my column—bamboo. More areas around the country must be planted with bamboo, and more people's, civic, church, private, business and other organizations as well as individuals need to be educated on why this humble grass can best help in beating the threat of global warming and climate change and reduce the risk of disasters. With so much needed to be done in a very short time, as the temperature rises and the weather goes from one extreme to another, bamboo is one good answer for what can be done immediately.

Going through and around the

countryside, one will spot bamboo clumps here and there. From those bamboo clumps, numerous culms may be produced for nurseries as source of planting materials for thousands of hectares more of denuded or degraded areas. Those cuttings will grow fast, as they grow faster than trees. In a year's time, a culm less than three feet high would be some six feet high, maybe more; in two years, it would be so much higher while below would have emerged new stems around the base of the original culm. Soon, there would be enough from which to get cuttings again, or to harvest poles for various purposes. Give it a few more years when there would be widespread areas planted to, and there would be a good source of materials for more food, clothing, furniture, musical instruments, bikes, boats, surf boards, construction and finishing for houses and buildings, and so on and so forth. Yet, while we cut those poles, more stems will sprout again. Bamboo is a very good example of sustainability.

Not only is bamboo a material for musical instruments, it also produces music. Have you ever heard it singing softly as it gracefully waves and produces wind, even while the other trees remain still? The bamboo is singing a song of hope, so softly many of us could not hear it because of all the noise around us and the so many problems that threaten to drown us. We can cling to the bamboo; it will save us from drowning. When Typhoon Yolanda brought down even the most expensive houses, only the bamboo houses stood firm. In remembering Yolanda, we think, and must do, bamboo. (bangonkalikasan@yahoo.com)

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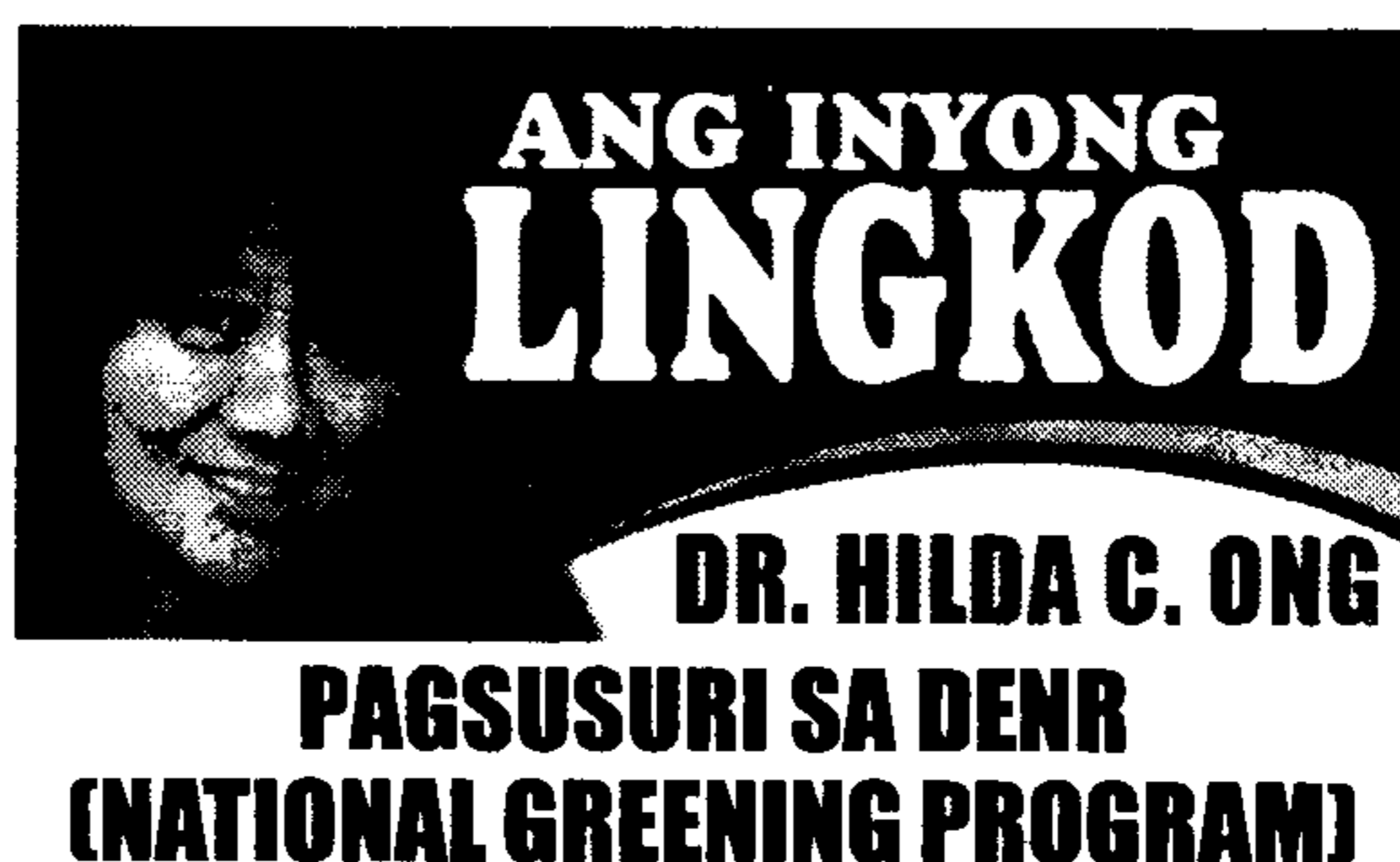
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SA prinsipyo ng "Daang Matuwid", inihalal ng mayorya ng botanteng Filipino si Pangulong Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III upang pangunahan ang bansa. Isa nga sa mga ipinangako ng Pangulo ang pagpapaigting sa pangangalaga ng kalikasan na kalunos-lunos ang kalagayan sanhi ng kapabayaan ng nagdaang administrasyon. Naatasan si Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje na pamunuan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Sa pagtatapos ng termino ng administrasyong Aquino, nakapanayam ng inyong lingkod si Kalihim Ramon JP Paje ukol sa mga ginawang programa at proyekto ng ahensiya ukol sa kalikasan mula July 2010 hanggang December 2015.

Ang unang tinalakay ni Kalihim Paje ay ang National Greening Program ng DENR sa panahon ng kanyang pamunuan na masasabing matagumpay dahil hindi lang maabot ng ahensiya ang target goal, masayang ipinahayag ni Kalihim Paje "lalampas pa kami sa inasam target goal, bonus na



yan".

National Greening Program (NGP) ito ang pangunahing inisyatiba na pinasimulan ng pamahalaan sa ilalim ng Executive Order No. 26 upang muling gawing luntian ang mga kabundukan, watershed, mga baybayin, at iba pa sa pamamagitan ng pagtatanim ng mga puno at bahura.

