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# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

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Everybody's Newspaper

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### DENR stops Aklan river dredging

SOME 60 operatives from various law enforcement agencies joined hands in stopping a 50-ton Chinese boat conducting dredging at the banks of Aklan river.

According to Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Arturo Valdez, the dredging operations were carried out sans the required permits from the department and the local government.

The boat, "MV Zhong Hai 18," was contracted by STL Panay Resources Co. Ltd. (STLPRCL) to dredge shallow parts of Aklan river.

Valdez said the contractor of the dredging

project failed to secure permits from the DENR and the multi-sectoral monitoring and validation team created by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Aklan to ensure the safety of the dredging operations.

The operation, he add-

ed, was pursuant to a cease and desist order (CDO) issued by the DENR on Jan. 26 against the dredging project and a directive from DENR Secretary Gina Lopez.

He said Lopez immediately ordered Valdez to link up with Aklan DENR

officials upon learning from Kalibo town Mayor William Lachica about the Chinese boat dredging at the river.

Authorities discovered around 1,200 cubic meters of sand materials in two of the boat's six compartments.

The boat was reportedly anchored off Bgy. Bakhaw Norte in Kalibo since November last year.

Residents in the area were strongly opposing the dredging project as they worried that it might result in further erosion of the riverbanks. **Joel dela Torre**

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# DENR stops dredging of Aklan River

By JUNIE AGUIRRE

**T**he Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered STL Panay Resources and a Chinese vessel to stop dredging along the Aklan River in Kalibo, Aklan.

In a Facebook post, DENR Secre-

tary Gina Lopez said she instructed Undersecretary Arturo Valdez to issue a cease and desist order to STL Panay and the Chinese vessel Zhong Hai 18 which were allegedly illegally mining for black sand in disguise of dredging.

Lopez said the dredging has eroded sandbars, which act as a natural barrier against disasters.

Four houses along the river were reported damaged by soil erosion from the dredging.

Since last November, residents and Kalibo Mayor William Lachica have been protesting the operations of the Chinese vessel in the river.

Valdez said the dredging has no proper permit.

The police, military, coast guard and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) assisted the DENR in implementing the order.

The river runs through Kalibo, the provincial capital, and several other towns.

The Aklan River Watershed Forest Area is considered a protected area by the DENR.

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# BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## DENR stops 'dredging' in Aklan River; 15 Chinese nationals held on suspicion of black-sand mining

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

✉ @jonlmayuga

**T**HE National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTF) swooped down on an illegal dredging operation on Tuesday and took custody of a boat and 15 undocumented Chinese nationals along the Aklan River in Kalibo, Aklan, on Tuesday.

The raid was part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) campaign to stop large-scale environmental crimes, including illegal mining, logging and wildlife-trafficking activities.

DENR Undersecretary and NAECTF Head Arturo T. Valdez said the dredging operation was carried out without the necessary permit from the DENR or the concerned local government units (LGUs).

The official said the dredging operation is a scheme to extract, haul and transport magnetite, or black sand, from the Aklan River.

The DENR and the NAECTF are now building up cases against officials of the company engaged in the dredging activity, including 15 Chinese nationals who were arrested during the NAECTF operation.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau has a standing order stopping all black-sand mining operations along coastal areas and rivers throughout the country.

Valdez said 60 operatives from various law-enforcement agen-

cies swooped down in Kalibo and seized a Chinese boat that can haul and transport 50 tons of ore along the Aklan River.

The boat, identified as MV *Zhong Hai 18*, was contracted by STL Pannay Resources Co. Ltd. (STLPRCL) to dredge shallow parts of the Aklan River.

He added that the contractor of the dredging project failed to secure permits from the DENR and the multi-sectoral monitoring and validation team, created by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Aklan, to ensure the safety of the dredging operations.

The operation was pursuant to a cease-and-desist order (CDO) issued by the DENR on January 26 against the dredging project and a directive from Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez.

Valdez said Kalibo town Mayor William S. Lachica sought the help of Lopez.

During a surprise inspection conducted by the DENR and the multi-sectoral monitoring team on January 3, around 1,200 cubic meters of sand were discovered inside two of the boat's six compartments, Valdez said.

The boat has been anchored off Barangay Bakhaw Norte in Kalibo since November last year.

The dredging project, an offshoot of the massive flooding caused by Typhoon Frank in 2008, faces strong opposition from residents worried it might result in

further erosion of the riverbanks.

Valdez said there was no go signal coming from the monitoring team and the DENR to proceed with the project as STLPRCL has yet to comply with the requirements set by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Part of the requirements was to secure clearances from the monitoring team and concerned local DENR offices.

Combined operatives from the Philippine Army, Philippine Coast Guard and the National Bureau of Investigation joined the DENR in implementing the CDO against the dredging project.

The joint operatives found 15 undocumented Chinese nationals inside the boat conducting the dredging operation.

"None of the Chinese nationals we found onboard the ship were able to present their passports, nor they were able to present a mineral-ore-transport permit for the ship's cargo," Valdez said. He added that the DENR has already coordinated with the Bureau of Immigration regarding the Chinese nationals, and the Bureau of Customs for the issuance of a hold order against the vessel.

The DENR official said his team does not rule out the possibility the ship is engaged in black-sand mining, noting the SPRCL has offered the dredging of the river in exchange for buying the materials that will be taken out.

## DENR stops Chinese boat from dredging Aklan River

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) stopped a 50-ton Chinese boat from unauthorized dredging of shallow parts of the Aklan River.

Some 60 operatives from various law enforcement agencies on Tuesday swooped down on the boat MV Zhong Hai 18 which was contracted by STL Panay Resources Co. Ltd. (STLPRCL) for the dredging operation.

The DENR sought the assistance of law enforcement agencies to implement the cease and desist order (CDO) issued by the DENR on January 26 against the dredging project and a directive from DENR Secretary Gina Lopez.

Undersecretary Arturo Valdez said the project contractor failed to secure permits from the DENR and the multi-sectoral monitoring and validation team created by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Aklan to ensure the safety of the dredging operations.

Valdez, who is head of the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTF) immediately ordered the NAECTF to link up with Aklan DENR officials upon learning of the dredging activities through a letter sent by Kalibo town Mayor William Lachica.

He noted that around 1,200 cubic meters of sand were discovered inside two of the boat's six compartments during a surprise inspection on January 23.

It was also learned that the boat has been anchored off Barangay Bakhaw Norte in Kalibo since November last year.

The dredging project, which is an offshoot of the massive flooding caused by Typhoon "Frank"

in 2008, is strongly opposed by the town's residents saying it might result in further erosion of the riverbank.

Valdez clarified that the monitoring team and the DENR did not give STLPRCL the go signal to proceed with dredging operations because it has yet to comply with the requirements set by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Part of these requirements was for STLPRCL to secure clearances from the monitoring team and concerned local DENR offices.

Combined operatives from the Philippine Army, Philippine Coast Guard and the National Bureau of Investigation joined the DENR in implementing the order against the operation and also found 15 undocumented Chinese inside the boat conducting the dredging operation.

"None of the Chinese nationals we found on board the ship were able to present their passports, nor were they able to present a mineral ore transport permit for the ship's cargo," Valdez said.