Batay sa opisyal na datus ng DENR, mula taong 2011 hanggang 2015, may 1.35 milyong hektarya ang natamnan ng 915,306,023 tree seedlings o 113 porsiyentong higit na mas mataas kaysa sa 1.2 milyong hektaryang target.

Ang programang NGP ay nakalikha ng 2,899,266 na trabaho para sa 413,362 indibidwal na ang dating ikinabuhay ay nagmumula sa ka-

gubatan gaya ng mga katutubo.

Ipinakita ng NGP ang pagbabayanihan sa pagitan ng pamahalaan, pribadong sektor at mga mamamayan.

Maraming lokal na pamahalaan, kumpanya, at mga organisasyon ang nakibahagi sa pagtatanim ng mga tree seedlings.

Hindi basta-basta ang lokasyong pinipili ng DENR para pagtaniman, sinisigurdong akma sa lupa ang punong itatanim at malayo sa mga pamayanan upang higit na maproteksiyunan.

Kumbaga, hindi para lamang sa pakitang tao o picture taking ang paglahok nila sa NGP activity kundi para sa ating kinabukasan.

Green groups push for law vs microbeads

By CHITO A. CHAVEZ

Two pro-environmental groups asked lawmakers to pass a law that will prohibit the manufacture of beauty products containing plastic microbeads that pollute the oceans, harm marine life and threaten public health.

With US President Barack Obama's signing of the Microbead-Free Waters Act on December 28, local environment advocates EcoWaste Coalition and Oceana Philippines urged Congress to consider enacting a similar law that will ban plastic microbeads in cleansing products such as facial wash, shampoo and toothpaste.

The International Campaign against Microbeads in Cosmetics noted "the microbeads used in personal care products are mainly made of polyethylene (PE), but can also be made of polypropylene (PP), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) and nylon."

"Our Congress should follow US regulatory action on plastic microbeads and pass our own Microbead-Free Waters Act," said Sonia Mendoza, president of EcoWaste Coalition.

Mendoza said plastic microbeads in personal care products go straight to

the drainage system and into water bodies subsequently polluting the oceans with minuscule, non-biodegradable particles that are then eaten by aquatic organisms who mistake them for eggs or plankton.

"These microbeads, which are often smaller than 1 millimeter, attract and absorb hazardous substances and can be up to a million times more toxic than the water around them according to aquatic health researchers," Mendoza added.

Gloria Estenzo-Ramos vice-president of Oceana Philippines, stressed phasing out plastic microbeads in personal care products will help reduce alarming microplastic pollution of the oceanic waters.

"We hope that Congress will craft the necessary legislation and boost the growing movement against microbeads in cosmetics and for healthy fisheries and oceans," Estenzo-Ramos said.

The environmental advocates noted that presidential candidate Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago has filed Senate Bill 2135 that aims to "prohibit the production, manufacture, distribution and sale of any beauty product, cosmetic or other personal care product containing plastic particles less than 5 millimeters in size."

The groups urged lawmakers to look

into the said bill and see how it can be adopted by the current Congress.

"Once in the water, microbeads, like other plastics, can attract and accumulate certain toxic chemicals commonly found in waters," the bill's explanatory note said.

"Environmental pollution found in waters, such as PCBs (the industrial pollutants polychlorinated biphenyls), gravitate and attach to the surface of plastic. If fish and wildlife species low on the food chain eat these contaminated plastics, the chemicals might be passed on to larger birds, fish and other animals that people eat," it explained.

The bill stipulates that "no person shall produce, manufacture, sell, or offer for sale any personal cosmetic product which contains intentionally-added microbeads."

As proposed, any person or corporation who violates the prohibition shall be civilly liable for penalty not to exceed ₱50,000 for each day during which such violation continues.

"These plastic microbeads are an unnecessary and harmful product that do not belong in our waterways, and should be phased out of use as quickly as possible thus urgent passage of this bill is earnestly sought," Santiago said.

THE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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GREEN GROUPS PUSH FOR LAW VS. MICROBEADS



PLASTIC MICROBEADS in personal care products are found to go straight to the drainage system and into water bodies, subsequently polluting the oceans with minuscule, non-biodegradable particles that are then eaten by aquatic organisms who mistake them for eggs or plankton (Image by 50yres, courtesy of Oregon State University).

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Candidates urged to bare stand on environment

A group of environmentalists has challenged presidential candidates to state their stand on farmer support, including how to make farming conditions more resilient and environment-friendly, and address issues on food sufficiency.

Meanwhile, a survey commissioned by Greenpeace showed that nearly eight in 10, or 76 percent of 1,200 respondents will vote for candidates whose platforms include ensuring food sufficiency and addressing farmers' needs. This is the result of the Social Weather Stations (SWS) 2015 third Quarter Social Weather Survey.

The nationwide survey, conducted from Sept. 2 to 15, 2015, also

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

showed that 75 percent of respondents prefer presidential candidates who will ensure that food needs are met and 70 percent will support candidates who promote environment-friendly farming.

Moreover, 44 percent of respondents entreated the government to focus on financial support for farmers to make farming climate-resilient while 39 percent expressed support for ecological agriculture such as organic farming.

Vigie Benosa-Llorin, Greenpeace Philippines food and ecological agriculture campaigner, said "Agriculture, specifically ecological agriculture, has taken a back seat in terms of government prioritization. We have the Organic Agriculture Act but actual implementation and government support have to improve tremendously. Our presidential candidates should take these survey results seriously, as these show how concerned Filipinos are with our current food and agriculture systems."

Ecological agriculture, which includes organic farming, is a climate-resilient farming system that addresses the issue of food security. It combines modern science and innovation with respect for nature and biodiversity, and ensures healthy farming and food production while protecting the soil, water and climate. It does not contaminate the environment with chemical inputs or use genetically engineered crops.

"We challenge our presiden-

tial candidates to make clear their position on food sufficiency and sustainable agriculture. While each candidate may have his or her own line about agriculture, the voters are looking and demanding for more than mere rhetoric, but rather real programs and policies toward safe, healthy and sustainable food and agriculture systems that respond to the continuing plight of Filipino farmers, the majority of whom continue to reel from mass poverty, hunger and destitution," added Benosa-Llorin.

For its part, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) laments the poor state of agriculture in the country, and called on the government to stop supporting chemical-based and corporate agriculture and instead develop policies that will help farmers through the promotion of ecological agriculture.

"In recent decades, the promotion of agricultural liberalization and corporatization has also intensified the condition where toxic chemicals and engineered organisms bear down on the Filipino farmers and consumers and their efforts to promote socially desirable practices including organic, sustainable and ecological agriculture," said Rafael Mariano of the KMP.

"The Philippine government has generally negated the objectives of sustainable and ecological agriculture as it continues to promote an overall policy of chemical farming that is founded on rural monopolies in land, income, wealth and power," he added.

Bataan governor advocates growth in economy, ecosystems

By MART T. SUPNAD

BATAAN – While Governor Abet S. Garcia is pushing for the industrialization of the province to generate more employment, he is also bent on environmental protection to balance what he called economic growth and preservation of the environment.

Garcia's action came in the wake of reports by Provincial Environment and Natural Resources officer Raul Mamac regarding the construction of a multibillion-peso Orion dry dock in Barangay Sta. Elena that was stopped by Mayor Antonio Raymundo.

Based on the observation and findings of the DENR Team led by Florencio Lalu, the report said the group has no concrete evidence on the alleged destruction of 3,990 mangrove trees, 16,720 saplings and aqua Silvi projects in the area where Orion dry docks will be constructed.

The DENR team, however, said there were a few fallen mangroves as a result of the backfilling activities within the area but is within the foreshore lease to the company. "For these rea-

sons, it is recommended that the Orion dry dock should look for a one-hectare mangrove area that could be rehabilitated and maintained to surrogate the assumed/suspected damage within the project area," said the DENR team, a suggestion approved by its owner Vic Rossano C. Ignacio.

Ignacio assured Garcia that before they started the backfilling in the area, they had already planted 13,000 mahogany and seedlings in Sto. Domingo and in Liyang, Pilar town.

"Aside from the hundreds of employment that we are going to hire in Orion, we are going also to contribute to the economic development of that town and in Bataan in the form of taxes," Ignacio told Garcia.

Ignacio added that his company has secured permits from Orion itself, the DENR provincial capitol and other government agencies.

"Orion dry dock should develop the foreshore area as their access point going to Manila since this [offers] the best access from the project site without damaging the existing mangroves along Manila Bay," the team added.

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Indigents' culture, art on display in Pagadian

By A. Perez Rimando

PAGADIAN CITY, Zamboanga del Sur—The National Commission for Culture and the Arts opened last week its "Schools for the Living Tradition Gallery" at San Francisco district here.

A city official said this was to preserve the arts and culture of increasing number of Indigenous Peoples in Zamboanga del Sur and its adjacent provinces of Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay.

City Councilor Bienvenido Culve said the gallery serves as the craft center where the artworks and hand-woven crafts—baskets, mats, hats, textile and the like—"are displayed to popularize the arts and culture of local IPs or *lumad* who include Subanen, Maguindanaon, Samal and Bangingi who reside in mountain and coastal villages of Zamboanga Peninsula."

Culve stressed the building, constructed by the NCCA, through the assistance of City Mayor Romeo Pulmones, seeks "to showcase the unique arts and crafts of the IPs in the region" even as he noted that "Art is not a form of propaganda but an embodiment of truth."

National Commission on Indigenous Peoples Region 9 Director Margarita Baya urged local *lumad*, especially the young ones, to help conserve and propagate their rich culture "by learning and using their dialects, folk dances, native songs, customs and practices," asking that "if we don't do this, where will we be several years from now?"

At the same time, Roservirico Tan, chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Regional Public Affairs Office, pledged his agency's help in processing of the IPs' ancestral domain claims and other related efforts and in promoting the National Greening Program among the *lumad* in Zamboanga Peninsula.



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Malasakit ng Albay sa kalikasan, pinarangalan

LEGAZPI CITY - Napili ng Green Convergence Philippines (GCP) ang Albay bilang unang LGU Eco Champion nito, matapos kilalanin ng kalulunsad na parangal ang matagumpay at mabisang "environment policies and ecologically sound tourism program" ng lalawigan.

Ang GCP ay koalisyon ng mga organisasyon at mga indibiduwal na nagsisikap na lumikha ng huwarang balangkas para matugunan ang mga

kailangan sa makabuluhang pag-unlad, habang napangangalagaan ang kalikasan.

Kinumpirma ni GCP President Angelina P. Galang ang parangal para sa Albay sa liham niya kamakailan kay Albay Gov. Joey Salceda, na roon ay binigyang-diin niya na ang may malasakit na pagtupad ng lalawigan sa mga batas pangkalikasan ay buod ng "good environmental governance and best practices" na maaari ring isagawa ng ibang lokal na pamahalaan.

Kilalang "green Economist", ang gobernador ang utak sa likod ng matagumpay na Albay Green Economy, na nakabatay sa mga panuntunan ng disaster risk reduction (DRR) at climate change adaptation (CCA).

Napalawak niya ang bakawan ng probinsiya sa mahigit 2,400 ektarya mula sa 700 ektarya lamang, at ang forest cover ay nasa 88 porsiyento sa 44,000, mula 26,000 ektarya sa loob lang ng anim na taon.

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Mines greenlights \$2-b Comval mining project

THE Mines bureau has given the Nationwide Development Corp. the go-ahead to work on a \$2-billion mining project in Compostela Valley, Mindanao.

"We can now proceed with developing, constructing and operating the country's gold mining project," Nadecor chairman Jose Ricafort declared on the heels of the Mines bureau's approval of the mining firm's feasibility study before year-end.

MGB approved last December 29th Nadecor's "Declaration of Mining Project Feasibility" for the King-King Gold Mine Project located in Compostela Valley.

For his part, Jose P. de Jesus, Nadecor president, said: "With the recent issuance of the environmental compliance certificate, this MGB approval paves the way for the development, construction and operation of the project.

The project is covered by a mineral production sharing agreement between the government and Nadecor, whose minesite has an estimated value of \$2 billion, by far the country's biggest gold mineral resources.

Nadecor chairman Ricafort clarified that MGB's order of approval was officially sent to Nadecor, "and such order does not mention at all any connection between St. Augustine and the King-King Project."

Ricafort explained that Nadecor terminated its business relationship with St. Augustine as early as March 26, 2012. "In fact, St. Augustine, invoking an arbitration clause, sent a notice of dispute with Nadecor regarding such rescission and subsequently reiterated the same," Ricafort added.

Ricafort declared: "St. Augustine is no longer a partner of Nadecor in developing the King-

King Project."

Nadecor currently figures in an intra-corporate dispute now pending before the Supreme Court between two contending shareholder blocs, one led by Jose Ricafort and the other by Conrado Calalang. Both Ricafort and Calalang are erstwhile friends.

In a complex twist of events, the Calalang bloc claimed that it had forged a joint venture with St. Augustine Gold and Copper Limited over the objections of the Ricafort-De Jesus bloc, "precisely because the Ricafort-De Jesus Board terminated its agreement with St. Augustine as early as 2012."

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

Report urges intensified efforts to cut carbon emission in Southeast Asia

A new Asian Development Bank (ADB) report raised urgency for fast-tracking Southeast Asia's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction, warning limited impacts of climate change arising from these discharges can reach some 11 percent of this region's Gross Domestic Product by 2100.