He said that the DENR has already coordinated with the Bureau of Immigration regarding the Chinese, as well as the Bureau of Customs for the issuance of a hold-departure order against the vessel.

The DENR official said his team does not rule out the possibility that the ship is engaged in black sand mining, noting that the SPRCL has offered to dredge the river in exchange for buying the materials which will be taken out.

JAMES GALVE

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

AKLAN PROJECT

## DENR HOLDS CHINESE SHIP, CREW FOR LACK OF PERMIT TO DREDGE RIVER

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.  
@nestorburgosINQ

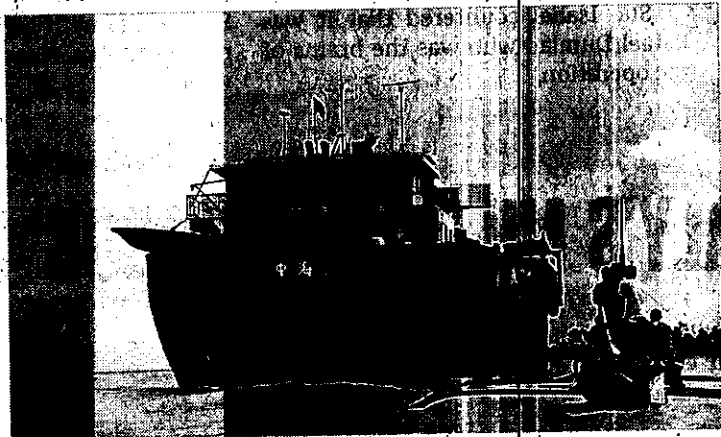
ILOILO CITY—A government team on Tuesday held a Chinese dredging ship and its 15 crew members in Aklan province for dredging a section of the Aklan River without permits.

Environment Undersecretary Arturo Valdez, accompanied by personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine Coast Guard and Philippine Army, served a cease and desist order on the operations of MV Zhong Hai 18 and STL Panay Resources Company Ltd. The vessel was docked about 300 meters from the mouth of the river.

Jim Sampulna, DENR regional executive director in Western Visayas, said the vessel's crew and workers had no passports and working visas. The team also found three of six compartments of the vessel filled with sand and silt.

The ship and its crew were restrained from leaving the area. Valdez, head of the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force, said the DENR is coordinating with the Bureau of Immigration and Bureau of Customs for the issuance of a hold order against the vessel and in preparation for the filing of criminal cases against the crew members.

But Roger Vergara, consultant for environmental and engineering concerns of STL Panay Resources Company Ltd.,



The Chinese-registered dredging vessel MV Zhong Hai 18 is held at the Aklan River after authorities stopped its dredging activities. —RODNELAGUIRRE / CONTRIBUTOR

take the dredging project.

Vergara clarified that dredging activities have yet to start. He said the firm conducted a test operation because the ship was "inactive" for about two months.

He admitted the vessel gathered silt, sand and other materials, but these were not intended to be transported.

The company, a subsidiary of the Singapore-based Santarli Construction Ltd, entered into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Aklan provincial government in 2013 to undertake the three-year dredging project, at no cost to the government, as a flood mitigating measure, said Roger Es-to, provincial planning and development coordinator and a member of the project's multi-partite monitoring team.

The company, according to the MOA, will pay the local government P5 per cubic meter

siltation as a major cause of flooding in the capital Kalibo and neighboring towns during heavy rain.

The 72-kilometer Aklan River is the province's main tributary. It passes through eight towns, including the capital Kalibo.

The project involves dredging an 8-km canal along the river in Numancia and Kalibo towns.

Sampulna said the company was told not to start dredging activities until a review of the project design was completed. He said it also failed to secure a mineral ore export permit (MOEP).

Vergara said the firm has not applied for an MOEP because it has no materials to transport and export.

Sampulna said the project has drawn opposition from residents, especially those living in Barangay Bakhaw Norte at the mouth of the river.



# Balita

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### Dredging sa Kalibo, ipinatigil

KALIBO, Aklan - Opisyal nang ipinatigil ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang umano'y ilegal na operasyon ng dredging ng isang Chinese Vessel sa Kalibo, Aklan.

Sa Facebook post, sinabi ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez na ipinag-utos niya ang pagsisilbi ng cease and desist order sa M/V Zhong Hai, na nasa baybayin ng Barangay Bakhaw Norte, Kalibo noon pang Nobyembre 2016.

Ayon kay Lopez, sa tulong ng National Bureau of Investigation, Armed Forces of the Philippines, at Philippine Coast Guard, isinilbi ang order matapos na makatanggap ng reklamo ang kalihim tungkol sa umano'y ilegal na operasyon ng barko.

**Jun N. Aguirre**

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**D'YARYO NG BAYAN**

## **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

### **18 Chinese sabit sa black sand mining sa Aklan**

**KALIBO, Aklan** – Inimbestigahan ang 18 Chinese crew ng isang dredging vessel, sinasabing nagsasagawa ng black sand mining sa Aklan River. Ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Field Operations Arturo Valdez, malinaw na pantoloko ang ginagawa ng Santarli (STL) Panay Resources Company Limited, na nagkomisyon sa barko, dahil imbes dredging, mistulang minang ang kanilang ginagawa. Illegal aniya ang kanilang operasyon dahil walang kaukulang papeles at working permit. Aniya, sinabi ni DENR Secretary Gina Lopez, ilegal ang dredging operation kaya agad pinakilos ang National Environmental Crime Task Force na nangunahan ni Usec. Valdez, upang ipahinto ang kanilang ginagawa. Nauna rito, halos 100 residente ng Brgy. Bakhaw Norte, Kalibo, ang nag-rally upang kon-

denahin ang ginagawang dredging operations, sinasabing nagdudulot ng soil erosion, naging sanhi ng pagkahulog ng apat na bahay sa Ilog.

Napag-alaman, nakipagkasundo ang provincial government sa naturang kompanya, na ang makukuhang buhangin ay bibilhin ng P5 per cubic meter, na magtatagat ng tatlong taon, at dadalhin ito sa Singapore.

Ang kikitang pera ay gagamitin para sa flood control.



# THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### NGO wants total closure of erring mining firms

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

Non-government organization Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) wants the government to totally close down erring mining firms instead of merely suspending their operations.

"We don't believe that suspension is enough. The Mining Act of 1995 is clear and that should be the basis to close down and cancel their contracts if they violate any environmental and national law," said Jaybee Garganera, ATM national coordinator during a rally it held at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) office yesterday.

"The government must bring the mining audit to its logical

conclusion which is to close down mining projects that violated our environmental laws or those that failed to comply with their mining contracts," he added.

Garganera said almost all the 41 mining firms did not fully comply with their contracts.

The ATM warned it was ready to take legal action against the erring mining firms should the DENR refuse to close these companies down.

"We are exhausting all our options here and if it's not enough, we will study our available options and might file cases against the mining companies," Garganera said.

He likewise reiterated the need for a new mining law and sought

the immediate passage of the Alternative Minerals Management Bill.

"The root cause of all these problems is the Mining Act itself because it does not ensure that the benefit of the mining industry is for the communities and for the Philippines," Garganera told The STAR.

"We need to change it. Right now, we extract the minerals then export and with very minimal taxation. What we propose is, we only extract those that would be beneficial for us and for our industrialization," he added.

The bill, which was crafted with the help of different advocates, is anchored on land and natural resources management and human rights-based approach. It aims to regulate the rational exploration, development and utilization of mineral resources and ensure the equitable sharing of benefits for the state, indigenous peoples and local communities.

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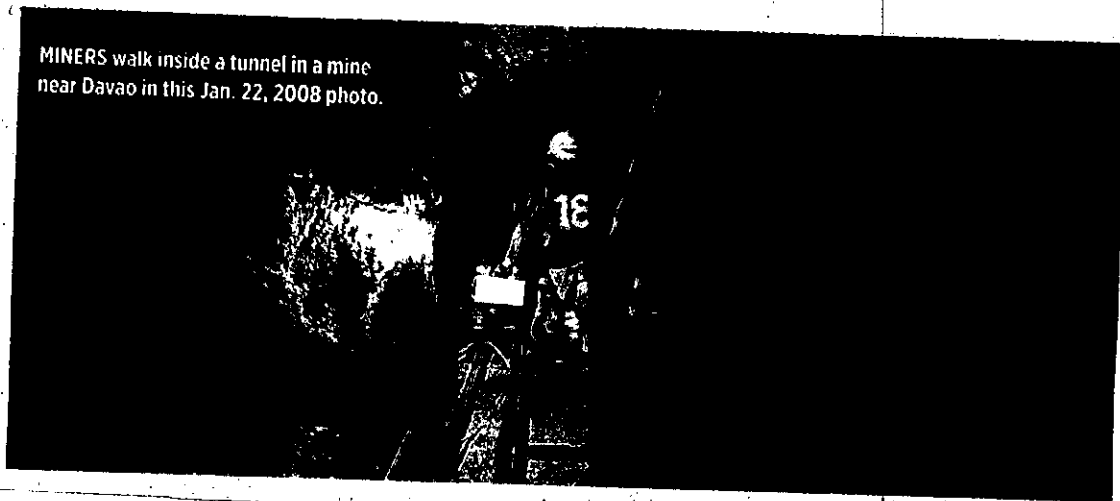
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# DENR's Lopez says some mines need to be shut on eve of green audit results

MINERS walk inside a tunnel in a mine near Davao in this Jan. 22, 2008 photo.



MANILA — Some Philippine mines need to be shut given the environmental harm they have caused, the minister in charge of sector said on Wednesday, a day before the government announces the results of a months-long review of the country's mineral producers.

"We'll be really, really strict," Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez told radio station DZMM. "There's some really that have to be closed," Ms. Lopez said, without identifying which mines she meant in the review to be published on Thursday.

"That's what I see, because it's too much; it's extreme," Ms. Lopez said on the destruction some mines have caused.

The Southeast Asian nation, the world's biggest nickel ore supplier, last year suspended operations at a group of 10 of its 41 mines — including gold and copper mines as well as nickel ore producers — for environmental infractions after launching an audit of the sector in July. Manila said in September that 20 more mines were at risk of suspension.

The country's firebrand leader Rodrigo Duterte has backed Ms. Lopez's mining audit, warning shortly after tak-

ing office last June that the Philippines could survive without a mining industry.

"The decisions that we're making are not political," the minister said. "I'm not looking at who owns the mines. What's important is the welfare of those people who live there."

Some 22 of the 30 mines under review are nickel ore producers, and the threat to disruption of supply from the Philippines has helped fuel a 14% rally in global nickel prices since last year.

On Wednesday, three-month nickel on the London Metal Exchange was up 0.5% at \$10,000 a ton by 0302 GMT, recovering from a seven-month low reached last week.

— Reuters

**Malaya**

# Business Insight

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Gov't pushing green reforms on mining, logging

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte yesterday ordered strict implementation of the current ban on logging while the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will announce today the names of mining companies despoiling the environment and thus will be ordered to stop operations.

Agriculture Secretary Manny Pinol said Duterte ordered the strict implementation of the log ban after massive flooding in Mindanao. The ban, Pinol said will protect the country's water sheds.

Duterte ordered that the DENR, DA and local governments work on the details of implementing the ban.

"Stop all logging operations with no exemp-

tions," Duterte was quoted by Pinol.

Duterte gave Environment Secretary Gina Lopez "the full authority" to implement the rules on the log ban.

Cutting of trees is still allowed if they are commercially grown specifically for timber.

He said planting and harvesting of pulp and paper trees like Falcata is also a major source of livelihood for poor families in the Davao and Caraga regions.

The tripartite committee will meet on February 6 to start the formulation of the guidelines on the log ban.

He said the guidelines should be clear on how to treat the cutting of trees planted by farmers in their farmlands for their future use, and include

programs which would ensure the efficient reforestation of the denuded watersheds in the country.

Meanwhile, Reuters reported that Lopez had announced that several mines will be shut down given the environmental harm they have caused.

"We'll be really, really strict," Lopez told radio station DZMM. "There's some really that have to be closed," Lopez said, without identifying which mines she meant in the review to be published on Thursday.

"That's what I see, because it's too much, it's extreme" Lopez said on the destruction some mines have caused.

The Southeast Asian nation, the world's biggest

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## GOV'T

nickel ore supplier, last year suspended operations at a group of 10 of its 41 mines - including gold and copper mines as well as nickel ore producers - for environmental infractions after launching an audit of the sector in July. The said in September that 20 more mines were at risk of suspension.

"The decisions that we're making are not political," the minister said. "I'm not looking at who owns the mines. What's important is the welfare of those people who live there."

Some 22 of the 30 mines under review are nickel ore producers, and the threat to disruption of supply from the Philippines has helped fuel a 14 percent rally in global nickel prices since last year.

On Wednesday, three-month nickel on the London Metal Exchange was up 0.5 percent at \$10,000 a ton, recovering from a seven-month low reached last week.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Cabinet gives Duterte green light to OK Paris accord

The Philippines has inched closer to ratifying the Paris Agreement on climate change after concerned government agencies submitted to Malacañang the certificates of concurrence (COC) to the landmark accord.

After threatening to reject the global accord for being "absurd" and "stupid," President Duterte convened the Climate Change Commission (CCC) on

Tuesday in the Palace, where the Cabinet concurred with its ratification.

Sen. Loren Legarda, the primary mover of the Paris accord in the Senate, yesterday expressed elation over Mr. Duterte's decision to convene the CCC which, she said, was the body's maiden meeting since it was created in 2009 with the passage of the Climate

Change Act.

Legarda, the UN Champion for Resilience, said the meeting was "a good sign that our President sees the importance of addressing climate change impacts as they affect the overall development of the country."

"It is a welcome development that all concerned agencies of government are now ready to ratify the Paris Agree-

ment," she said, adding:

"Once the executive [department] ratifies and transmits the instrument of ratification to the Senate, I would actively shepherd the Senate's immediate concurrence."

Legarda was invited to the meeting as the principal author of the Climate Change Act.