Launched Monday (Jan. 11) in Metro Manila, the report 'Southeast Asia and the Economics of Global Climate Stabilization' highlights need to mitigate GHGs as it cites the region as among areas most vulnerable to climate change due to geographic, demographic, economic, and other conditions prevailing there.

The report also said Southeast Asia registered — at nearly five percent annually between 1990 and 2010 — the fastest relative growth in emission of carbon dioxide, one of the climate change-driving GHGs.

"It finds that mitigation is in the region's economic interest," ADB Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development vice president Bambang Susantono said at the report's launch.

He noted adapting energy efficient (EE) measures and addressing deforestation are among mitigation activities for significantly reducing Southeast Asia's GHG emissions.

"EE is the largest source of potential emission reduction while addressing deforestation is critical to mitigation especially in the medium-term," he said.

According to experts, GHG emissions accumulate in the atmosphere and trap heat so global temperature rises, resulting in climate change.

Increasing onslaught of extreme weather events as well as sea level and temperature rise are climate change's impacts on the Philippines and other



GREENHOUSE GAS Southeast Asia registered the fastest relative growth in emission of carbon dioxide. Photo courtesy of passion-africa.com

Southeast Asian countries, they said.

Last year's climate agreement in Paris targets stabilizing climate by keeping global temperature rise below 2°C.

To help achieve such target, ADB Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Division Dir. Preeti Bhandari said the bank will double its climate financing to \$6 billion by 2020.

She noted \$4 billion of such financing will be for mitigation.

Some \$2 billion will be for adaptation so countries can better cope with climate change, she also said.

"We stand ready to assist," she assured at the launch.

The report is an output of ADB's five-year technical assistance project "Strengthening Planning Capacity for Low-Carbon Growth in Developing Asia" which UK and Japan governments co-financed.

Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines are countries covered in the report.

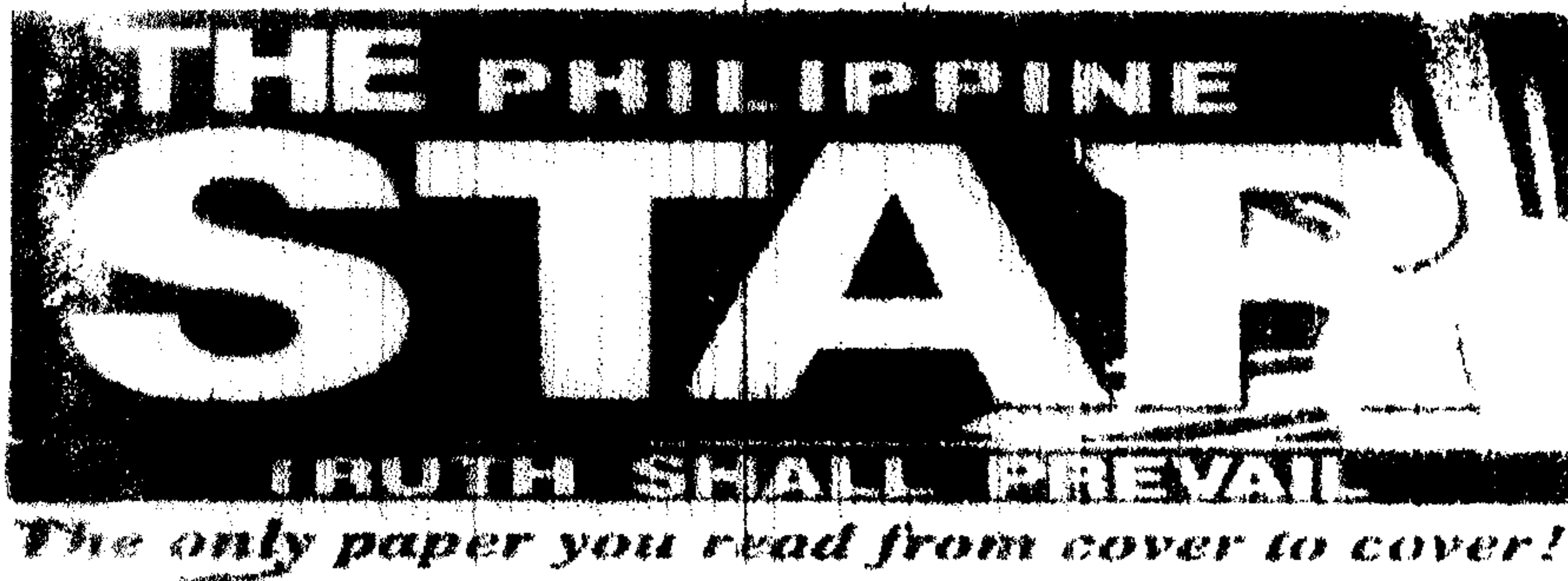
"Emissions growth would need to fall substantially under a contraction and convergence framework" which has national shares of global emissions "transition from business as usual (BAU) in 2020 to an equal per capita basis by 2050," the report said.

Achieving a 500 parts per million (ppm) climate stabilization target under such framework requires regional emission reduction of over 60 percent from BAU to a level some 30 percent below 2010 emissions by 2050, the report noted.

"Even a 650 ppm scenario requires that 2050 emissions need to be slightly below 2010 levels," continued the report.

The report warned delaying climate action can increase climate stabilization cost — even possibly by about 60 percent as one model suggested.

Adapting low-carbon technologies are among the measures essential to reducing carbon emissions, the report said further. (PNA)



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'SEA must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60%; Phl by 5.7%'

By TED TORRES

Southeast Asia must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent by 2050 to enable the region to meet targets limiting global warming to less than two degrees Celsius.

Failure to limit global warming would result in an 11-percent reduction in gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 2100, according to the Asian Development Bank.

David Raitzer, project officer and economist of the Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department of the ADB, said the region is one of the most vulnerable, and the Philippines more so.

Five Southeast Asian countries accounted for nearly 90 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the region in 2010.

In the ADB report entitled Southeast Asia and the Economics of Global Climate Stabilization Context and Approach, Raitzer said that the region is expected to suffer

GDP losses ranging from 1.7 percent arising from 10 degrees Celsius of global warming to 4.8 percent from an increase of 12.5 degrees.

This compares with an average world gain of 2.3 percent of GDP from 10 degrees Celsius of mean global warming and an average loss of 4.6 percent of GDP from 4.8 degrees of warming, such that Southeast Asia is more vulnerable than the rest of the planet.

Meanwhile, the Philippines plans to reduce carbon dioxide or CO2 emissions by 5.7 percent by 2030.

Mitigating measures will be focused on the sectors of energy, transport, waste, forestry and industry.

"Following the sectoral restructuring of the economy, there is an increase in share of emissions from transportation services, fossil-fuel-based electricity, heavy industry, and households. In contrast, the share of emissions by the agriculture sector is found to decline from

around 28 percent to just 6.4 percent," the report said.