Mr. Duterte had earlier warned that he would not honor

the Paris accord, saying it would only stymie the country's economic growth and that it was just being "imposed" by industrialized countries on developing nations like the Philippines.

At the Paris climate conference in 2015, 195 nations adopted the legally binding global climate accord that aims to limit global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius, a

warming threshold, that scientists believe could significantly reduce the dangerous impacts of climate change.

CCC Commissioner Emmanuel de Guzman confirmed yesterday that Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. had signed the last of the documents needed for the ratification of the international treaty.

—MARLON RAMOS INQ

# THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Phl one step closer to ratifying Paris treaty

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ and JANVIC MATEO

Despite the misgivings of President Duterte over the 2015 Paris agreement on climate change, the Philippines moved one step closer to ratifying the deal after all concerned government agencies signed their concurrence.

The Instrument of Accession – the document signifying the Philippine ratification of the deal – was submitted to Duterte following the joint meeting of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and its advisory board on Tuesday, commissioner Emmanuel de Guzman said.

De Guzman said Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. signed the last of 33 certificates of concurrence needed before the transmission of the document to the Office of the President.

"This is an important development towards the country's joining the climate change accord and the early delivery of its benefits to our Filipino people through climate finance, capacity building, technology and knowledge transfer for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as we pursue climate justice," the commissioner said in a post on Facebook.

Once Duterte signs the Instrument of Accession, this will be transmitted to the Senate for concurrence, the last step in the ratification process.

De Guzman said the CCC meeting was chaired by Duterte as chairman of the commission, and Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the Senate committee on climate change.

Legarda, principal author of the Climate Change Act, hailed the decision of Duterte to convene the meeting.

"This is a good sign that our President sees the importance of addressing climate change impact as it affects the overall development of the country," she said.

Legarda pledged to "actively shepherd" the Senate's concurrence of the ratification.

"The issue of climate justice, which is one of the concerns of the administration, is enshrined in the agreement. If we ratify, we become part of the succeeding meetings about the Paris agreement," Legarda said.

"It is to our advantage that we are in the talks so we can converge with our fellow vulnerable nations on how we should move forward and combat the greenhouse

The Philippines, despite its support during the negotiations, was not able to immediately ratify the agreement following the change in administration.

Duterte initially said he was not amenable to the deal as it would be unfair for a poor country like the Philippines to be pressured to limit its carbon emissions when it needed to industrialize.

He noted that rich countries like the US and China emitted carbon heavily when they were industrialized, and questioned why developing countries would be sanctioned for it.

Duterte also expressed his concern with the treaty's lack of sanctions for countries violating carbon emission restrictions.

The agreement mandates countries to volunteer how much they would reduce their carbon emissions in the next decades to stop global warming.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Duterte slams logging ops amid Mindanao flooding

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**N**o one should be exempted from the government's crackdown on logging operations detrimental to the environment.

President Duterte issued this reminder to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) following the severe flooding in some parts of Mindanao largely blamed for rampant logging activities.

"Hindi ba total log ban na tayo? Stop all logging operations with no exemptions," Agriculture Sec-

retary Emmanuel Piñol quoted the President telling Environment Secretary Gina Lopez in a recent meeting at the Palace.

"The President issued the order during the en banc meeting of the Climate Change Commission where I brought up the massive floodings in the different river basins, of Mindanao resulting from denuded mountains and heavily-silted rivers," Piñol said in a Facebook post.

Piñol said Lopez admitted that several companies have been given permits to cut down trees as part of the Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA)

and the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) contracts authorized by the DENR.

The President has also ordered the creation of a new government committee to craft the guidelines on the logging ban.

"The President has ordered that a tripartite convergence committee be formed, composed of DENR, DA (Department of Agriculture) and DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government) to discuss details of a Total Log Ban in order to protect our watersheds," Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

Piñol said the committee has

been assigned to "formulate the guidelines in the implementation of a tougher government action against illegal logging."

The guidelines must be clear on how to treat the cutting of trees planted by farmers in their farmlands for future use, he added.

"The Tri-Partite Committee will meet on Monday, Feb. 6, to formulate the guidelines on the total logging ban ordered by President Duterte and design programs which would ensure the efficient reforestation of the denuded watersheds in the country," Piñol said.



PRESIDENT DUTERTE

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# BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Lopez blames deforestation and logging for massive flooding in Agusan del Sur

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

@jonlmayuga

**E**NVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez on Wednesday said mining and deforestation caused the massive flooding in Agusan del Sur and other areas in the Caraga region, adding that the catastrophe had forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of residents to various evacuation centers.

The entire province of Agusan del Sur is under a state of calamity, as the excessive rains over the past

several days caused the Agusan River to overflow, submerging low-lying areas and destroying millions worth of agricultural products.

According to the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office of Agusan del Sur, four people died while more than 20,000 are still sheltered in evacuation centers. The excessive rain and floods affected all 14 towns in Agusan del Sur.

An environmental advocate, Lopez affirmed her commitment to rehabilitate the country's rivers, and said she had already met

with several groups, including church, non-governmental organizations and academe in Agusan del Sur.

Caraga has been besieged by mining. Most of the mining operations in Mindanao facing suspension operate in the Caraga region, which is rich in gold, copper and nickel deposits.

In a text message, Lopez vowed to "fix" the environmental problem caused by deforestation and mining that led to the disastrous flooding in Agusan del Sur.

She added that she will also or-

der the DENR field officials to look into the status of the Agusan River Basin and areas affected by logging and mining concessions, and come up with plans and programs on how to address the problem.

According to Lopez, the river basin will have to be improved to prevent disaster. She promised to intensify tree-planting activities in the area under the Enhanced National Greening Program to strengthen the community's natural protection against calamities.

The longest river in Mindanao, and the third largest in the coun-

try, Agusan River is the life vein of the Agusan River Basin, which covers 12,019 square kilometer of forestland and home to critical watersheds, key biodiversity and protected areas. It encompasses vast areas in the provinces of Misamis Oriental, Bukidnon, Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur.

Among the critical watersheds within the Agusan River Basin are the Andanan, Gibong, Batuto, Simulao and Taguibo.

Experts have also warned of the

degradation of the peatlands within the Agusan River Basin, particularly the Agusan Marsh.

According to the River Basin Control Office, Agusan River Basin is besieged by poor involvement of institutions, local government units and other stakeholders; mining; and excessive resource exploitation that leads to deforestation; and other illegal extraction.

Another major problem is inappropriate farming practices in many areas along the river that results to siltation and sedimentation, deforestation and soil degradation.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SEC

## Duterte orders total log ban

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has formed a committee that will study the implementation of a total log ban in the country.

"The President has ordered that a tripartite convergence committee be formed, composed of DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources], DA [Depart-

ment of Agriculture], and DILG [Department of the Interior and Local Government] to discuss details of a total log ban in order to protect our watersheds," Presi-

dential spokesman Ernesto Abella said in a statement.

Duterte issued the directive during the Climate Change Commission and Advisory Board en banc meeting in Malacañang on Tuesday night.

In a Facebook post, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said Duterte ordered the DENR "to implement the ban on logging in the country without any exemptions."

Piñol said he discussed the

massive flooding in Mindanao caused by "denuded mountains and heavily-silted rivers" during the meeting.

"*Hindi ba total log ban na tayo* [Aren't we under a total log ban]? Stop all logging operations with no exemptions," Piñol quoted Duterte as having told Environment Secretary Regina Paz "Gina" Lopez.

According to Piñol, Duterte gave Lopez "full authority to imple-

ment the total log ban."

"It [committee] was formed to formulate the guidelines in the implementation of a tougher government action against illegal logging," Piñol said.

The tripartite committee will meet on February 6 to formulate the guidelines on the total logging ban.

In 2011, then President Benigno Aquino 3rd signed Executive Order No. 23 which implemented

an indefinite nationwide logging ban in natural or residual forests throughout the country.

The DENR defines natural or residual forests as "forests composed of indigenous trees that were not planted by man."

The EO, however, does not provide for a total log ban since it allowed logging companies with unexpired licenses to continue logging. It also allowed logging in plantation forests.



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## News

# Total log ban mulled

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has ordered the creation of a tripartite committee to study the possible implementation of a nationwide logging ban, Malacañang said Wednesday.

He cited the massive flooding in parts of Mindanao as a result of the denuded mountains and heavily silted rivers, presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said in a statement.

"The President ordered that a tripartite convergence committee be formed and composed of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture and the Department of Interior and Local Government to discuss a total log ban to protect our watersheds,"

Abella said.

Duterte ordered Environment Secretary Regina Lopez to implement a logging ban during a meeting of the Climate Change Commission on Tuesday, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said.

"Aren't we already in a total log ban? Stop all logging operations with no exemptions," Piñol quoted Duterte as telling Lopez.

He also quoted Lopez during the meeting that the licenses to

cut down trees were approved under the Integrated Forest Management Agreement and the Community-Based Forest Management contracts during the previous administration.

Lopez, in a text message, said Duterte wanted a total logging ban because he "deeply feels for the welfare of his people."

"It's the suffering that logging results in. He had gone to Sultan Kudarat and met with the lumad there and they have been super suffering," Lopez said.

"The President's commitment is to social justice and to eradicate corruption and he is going for it with determination. It should be rightly applauded."

In the same meeting, Piñol brought up the implications of prohibiting farmers from cut-

ting trees in their plantations. Farmers in Davao and Caraga, for instance, depend on the harvesting of trees for their livelihood.

Lopez said forest management practices in places like Finland allow people to use the trees but still preserve their forests.

A moratorium on logging in natural or residual forests throughout the country is now in place through Executive Order 23 signed by former President Benigno Aquino III in 2011.

The EO, however, does not provide for a total logging ban since it allowed logging companies with unexpired licenses to continue logging. It also allowed logging in plantation forests or forests planted by man. **John Paolo Bencito**

# PILIPINO MIRROR

• SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Utos ni Digong TOTAL LOG BAN

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## Utos ni Digong TOTAL LOG BAN

INIUTOS ni Presidente Rodrigo Duterte ang paglikha ng isang tripartite committee na magsasagawa ng pag-aaral sa pagpapatupad ng total log ban sa bansa.

"The President has ordered that a tripartite convergence committee be formed, composed of DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), DA (Department of Agriculture), and DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) to discuss details of a total log ban in order to protect our watersheds," wika ni

presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella.

Inilabas ni Duterte ang direktiba sa Climate Change Commission and Advisory Board en banc meeting sa Malacañang noong Martes ng gabi.

Sa isang Facebook post, sinabi ni Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel "Manny" Piñol na inatasan ni Duterte ang DENR na ipatupad ang

ban sa pagtutroso nang walang anumang exemptions.

Ayon kay Piñol, tinalakay niya ang malawakang pagbaha sa Mindanao na sanhi ng pagkakalbo ng mga bundok at labis na pagdumi ng mga ilog.

"Hindi ba total log ban na tayo? Stop all logging operations with no exemptions," ang direk-

tiba, aniya, ni Duterte kay Environment Secretary Regina Paz "Gina" Lopez.

Anang agriculture chief, binigyan ni Duterte si Lopez ng 'full authority' upang ipatupad ang total log ban.

Aniya, ang tripartite convergence committee ay binuo para buma langkas ng mga alim tuntunin laban sa illegal logging.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Log ban pushed

**PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte wants a total log ban.**

In fact, the President has ordered the creation of a tripartite committee that would study the total log ban implementation in the country.

"The President has ordered that a tripartite convergence committee be formed, composed of DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources), DA (Department of Agriculture),

and DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) to discuss details of a total log ban in order to protect our watersheds," presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said in his press statement.

Duterte gave the instruction during the Climate Change Commission and Advisory Board en banc meeting at Malacañang on Tuesday night, it was learned.

Efren Montano

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"UCPB JOINS HARIBON REFO"

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## UCPB joins Haribon reforestation effort

THE United Coconut Planters' Bank (UCPB) has partnered with Haribon Foundation to donate seedlings that will be planted at two protected areas in Nagcarlan, Laguna, the conservation group announced.

UCPB President and CEO Higinio O. Macadaeg Jr. signed the Bank's commitment to support the Foundation's Road to 2020 program, an initiative to restore the country's rainforests using native tree species.

Mr. Macadaeg said the partnership with Haribon reaffirms the bank's pro-environment advocacy. He shared with Haribon representatives that aside from providing financing to ventures in the renewables sector, the bank successfully restored a part of the Sierra Madre in Rizal. The UCPB-CIIF Reforestation Site in Sitio Boso-Boso, which forms part of the Marikina Watershed, had been recognized as a model reforestation project by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in 2007.

"With our support, I hope we continue promoting our advocacies to protect and conserve the environ-

ment," Mr. Macadaeg said.

The Foundation, which was represented by its Chief Operating Officer Maria Belinda de la Paz and constituency and resource development manager Arlie Jo B. Endonila, is currently working on restoring a portion of the Mts. Banahaw and San Cristobal Protected Area in Nagcarlan, Laguna.

"We're glad that UCPB is signing up to work with us as we continue our reforestation work in Laguna. We are currently working with different clusters throughout the country as we work toward restoring rainforests with the highest survival rate possible," Ms. De la Paz said.

The Bank donated 500 seedlings to the foundation, which is gathering seedlings for the planting season that runs from June to December. It will also support the foundation in its education campaign for environment protection by disseminating information to UCPB associates and encouraging them to engage in environmental activities. HARIBON FOUNDATION

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Benham Rise management framework to be tackled

Manila, Philippines — Policymakers and biodiversity experts are geared towards the creation of a framework for the sustainable management of Benham Rise, a pristine undersea territory off the eastern coast of Luzon.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) will conduct a workshop on Feb. 2-3.

It will bring together policymakers and experts to come up with a policy framework for the protection and sustainable management of the undersea region.

### Vast PH marine territory

Benham Rise is considered the largest marine area of the country that remains relatively pristine.

With the recent recognition of Benham Rise as part of the Philippines' territory and extended continental shelf (ECS) granted by the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in 2012, interest in utilization of Benham rise increased.

zone (EEZ), continental shelf, and extended continental shelf.