In 2010, energy was sourced primarily from oil (34 percent), geothermal (21 percent), coal (19 percent), biomass (17 percent), gas (eight percent) and hydropower (two percent).

Raitzer said the Philippines must dramatically reduce the use of coal by 2020 and completely phase out coal plants by 2050.

In turn, renewable as well as non-traditional energy sources should increase to fill the energy-source gap.

The ADB said that avoiding deforestation is the major near-term low-cost abatement opportunity especially in the case of Indonesia and Malaysia, where deforestation accounts for a large share of emissions.

Achieving improvements in energy efficiency and substitution of cleaner sources for fossil fuels require investment in green infrastructure.

This may include new zero or low-carbon power generation facilities, smarter power grids that can match both centralized and distributed supply and demand sources, energy-efficient buildings, public transport facilities that enhance mobility and safety while reduc-

ing congestion, and charging and refueling networks for electric and alternative fuel vehicles.

The study finds that by 2050, an additional \$30 billion in annual investments will be needed in Southeast Asia's power generation under a scenario of 500 parts per million.

Daily Tribune

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Rep of island dispute welcomes SC ruling on EDCA

By Gerry Baldo

The representative of the province under assault by China's "sea grab" welcomed the Supreme Court's upholding of the legality of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA).

The congressman said that it was "a big help in asserting our territorial rights."

Palawan Rep. Franz Alvarez expressed optimism that EDCA

will lead "to an enhanced defense posture in the West Philippine Sea."

Chinese jets had recently landed on a 230-hectare reclaimed land around Fiery Cross, a reef, which the Philippines call Kagitingan.

"Ideally," Alvarez said, "EDCA should enhance our position, our claims, our presence in that area. That should be the test of its effectiveness."

Alvarez, however, lamented that the Philippines does not have the money to boost its maritime defense.

"The military budget is by and large a payroll budget. In US dollars, the Army budget for 2016 is about a billion and the Air Force's a third of that, which is small by global standards," he said.

He said the P25 billion allocation for AFP modernization this year "would only allow it to

shop for a few a things."

While Alvarez supports the affirmation of EDCA's constitutionality, "the agreement must be followed to the letter. Meaning there should be no permanent basing or permanent stationing of US troops."

It should not be used "to crowbar the de facto reestablishment" of US bases in the Philippines or permanent deployment of American

servicemen on Philippine soil, Alvarez said.

He added that temporary deployment of US military equipment, vehicles in Philippine bases under EDCA must be done with the approval of Philippine military, "and with local political leaders being advised," he said.

And while the SC has disagreed with the Senate's position that EDCA be subjected to its concurrence by at least two-

thirds of all its members, "the door should not be closed on Congress performing oversight on EDCA's implementation."

Alvarez had earlier condemned China's first civilian flights to Fiery Cross, "saying it could lead to China's establishment of an Air Defense Corridor inside Palawan."

"It could hinder freedom of navigation in that area," Alvarez said.

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Agri firm Monsanto commits to be carbon neutral by 2020

MONSANTO Company plans to make its operations carbon neutral by 2021 through the unique carbon neutral crop production program targeted across its seed and crop protection operations, as well as through collaboration with farmers.

"Climate change is one of the biggest issues we face in agriculture, as well as one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity," said Hugh Grant, Monsanto chairman and chief executive officer.

"That's why we have pledged to do our part within our own business and to help support farmers and others. While progress has been made to reduce agriculture's carbon footprint, we must work collectively to do even more if we are going to sustainably feed 9.6 billion people by 2050," Grant said.

Sandro Rissi, Monsanto country head and chief executive officer, underscored the importance of innovative climate change mitigation measures, such as the carbon neutral crop production program, in the Philippines.

According to Rossi, while the country has improved its standing in the latest 2016

Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI) released by risk analysis company Verisk Maplecroft, the Philippines remains "extremely" vulnerable to climate change. In the same Index, the Philippines is ranked the 13th most climate-vulnerable country in the world.

"Considering the critical and complex challenges posed by climate change, Monsanto Philippines recognizes its responsibility to contribute its fair share in the global climate change action. The carbon neutral crop production program itself hopes to contribute in mitigating the serious impacts of climate change and natural hazards, while at the same time creating sustainable agriculture for local Filipino farmers," Rissi said.

The carbon neutral crop production program will be implemented across all Monsanto business units, including the Philippines. The program focuses on several key areas: seed production, crop protection and sharing data/ increasing adoption of best practices

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Cloud-seed operations on in Bohol

By Leo Udtohan
Inquirer Visayas

TAGBILARAN CITY—Agriculture officials started cloud-seeding operations on Tuesday to save crops from further ruin due to the long drought caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon.

The operations will continue for a month depending on the availability of clouds that process dried fine salt into rainwater, according to the Provincial Agriculture's Office (PAO). Some 700 bags of salt have been prepared for the mission.

Cloud seeding is a weather modification method in which chemical "nuclei," such as silver iodide or calcium chloride, are introduced in the atmosphere to induce condensation, and eventually, precipitation.

It aims to cushion the impact of the dry spell and maintain the productivity of farmers, said Leon Parac Jr., agricultural technician of the PAO.

A weak El Niño started in Bohol during the third quarter of 2015, said Leonard Samar of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) in Bohol. "Now, the province is experiencing a strong El Niño," he said.

Hot spot

Bohol, considered one of the El Niño hot spots in the country, has been experiencing less rainfall compared to previous months because of the erratic weather conditions, despite the occurrence of typhoons in 2015. It is also the rice bowl of the Central Visayas, with a total of 47,375 hectares of rice fields, of which 23,041 ha are irrigated and 24,336 ha are rain-fed.

"Minimal rainfall is observed during the onset of January 2016," Parac said.

Major dams need replenishment to have enough water supply, he added. These are the Malinao Dam in Pilar town with a service area of 4,700 ha; Bayongan Dam in San Miguel town, 5,300 ha; Capayas in Ubay town, 1,100 ha; and Zamora Dam in Talibon town, about 1,000 ha.

Samar suggested that farmers plant crops which are resistant to heat and have shorter growth periods.

According to Parac, the El Niño Task Force, which is composed of Pagasa, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, and the Philippine Air Force, met on Dec. 14 last year to tackle preparations for the coming drought. Experts had said that the situation would be worse than the 1997-1998 El Niño.

Cloud-seeding operations were scheduled on Dec. 14-23 last year but were postponed when Typhoons "Nona" (international name: Melor) and Tropical Depression "Onyok" brought excessive rainfall to Bohol.

Some P2.2 million has been allocation by the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office for the mission, Parac said. "The cloud-seeding is urgent to save rice lands from further destruction due to lack of water from irrigation dams," he said.

Even if the dams are filled up with water, a majority of the 55,850 ha of the rice land are still in the land preparation phase for second cropping (September 2015 to March 2016), the official said.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

Powerful replacement in works for climate-modeling computer

CHEYENNE, Wyoming — One of the most powerful computers in the world dedicated to climate change, weather and other earth science research will be replaced in 2017 by an even faster machine, officials announced Monday.