### Marine resources

The discussions will focus on resources in the region including biodiversity, fisheries, mineral, oil and gas; existing policies governing the area, and alignment to the Sustainable Development Goals and Philippine Development Plan, among others.

Resource persons include BMB officials led by Director Theresa Mundita Lim, who is expected to speak on the thrust towards the sustainable management of the Benham Rise. Dr. Vincent Hilomen on the general overview of the region, and Ms. Armida Andres on the framework's alignment in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Philippine Development Plan.

Experts from the University of the Philippines (UP) are also expected to share their knowledge and expertise on the Benham Rise during the workshop.

Dr. Cesar Villanoy of the UP-Marine Science Institute will make a presentation on the physical environment of Benham Rise, while Dr. Hildie Nacorda of the UP-Los Baños in Laguna will tackle the biodiversity resources surveys made in the Benham Rise in 2014 and 2016.

Dr. Carlos Primo David, also of UP-NIGS, will present the mineral, oil and gas resources of the region, while Commodore Eduardo Gongona of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources will talk on the fishery resources.

The recognition of the Philippine jurisdiction over the Benham Rise Region is the Philippines' first successful validation of a claim in accord with the 1982 UNCLOS.

It is the first major expansion of the Philippines' maritime boundaries since the late 1970s when it declared its EEZ. The waters above the ECS are considered as high seas.

With the UN decision, the Philippines' continental shelf and territory increased from 30 million hectares to 43 million hectares.

The development of a sound sustainable management framework for Benham Rise would give the Philippines opportunities to develop its marine scientific research capabilities, provide an anchor for mobilizing offshore resources and management in the eastern seaboard of Luzon, and

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Lawmakers support initiative to localize biodiversity action plan

**L**awmakers threw support to the initiative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to localize the country's biodiversity action plan and financing in Mindoro.

Occidental Mindoro Rep. Josephine Ramirez Sato, Oriental Mindoro Rep. Paulino Salvador C. Leachon, and Oriental Mindoro Rep. Reynaldo V. Umali

signed recently the Declaration of Cooperation in support of the localization of the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (PBSAP) 2015-2028.

"Being an island endowed with rich natural resources and a host of unique species of plants and animal wildlife, Mindoro and the people living on the island have everything to gain out of this initiative," Sato said.

Occidental Mindoro Governor Ma

rio Gene J. Mendiola and Oriental Mindoro Alfonso V. Umali Jr. also manifested their support to the localization of the country's blueprint seeking to protect and conserve country's rich biodiversity.

Sato, a member of the House Committee on Ecology, thanked the UN and DENR for choosing the islands Mindoro as pilot areas for the localization of PBSAP and the Biodiversity Financing

## Initiative (BIOFIN) project.

The former governor of Occidental Mindoro noted that the PBSAP lists 113 actions that cover nine thematic areas, including forest, coastal and maritime, inland waters, cave and cave systems, protected areas, agrobiodiversity, urban biodiversity, invasive alien species and access, and benefit-sharing.

It involves more than 50 national and attached agencies as responsibility centers supported by other sectors in the society, such as the academe, local governments and civil society, she said.

"While the Philippines is committed to protecting and conserving its rich biodiversity as a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), much needs to be desired in terms of financing as reflected in its annual budget allocation," Sato laments.

She said from 2017 to 2028, the government has to spend ₱24 billion a year in implementing the PBSAP.

Current spending of the Philippines for biodiversity conservation stands at



Cebu Hawk Owl (Credit: Godfrey Jakosalem via PBCFI / Manila Bulletin)

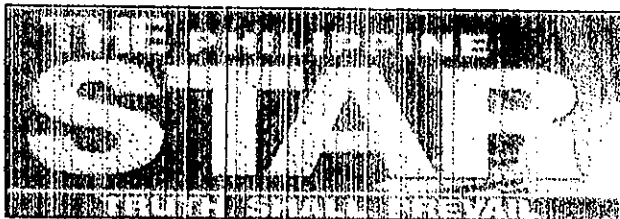
tion, crop production, and benefits derived from coral reefs and mangrove.

BIOFIN is a testing finance mechanism such as budget realignment, private sector engagement, and access to earmarked funds.

The project will be jointly imple-

the province of Mindoro for taking on the challenge and are now leading the efforts to narrow the financing gap in biodiversity protection and conservation, one province at a time."

The repercussions of biodiversity loss are much more expensive than



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



### Philippine Eagle rescued in Sarangani

A juvenile Philippine Eagle, the country's national bird, was recently rescued by the municipal government in the forested upland village of Batian in Maitum, Sarangani.

The eagle, which was found to have an embedded pellet in its left groin, was taken to the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Kiamba for assessment. It was subsequently brought to the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Davao City for rehabilitation.

Batian is within the 114,144-hectare Mt. Busa park, a priority conservation and protection biodiversity study area, and one of Sarangani's remaining forests.

Declared as a key biodiversity area and

an important bird area in 2001, Mt. Busa harbors critically endangered, threatened, vulnerable and rare bird species.

Maitum Mayor Alexander Bryan Reganit said the rescue of the eagle attests to the town's good forest cover that must be preserved and protected as legacy to future generations.

The Environmental Conservation and Protection Center (ECPC) of the Sarangani provincial government has reported sightings of tarsier, wild deer, wild boars, monkeys, bats, civets and endangered bird species in the reservation.

Straddling the towns of Maitum, Kiamba and Maasim, Mt. Busa is threatened by land conversion, *kaingin* (slash-and-burn), wildlife hunting, illegal logging and mining.

# The Manila Times

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■ KAAMPAKA members manage the dried fish processing operation as part of their economic enterprise. The Burgos Birds and Fish Sanctuary in Surigao del Sur is managed by KAAMPAKA, with women playing a significant role in patrolling and protecting the marine reserve. PHOTO BY HARIBON FOUNDATION

## Women lead protection of the Burgos Sanctuary

THE Burgos Birds and Fish Sanctuary in Surigao Del Sur highlights the valuable contribution of women in the fishing industry, through promoting active participation in the management of marine protected areas and a booming dried fish enterprise, conservation group Haribon Foundation said.

The Burgos Birds and Fish Sanctuary is managed by KAAMPAKA (Kadagatan Ampingan Pagmata. Katawhan), which is duly registered in the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). It was founded by only five fishermen in 1997 and has since increased in membership to 40 members today, including a number of women.

Haribon said these women voluntarily guard the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) round-the-clock, chalking out their

main unfazed by hurdles, motivated by how their contribution can benefit their own children.

In 2012, the Haribon Foundation through the DARWIN project surveyed the abundance of the *danggit* fish in the area. After a series of feasibility studies, KAAMPAKA with the assistance of Haribon commenced an income generating activity for the community of Burgos. Members of KAAMPAKA underwent capacity building and organizational strengthening training. Women members, on the other hand, were given the opportunity to manage the enterprise.

The KAAMPAKA Dried Fish Processing Project was opera-

tionalized in 2014. In a regular day, with at least 20 kilos of fresh *danggit*, five women members receive 150 pesos daily subsidy. Another two women gained 75 pesos for a half-day packaging of processed dried fish. Women members tasked to market the products earn 150 pesos a day. A tenth of the share from the total net income is allocated for MPA management expenses.