The Yellowstone supercomputer in Wyoming currently ranks among the 60 fastest in the world. The new supercomputer, to be named Cheyenne, will be at least 2 1/2 times more powerful, the National Center for Atmospheric Research said.

Capable of 5.3 quadrillion calculations, or petaflops, per second, Cheyenne will be some 100,000 times faster than a typical home computer. The speed provides unprecedented detail in climate-change predictions, including regional modeling of effects, the center said.

A more powerful computer will allow researchers to see results in higher resolution, like a higher density of pixels sharpens images on a television or a stronger telescope brings a greater number of far-off galaxies into focus, explained Rich Loft, the center's director of technology.

Scientists since 2012 have been using the Yellowstone supercomputer near Cheyenne for a range of research that also includes modeling air pollution and ocean currents.

The atmospheric research center plans to install Cheyenne later this year and put it to work early next year. Questions it might help answer include:

- Is the California drought a

fluke or due to global climate change?

- Can scientists predict the intensity of solar flares — streams of radiation released by the sun that can endanger satellites and astronauts — during an upcoming solar cycle?

- How might climate change increase the likelihood of drought and change the extent of arctic sea ice from decade to decade?

The Yellowstone computer, located in a business park west of Cheyenne, puts Wyoming's capital on the map as a potential technology hub. Facilities including a huge Microsoft data center have set up nearby since the center opened.

The Cheyenne supercomputer will be about three times as efficient as Yellowstone, using 90 percent as much electricity but taking up to a third as much space. The machine will be built by Milpitas, California-based Silicon Graphics International Corp.

The University Corp. for Atmospheric Research, a consortium of more than 100 North American universities and colleges, oversees the National Center for Atmospheric Research. Both organizations are based in Boulder, Colorado. (AP)



CLIMATE MODELING The new supercomputer dedicated to climate change, to be named Cheyenne, will be at least 2 1/2 times more powerful. Image courtesy of static.guim.co.uk

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Gulf warriors' mission: Stop blast fishing

By Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan—Whenever Elinio Victorio sees something floating in the Lingayen Gulf, he gets curious.

A piece of Styrofoam wrapped with bright colored plastic bags or debris carrying a small flag may not be as innocent as they look, he said.

These floaters are often used as markers indicating the location of fish nets containing the day's haul caught in blasts when illegal fishermen ignite improvised explosives.

Victorio, 26, is a fishery regulation officer of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in the Ilocos region, who mans one of the six BFAR boats sent out each day to prevent blast fishing in the gulf waters off La Union province.

But Victorio and his fellow marine patrollers are new to the job. They were assigned to monitor the gulf in July last year, after a three-month training on fishery law enforcement.

Learning the ropes

They quickly learned the ropes, Victorio said.

"After blasting an area in the gulf, the fishermen would collect the fish in a net which they hide under the water. The net is connected to a sinker, usually a heavy steel bar. Then they mark the area with a buoy or a floater," he said.

"When the coast is clear, or when the

patrol boats are far from the scene, the fishermen would retrieve the fish and their gear."

The markings suggest that the illegal fishermen follow a code, he said, because no one but the owners would reclaim their haul.

Hannah Juguilon, another fishery regulatory officer, said guarding the gulf against illegal fishermen "is like playing hide and seek."

'Here they are again!'

"We hear side comments like, 'Here they are again!' when we are around the coastal waters," she said.

Juguilon, 22, a fishery course graduate, has only been on the job for six months. But she has experienced the inherent difficulties of protecting the marine environment.

Once in Lingayen town, Juguilon recalled, the head of the fishery and aquatic resources management council (FARMC) informed the agency about blast fishing in the area.

"Sadly, when we reached the place, the fishermen had fled, leaving behind two boats with nets, makeshift buoys and steel bars," she said.

The BFAR patrol confiscated the vessels, which were placed under the custody of FARMC head Rudy Aldre, while the agency drew up a complaint of illegal fishing against the boats' owners.

A government prosecutor ordered the boats released to the owners,

believing their story that the boats were stolen and used for illegal fishing, Juguilon said.

Boat owners' version

"But it turned out that the seven suspected thieves they identified to the prosecutor were all dead," she said, adding that BFAR intended to sue the boat owners for perjury and for obstruction of justice.

But none of the BFAR patrollers has seen blast fishing at sea.

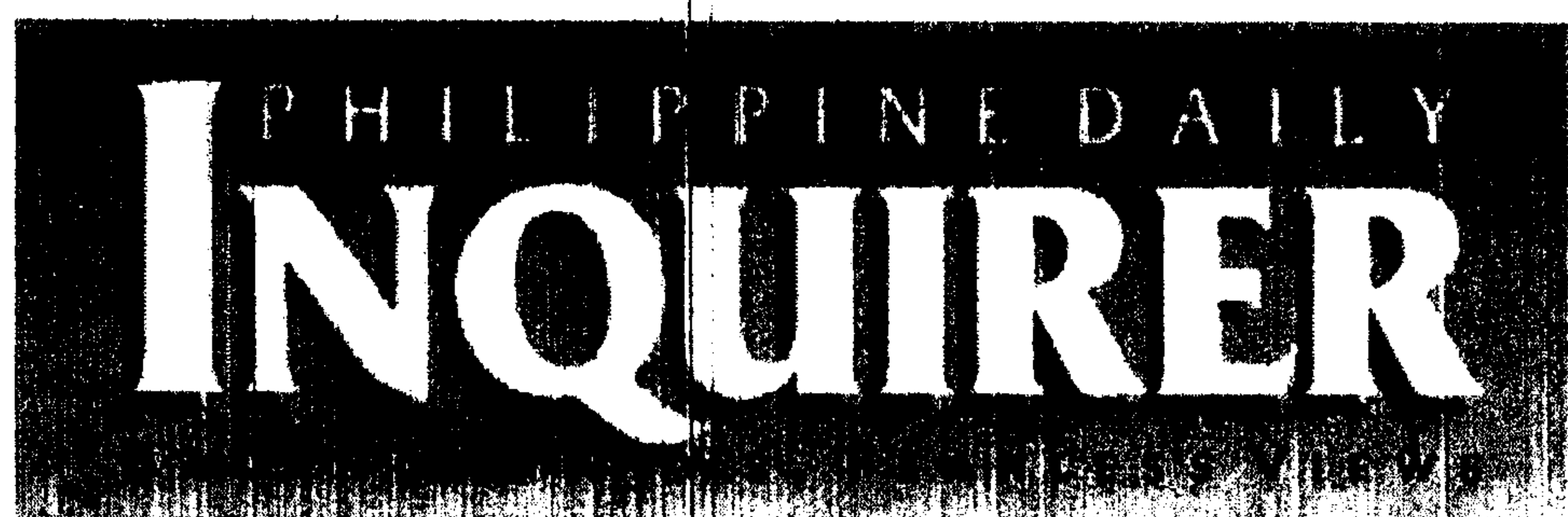
"We just [assume] they have done something illegal because when we approach the boat, they sail off as fast as they could, abandoning their fish and their fishing gear," Victorio said.

"One time, while we were explaining the law prohibiting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing to some fishermen, somebody unloaded several kilos of fish into our boat. We returned the fish, explaining why we could not accept the 'gift,'" Juguilon said.

The team also deals with crafty fishermen who try to beat the law by avoiding markets where fish examiners can detect traces of blast fishing when they check fish on display.

The illegal haul is often processed and sold as dried fish, said Belmor Bugaoan, fishery resources management division head.

Knowing how the illegal fishermen elude the law is half the battle won, he said.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

BATTLING EL NIÑO

Zambo City under state of calamity

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Local officials set aside political differences, and finally conceded to requests to put the city under a state of calamity as rivers run dry due to the El Niño weather phenomenon and water is rationed to communities due to the limited supply.

The city council approved the resolution late Tuesday declaring the state of calamity as recommended by the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (CDRRMC) following requests of the Zamboanga City Water District (ZCWD) and the city agriculturist, Councilor Cesar Jimenez said on Wednesday.

Jimenez sponsored the measure, which drew the support of opposition members in the Sangguniang Panlungsod, Councilor Melchor Sadain said.

"The resolution was made so that emergency funds from the city government could be utilized for cloud-seeding. So far, we see the resolution a justified move because of the drought we experienced," Sadain said.

On Monday, the CDRRMC urged the city council to declare the state of calamity even as the ZCWD said it was only able to provide about a third of the water volume it used to deliver to over 70,000 consumers.

The city agriculture office, on the other hand, said that rivers providing irrigation water were drying up. Its head, Diosdado Palacat, said at least 600 hectares of rice and corn fields had been wasted due to the effects of the drought and that the affected areas could widen further due to the lack of rain.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) has said the current dry spell is similar to the ones experienced in 1995, 1997 and 1998. "There will be no rainfall for about four months," said Maribel Enriquez, Pagasa's chief meteorologist here.

In November 2015, the city was supposed to experience 120.6 millimeters of rainfall based on normal weather conditions. "We only recorded 66.4 mm," Enriquez said.

More dry days ahead

In December 2015, the rainfall volume based on normal conditions was supposed to be 66.8 mm but actual volume monitored was just 7.9 mm, she pointed out. This month, she said, the rainfall volume was supposed to be 49.7 mm but by all indications, it could not be more than 1 mm.

"It's very alarming and we see more dry days, especially in February," Enriquez said.

The ZCWD said that if the situation gets worse, the water level in the Pasonanca River could go beyond the current 71.10 meters, which is way below the tolerable operating level of 74.20 meters.

From an average flow of about 14,000 cubic meters per hour in previous years, the water district said the supply had gone down to only about 4,000.

To ease the situation, cloud-seeding operations have to be conducted, Palacat said.

Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao



The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Zambo City declares state of calamity due to El Niño

By ROEL PAREÑO
and RAMIL BAJO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The city government has declared a state of calamity due to the dry spell that has been affecting the agriculture sector.

The city council on Tuesday approved a resolution allowing the local government to release the needed funds to mitigate the effects of El Niño.

The declaration was based on the recommendations of the city disaster risk

reduction and management council, Mayor Ma. Isabelle Climaco-Salazar said.

Salazar said the local water utility service imposed water rationing for 12 hours each day due to the dwindling supply.

The city agriculture office said the dry spell ruined sev-

eral hectares of rice, corn and vegetable farms, with damage reaching P10.8 million.

Worms attack rice fields

Meanwhile, farmers in the upper valley area of South Cotabato, one of the rice-producing provinces in Central Mindanao, are appealing for

help after worms attacked their crops.

Justina Navarete, chief of the provincial agriculture office, said they have yet to assess the damage brought by army worms in several villages in Norala town.

At least eight hectares of rice fields have reportedly been affected by the pest.

There are no reports yet of

similar attacks on the lower valley area, but local agriculture experts are not discounting the possibility.

Army worms attack at night and hide during the day. They destroy every field in their path.

"We told the farmers to use insecticide spray to annihilate the worms," Navarete said.

MANILA BULLETIN

A NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Zambo City under state of calamity

By NONOY E. LACSON

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The city council yesterday approved a resolution placing the entire city under a state of calamity to prevent further destruction to farm products and produce that may be caused by the El Niño phenomenon.

City Council Floor Leader Charlie Mariano said a majority of the council members has voted in favor to the recommendation of the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (CDRRMC) in this city to place the entire city under the state of calamity.

"We have immediately acted on the recommendation of the CDRRMC in order to allow local and national government agencies to provide the needed requirements to counter the destruction that may be caused by the dry spell," he said.

The CDRRMC, in a meeting Monday afternoon, endorsed to the City Council the declaration of a state of calamity in Zamboanga City due to the receding water flow at the Pasonanca diversion dam which is now at a critical level.

The Zamboanga City Water District (ZCWD) had actually urged the city government much earlier to declare a state of calamity even as it already imposed strict water rationing in its service areas.

Water rationing is only one of the few activities that the water firm seeks to undertake to mitigate the effects of one of the worst if not the worst El Niño phenomenon compared to that of 1997-1998.

ZCWD General Manager Leonardo Rey Vasquez said other action plans are now in the pipeline and will be ready for execution with funds coming from the calamity fund.

And with the declaration of a state of calamity, Vasquez said they can now ask the city government for financial help in undertaking these action plans.

Mayor Maria Isabelle Climaco has

directed the CDRRMC to work closely with the ZCWD, the City Agriculturist Office and the City Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO) to expedite the conduct of mitigating measures to prevent more crops from being destroyed and improve the water level of sources.

With the declaration, the disbursement of calamity funds for emergency measures particularly in cushioning the effects of the dry spell will now be possible, Mariano explained.

Mariano said the council resolution will also allow government employees to seek loans from the government institution to cushion the effects of the dry spell. This developed even as Zamboanga City second district Rep Lilia M. Nuño called a conference with officials of different government agencies in this city to discuss measures that will mitigate the devastating effects of the dry spell.

Nuño said "We're meeting with the regional heads of agriculture, natural environment resources and irrigation

offices because of the ongoing El Niño which is approaching its peak and will likely spawn dry spell and drought."

She said heads of Department of Agriculture, National Irrigation Authority, City Interior and Local Government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources attended the meeting yesterday morning.