Today, women members of KAAMPAKA are grateful for the additional income they earn from the *danggit* project. They can now set aside some extra to buy basic family needs like soap, salt, sugar, and coffee. They also noted how the income helped with their children's educational needs such as their school supplies and daily allowance.

The women members remarked that the project has helped them eliminate their dependency on their husband's daily wages, as they are now able to contribute to the family's financial resources. Interestingly, domestic violence was also reportedly reduced after the project started.

Haribon Foundation has been working with communities in Surigao to help sustain marine management initiatives in marine protected areas (MPA) and marine protected area networks (MPAN) in the province.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Department of Trade and Industry, the local government of Cortes, and The Foundation for a Sus-



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### 100 kilos of endangered marine species seized in Masbate

By **SONNY SALES**

**LEGAZPI City** -- Over 100 kilos of dried marine products, consisting of alligator pipefish (a variety of sea horse), shark's fin, sea cucumbers and other variety of sea horses, all considered as endangered species under the country's Marine Conservation Law, were seized by personnel of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) during a pre-

departure inspection at a passenger port in Masbate City.

Sources at the PCG headquarters in Rawis, Legazpi City, reported on Tuesday that the dried marine products came from the coastal town of Mobo, Masbate province, and were being transported by two couriers, Erwin Laurio and Luis Bajar, to Sorsogon province.

PCG sources here said the confiscated marine products stuffed inside sawed polyester sacks were later handed

over to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) while Laurio and Bajar face charges.

Earlier, BFAR fisheries expert Nona Ecolva reported that gathering of prohibited marine products remained a lucrative business since they command exorbitant prices in some Asian countries, or even in Metro Manila markets due to its demand in traditional Chinese medicines or delicacies in exclusive restaurants.

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"LONG TERM FALLOUT"  
LAGUNA LAKE

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## Long-term fallout from Aquino's Laguna Lake embarrassment

BY BEN KRITZ  
Columnist

As my fellow Manila Times columnist Rigoberto Tiglao revealed yesterday, on January 23 the World Bank's International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) ruled that the November 2011

cancellation by then-president Benigno Aquino 3rd of the P18 billion Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Project (LLRP) was improper, and ordered the Philippine government to compensate the Belgian dredging firm Baagerwerken Decloedt En Zoon (BDZ) P800-million plus interest costs.

►KritzB2

■ KRITZ FROM A1

## Long-term fallout from Aquino's Laguna Lake embarrassment

The figure represents the amount the ICSID deemed BDZ was entitled to recover from their investment in preparations for the project before it was arbitrarily canceled, which Aquino didn't even have the grace to do in writing. His Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima simply refused to sign the papers accepting a P7 billion development grant from the Belgian government.

Tiglao makes a strong argument that Aquino and Purisima personally, and not the current Philippine govern-



ROUGH  
TRADE

BEN KRITZ

ment or people's tax money, should be held liable for the sum owed to the 150-year-old, globally-respected Belgian marine engineering firm, as well as for the human misery and property damage suffered since 2012

— when the project would have been finished — due to floods it would have prevented or lessened.

Everything Tiglao related in his column is accurate, but there is far more to the fallout from Aquino's stupid early-term decision, which, incidentally, flew in the face of multiple positive assessments of the project from his own government and a couple of third-party organizations.

First of all, no significant flood control or other rehabilitation work has taken place at Laguna Lake. The

grand replacement for the LLRP, the P122.8-billion Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike Project (LLEDP), which was considered the centerpiece of Aquino's ultimately disappointing public-

fishermen, and some lakeshore communities. It has only been this year that any sort of work on Laguna Lake has started with the demolition of the lake's fishpens.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)

Muntinlupa to Los Baños, Laguna, but the same interests who were against the project originally still are, and it is uncertain whether it will be able to go forward.

The second issue is

the government as vulnerable to litigation. The first big loss was last April, when the Supreme Court

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■ KRITZ FROM B2

## Long-term fallout from Aquino's Laguna

reaffirmed its September 2015 ruling ordering the government to pay Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (PIATCO) over \$500 million for expropriating NAIA's problematic Terminal 3 back in 2006. One significant feature of multilateral trade agreements – it was a particular issue in the now apparently dead Trans-Pacific Partnership, and is part of the China-backed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) – is that third-party arbitration (such as through the ICSID) is a preferred dispute resolution mechanism. Whether it's fair or not, the Duterte administration has to sell large-scale projects to investors

with the albatross of the Philippine government's reputation for being a bit faithless in contractual matters around its neck.

At best, that is going to cost the government more to achieve its infrastructure aims, and will limit its sovereign prerogatives to some degree, because future contractors are going to insist the dispute resolution mechanism be a part of the deal. At worst, the higher probability that a deal will end up in some sort of litigation – which bears an undesirable cost in time and resources even for the eventual winner – will discourage some investors from taking a chance on a project here.

The valid claim the Philippines has

against its former President, and possibly against former Finance Secretary Purisima as well, is something that should be pursued, but if it is, the Duterte administration should take care to keep that at arm's-length from the process of contracting investors in new projects, where the focus should be on establishing consistency and reliability in terms and procedures. One would think that would not be too difficult to manage, but this is the Philippines; making things harder than they need to be sometimes seems like a national pastime.

ben.kritz@manilatimes.net

# THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

STARScience

# Saving Laguna de Bay

(1<sup>st</sup> of 2 parts)

By MACRINA TAMAYO-ZAFARALLA

The restoration of Laguna de Bay to a relatively pristine state is a major concern. This is a scientist's account on a multidisciplinary two to three-year scientific endeavor that culminated in a Environmental Health Report Card (EHRC), which the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) launched in 2016.

The EHRC anticipated the directive of President Duterte to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to dismantle "the vast

tracts of private fishpens in Laguna de Bay and give back the lake to the poor fishermen of the country." The Report Card was based on the 10-year data of the LLDA from 2004 to 2013.

The two implementors in the development of the first EHRC for Laguna de Bay, the country's largest inland water (surface area: 90,000 hectares or 900 square meters) were the following:

1) Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia Resource

Facility (PEMSEA); and

2) The LLDA under the UNEP/GEF Project on Global Foundation for Reducing Nutrient Enrichment and Oxygen Depletion from Land-based Pollution in support of Global Nutrient Cycle.

The key partners included the LLDA Technical Working Group; external experts from the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB); University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UPMSI); University of Santo Tomas (UST); Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR); and the science communication team from the Integration and Application Network, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. The byline represented UPLB.

### Indicators

For the four bays, namely the West, Central, East and South bays, we used the following indicators for water quality: nitrates, phosphates, chlorophyll *a*, dissolved oxygen (DO), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and total coliforms. These were compared with the DENR guidelines (DENR DAO 34 1990).

Three indicators were used



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### *Saving Laguna de Bay*

for fisheries: zooplankton ratio, native fish composition, and catch per unit effort (CPUE). These were calculated as ratios or percentages and combined as percentage score for each bay. The grading scale was from A (91-100 percent), B (83-91 percent), C (75-83 percent), D (70-74) to F (0-70).