According to Nuno, DA has extended aid in the form of a drilling rig and 10 units of shallow well pumps to help mitigate the effect of dry spell.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EL NIÑO WREAKING HAVOC

Zamboanga declares state of calamity

BY AL JACINTO
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

ZAMBOANGA CITY has declared a state of calamity after the water level in the Pasonanca diversion dam continued to drop to critical levels, prompting the local water utility firm to enforce a rationing of supply to many villages.

This is the result of the El Niño dry spell, which has been wreaking havoc in Zamboanga City, pushing temperatures up to a higher-than-normal 37 degrees.

Mayor Beng Climaco said the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (CDRRMC) recommended that the city be placed under a state of calamity to allow the use of the city water district's calamity fund to mitigate the effects of El Niño.

On Tuesday, the City Council approved the CDRMMC proposal. The city's calamity status will remain until the effects of the early dry spell in the region are addressed effectively.

Climaco urged residents to conserve not only water, but electricity as well, with the Mindanao grid being reliant on hydro energy for its power supply.

"Given the continuous decline in the water level, the water

firm's calamity fund cannot be accessed unless a state of calamity is declared by the local government through the City Council, upon the recommendation of the CDRMMC," Climaco said.

In October last year, the Department of Agriculture said Western Mindanao was still free from the effects of El Niño.

Evelyn Academia of the Department of Agriculture of the Regional Operations Division, said the weather phenomenon was expected to begin that month, but no reports of any such severe dry spell in Mindanao had been recorded.

But El Niño began inflicting damage on Zamboanga three months later.

El Niño is characterized by unusually warm ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, dis-

rupting the normal rainfall pattern in the areas.

Weather experts said different parts of the country experience varying degrees of the impact of the abnormal weather phenomenon.

Edgar Tabal, of the Rice Program Division of the Department of Agriculture, said other areas in the country may reel from the effects of warm weather – there are at least 120,000 hectares of rice farms and more than 136,000 hectares of corn fields in western Mindanao. In other areas, coconut plantations can withstand the effects of El Niño, but may not be spared by coconut scale infestations.

Western Mindanao contributes little to the rice production in the region. The provinces of South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani in central Mindanao are considered the rice granary of southern Philippines.

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El Niño lumalatay na!

Nagsimula nang maramdaman ang matinding epekto ng El Niño sa ibang bahagi ng Pilipinas. Ang Zamboanga City ay inilagay na sa 'state of calamity' dahil sa pananalasa ng tag-init.

Natutuyo na ang ilang lugar sa Pilipinas at marami pa ang magsisisunod sa paglala ng El Niño na inaasahang mananalasa hanggang sa pagpasok ng summer sa Pilipinas (Abril at Mayo).

Sana nga ay handa ang pamahalaang Aquino sa posibleng 'extreme effect' ng tagtuyot. Unang-una na ay ang mapeperwisyong mga agricultural land. Walang magiging ani. Naka-ready ba rito ang gobyerno? Ano ang isu-supply na pagkain sa sambayanan?

Hagip din dito sigurado ang mga palaisdaan na sa tuwing tumitindi ang init ay nagresulta rin sa pagkamatay ng mga isda bago pa mabenta.

Paano ang mga farmers kapag walang ani? Anong tulong ang ipinosisyon para sa kanila ng pamahalaan?

Sana ay gumana ang 'cash-for-work' program sa buong panahon ng El Niño. Napakahalaga na maalalayan ang mga apektadong sektor. May magugutom na mga pamilya dahil mawawalan ng kita. Walang ibang kakapitan ang mga ito kundi ang gobyerno.

Tatal ay hindi naman sorpresa ang pagdating ng tagtuyot at matagal na itong naialarma ng weather bureau, dapat talaga ay nakaposisyon na ang mga programa kontra rito.

Noong nakaraang taon ay nagpatawag pa ng forum para himayin ang magiging epekto ng El Niño sa bansa, kung

saan-saan ito sesentro, kung ilang milyong Pinoy ang direktang maapektuhan, kung saan kukuha ng alternatibong food source at pati na ang tamang estratehiya kung paano mapagkasya ang water reservoir sa mga "hardly-hit areas".

Ngayon ay isang lungsod na ang napuruhan. Marami pa ang susunod. Anong klaseng ayuda ang tinatanggap ng mga lugar na inilagay sa state of calamity dahil sa matinding init?

Dapat ay mayroon ding close coordination ang lokal at national government. Ang mga alkalde at gobernador ang

direktang nakakakita sa sitwasyon kaya't sila talaga ang dapat na maging maagap sa pag-aksyon at saka iparating sa national government ang kaganapan sa kanilang lugar para sa maagap na pagkilos.

Sa panig ng mamamayan, kailangan ang kooperasyon sa ibayong pagtitipid ng tubig. Kahit hindi apektado ng tagtuyot, dapat ay nakikibahagi sa paglalapat ng solusyon sa problemang dulot ng hagupit ng kalikasan.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

DILG continues rehab efforts for Manila Bay

By CZARINA NICOLE O. ONG

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) is not about to give up on Manila Bay. In fact, the department has been stepping up efforts to implement the Manila Bay Clean-Up, Rehabilitation and Preservation (MBCRP) program which hopes to restore the bay's pristine state.

DILG Secretary Mel Senen S. Sarmiento said the department is undertaking initiatives to ensure greater compliance among local government units (LGUs) along Manila Bay to environmental laws, rules and regulations, particularly in the conduct of inspection and monitoring of establishments having hygienic septic and wastewater treatment facilities.

"Hindi nagpapabaya ang DILG. Katuwang ang ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan at mga LGUs sa kanyang tungkulin na pagandahin at ibalik ang dating kagandahan at kalinisan ng Manila Bay, (The DILG and LGUs have not been remiss in its responsibilities to restore Manila Bay back to its former glory)," said Sarmiento.

However, Sarmiento said "the DILG is not the lead agency implementing the MBCRP program" since "there are 12 other national government agencies mandated by the Supreme Court Order to enact initiatives preventing the continuous cycle of

man-made pollution to restore the Manila Bay to its pristine form, fit for swimming and other forms of contact recreation.

"The department's role is centered on capacity development, coordination with LGUs and NGAs, and monitoring of the performance of the LGUs, hence most of the activities of the department are workshops, seminars and various coordination meetings," he explained.

As of 2015, all 178 LGUs mandated under the court are conducting inspection, where 53,266 commercial establishments (CEs), 2,357 factories and 391,058 private homes were inspected for adequate wastewater treatment facilities or septic tanks.

Out of the total number of inspected structures, there were 21,895 CEs, 1,816 factories, and 171,644 private homes that have proper wastewater treatment facilities or septic tanks after the department issued advisories to all concerned LGUs to issue compliance notices to non-complying structures.

Meanwhile, Manila Bay LGUs have been urged to draft and disseminate their own Septage Ordinance and Checklist that should contain clear guidelines on proper sewage treatment and septage management. At present, 28 LGUs have already adopted their septage and sewerage ordinance.