#### **Scores**

In water quality, the overall score of the entire lake was a low passing mark of 76 percent or C- (C minus). This means that the lake consistently met the DENR guidelines for Class C waters (suitable for fisheries and recreation), but chlorophyll *a* or algal matter was excessive. Water quality in the EHRC had chlorophyll *a* as indicator, representing the amount of algae in the lake, dissolved oxygen, nitrate-nitrogen, phosphate and biochemical oxygen demand. Chlorophyll *a* got a failing score because it was too excessive within the entire period when the data were gathered. An excessive amount of algae means that the lake is eutrophic. Eutrophication precipitates fish kills due to oxygen depletion that results when the algal bloom eventually dies or collapses.

Phosphate was too high, making the water highly eutrophic. Very high phosphate means abundant phospho-

highly eutrophic water promoted a negative impact on the fisheries.

Nutrients in the lake come primarily from the homes in the lake's watershed, the aquaculture facilities (fish pens and fish cages), agricultural lands and industrial establishments around the lake. Ironically, these sustain the lake's excessive fertility.

Consequently, lake fisheries scored a failing mark of 48 percent, which is F. Native fish composition was rated 53 percent, zooplankton ratio 68 percent, and catch per unit effort or CPUE, 22 percent. Invasive fish species and competition among fisherfolk contributed to the failing score. Clearly, the lake fisheries performed way below the desirable level.

#### **Scores per bay**

##### *West Bay*

This Bay was scored as second in having the lowest water quality (76 percent). Although it is the most heavily developed side of the lake with the highest concentration of commercial fishpens and cages, it turned out in 2013 as having acceptable levels of dissolved oxygen (which causes water to have enough air), biochemical oxygen demand (a measure of pollution), and nitrate-nitrogen (plant nutrient). Coliform or bacterial counts were low

watershed that is polluting the lake with nitrogen and phosphorus. Phosphorus entering the lake must be reduced.

West Bay fisheries got a failing mark of 55 percent, which was the second highest numerical fisheries score. This was taken from the following indicator scores: zooplankton (microscopic animals) ratio, 62 percent; CPUE, 35 percent; and native species composition, 68 percent. The estimated fishing ground allocation in West Bay was one fisher to 101 hectares.

##### *Central Bay*

The lowest score in water quality (71 percent) was given to this bay. But its fisheries score turned out to be 65 percent, a failing mark, but relatively higher than the other bays. Nitrate, DO, BOD and total coliform levels were acceptable at 100 percent; phosphate was too excessive and was given the lowest rating of 25 percent. Chlorophyll *a* was too excessive and rated 0 percent.

Despite its bad water quality, this bay came out with the widest variety of species as shown by the highest, but still failing, score for native fish species composition, 69 percent. Microscopic animals survived fairly well. Fishing ground allocation was around one per 110 hectares.

(To be concluded)

# REMATE

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### BAGO NA ANG BOSING SA LLDA

SINIBAK kamakailan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte si Dr. Nereus Acosta bilang general manager ng Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA).

Hindi pinayagan ni Duterte na manatili si Acosta sa LLDA kahit pa ang kanyang ina na si Socorro Acosta (dating alkalde sa bayan ng Manölo Fortich sa Bukidnon) ay matalagal nang kaibigan ni Duterte.

Ang ipinalit ng Pangulo kay Acosta ay si Joey Medina (katatapos lamang ang tatlong termino bilang alkalde ng bayan ng Pateros nitong Hunyo 30 2016).

Si Medina ay 'bata' ni Senador Peter Alan Cayetano.

Si Cayetano ay tumakbong Pangalawang Pangulo ni Duterte nitong nakalipas na halalan ngunit natalo.

Naniniwala akong hindi mabigat na dahilan kung bakit nasibak si Acosta sa LLDA, kundi dahil siya ay dinesisyunan na ng Sandiganbayan noong Marso 2016 ng pagkabilanggo ng 10 taon dahil sa P5.5 milyong iskam ng kanyang Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) noong 2002.

Para sa kagalingan ng ating mambabasa, si Acosta ay representatibo ng Bukidnon sa House of Representatives noong 2002.

Nadiskubre ng Sandiganbayan na ang P5.5 milyong PDAF o pork barrel ni Acosta ay inilagay sa isang non-govern-

### BADILLA Ngayon

NI NELSON S. BADILLA

mental organization na Bukidnon Vegetables Producers Cooperative (BVPC) kung saan ang nanay niyang si Socorro Acosta ay "director" at "coordinator." Nilabag ni Acosta ang Anti-Graft and Practices Act, din ng Sandiganbayan. (ITUTULOY)

#### KARANGALAN NA NAMAN NG MALAPITAN GOV'T.

KINILALA ng Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) ang Caloocan City Labor and Industrial Office-Public Employment Services Office (LIRO-PESO) bilang pangunahing tanggapan para sa pagbibigay ng hanap-buhay sa mga residente ng lungsod.

Sa kongreto, pinarangalan ang LIRO-PESO bilang "Best in Referral and Placement and Best in Career Guidance and Employment Coaching."

Naganap ito dahil sa mahusay na pamumuno ni Mayor Oscar Malapitan na nagsasabing, "una ang tao, una ang mamamayan ng Caloocan."

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Lanao Sur, university forge project to save Lake Lanao

COTABATO CITY (PNA) — To address threats facing the country's second largest lake, Mindanao's biggest state university in Marawi City and the provincial government of Lanao del Sur have agreed to carry out a project that will protect Lake Lanao and preserve its dwindling fish species and other marine resources.

The 34,000-hectare Lake Lanao serves as the major source of energy for Mindanao.

Lanao del Sur Governor Bedjoria Soraya Alonto-Adiong and Habib Macayong, president of the Mindanao State University (MSU), on Tuesday signed a memorandum of agreement binding their offices to cooperate on the projects.

Signed at Lanao Sur's provincial capitol, the deal is aimed at protecting the interest of Maranao fishing communities and ensure fish abundance in the lake.

It also includes preservation of the lake against contamination due to human activities and natural calamities.

Massive tree planting around the lake will also be launched by students of MSU-Marawi in partnership with the local government of Lanao and municipalities down to the barangay level.

Mindanao's largest state-run university, MSU offers fishery courses manned by professors with doctorates and master's degrees.

Inland fishing is among the major source of livelihood for Maranaos, the people of Lanao Sur, and years of sourcing food from the lake have depleted fish supplies, thus the need to revive its productivity.

According to Salma Jayne Tamano, Lanao del Sur's provincial information officer, the deal supports the environment protection programs of the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources under Secretary Gina Lopez and DENR-ARMM under Regional Secretary Kahar Kedtag.

ARMM Governor Mujib Hataman has given the regional government's all-out support to the partnership, saying similar joint efforts are being considered for other inland waters and the shorelines of the ARMM provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

Hataman has suspended all logging operations in forested areas around the lake in 2012 in an effort to protect it.

The ban still exists with an increasing number of illegal loggers and poachers landing behind bars and a rise in the confiscation of illegally-cut forest products.

Lake Lanao // Credit: lanaodelsur.gov.ph // Manila Bulletin