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I'll let go of Gina if...

*Duterte won't reappoint her if she
fails to get CA okay*

By John Paolo Bencito, Rio N. Araja, Sandy Araneta
and Anna Leah E. Gonzales

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte said Monday he is willing to let go of Environment Secretary Regina Lopez if she fails to win confirmation from the Commission on Appointments Wednesday.

The mining industry has mounted a concerted effort to block Lopez's confirmation after she closed or suspended 28 mining companies and canceled 75 mineral production sharing agreements over environmental concerns.

Lopez failed to win confirmation in December 2016 but was

reappointed by President Duterte. On Monday, he said he might not do it again if Lopez is bypassed a second time.

"That's another thing, because you know, this is a democracy. I do not control the careers of people through and through. There are processes to be observed," the President told reporters in a

chance interview

Despite this, the President said he supported Lopez.

"Yes, of course. I won't get her [in my Cabinet], if I do not like her," he said.

Lopez had earlier accused members of the Commission on Appointments of receiving a P50-million bribe to block her confir-

mation, a claim she later retracted.

In an eight-minute video posted on her Facebook page, Lopez turned emotional and addressed her detractors, particularly a few of the mine owners, and called them "very greedy."

Before a business group, Lopez had said: "My confirmation is on

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March 1. Let the dice fall where [they] may. I don't care. I was told that every congressman was offered P50 million if they voted against me. I don't know. I heard there's a kitty out there, I don't know, that's people talking."

Following Lopez's statement against the lawmakers, the 12-member House contingent, led by its chairman San Juan City Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, canceled a courtesy call that Lopez had sought with them.

Zamora said the contingent would just see Lopez on Wednesday, during her confirmation hearing.

On Monday, the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Science slammed Lopez for blaming large-scale mining for the degradation of the environment and said her actions would have disastrous effects on Geology students and graduates, who worked hard to earn their degree.

"My students are hurt. Mining is a decent job," said Carlo Arcilla, UP-NIGS professor, at a news conference. "I did not teach my students to rape the environment."

He said even his former students who now work at the DENR stand to lose their jobs if large-scale mining operations are shut down.

"They could not speak to share their views for fear of reprisal," he told the Manila Standard.

"In fact, I am on the record, she must not be confirmed. I have nothing against her. She would be a very, very good tourism secretary."

Arcilla said small-scale miners account for 70 percent to 80 percent of all mining in the country, while large-scale mining accounts for only 20 percent.

He said it is difficult to regulate small-scale mining because provincial governors are authorized to issue permits, and local governments often do not have the expertise to monitor mining operations.

In 2012, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Mines and Geoscience Bureau admitted small-scale mining was not that easy to monitor and regulate, and that it exploited Presidential Decree 1899 issued in 1984 allowing individuals to apply for mining permits while imposing very few requirements.

"Why is she [Lopez] too focused on mining?" he asked.

Illegal logging, not mining, has caused the denudation of the forest cover triggering landslides and flash floods, he said.

"If something goes wrong, she blames mining at once. The problem with her is her ecological approach. She has maintained her anti-mining position since the very start. It is okay to order the closure of some, but not all. There are responsible miners around," Arcilla said.

"We have no choice but to mine responsibly."

He slammed Lopez for her failure to even define what a watershed area

is, and her refusal to listen to mining experts, geologists and metallurgical engineers.

Lopez would rather listen to non-government organizations and accuse experts of being paid off by the mining companies.

"She herself cannot even define what a watershed is."

Ronald Recidoro, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines vice president for legal and policy, said Lopez, the DENR and the government will face many civil suits if her appointment is confirmed by the Commission on Appointments.

"She [Lopez] is not qualified. She lacks the experience and knowledge to run the affairs of the Environment Department," he said.

Rep. Allen Jesse Mangaoang of Kalinga said Lopez was singlehandedly "killing the mining industry."

At a forum Monday, Mangaoang said Lopez did not know the consequences of her actions, and did not know the mining industry.

He said local governments stand to lose P650 million a year from taxes that mining companies pay. The country could also lose billions of pesos a year, not only from the mining industry, but from other industries that supply it.

Mangaoang, a geologist, worked 10 years for private mining companies.

"I know how mining workers feel if they are out of jobs," he said.

Under the law, companies with violations are not shut down, but given time to rectify these violations, he said.

"Responsible mining is you follow

the law. If there are 1,000 policies or rules, you must follow the 1,000 rules. If you miss one, you rectify that," he said.

Silangan Mindanao Mining Co. Inc. and Philex Gold Philippines Inc., both wholly-owned subsidiaries of Philex Mining Corp., said Monday they are reserving their civil and criminal rights and remedies against all responsible parties, including rights for enforcement and compensation under applicable investment treaties should the government close their mines.

The two companies recently filed separate letters responding to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' show cause letters, which directed them to explain why their mineral production sharing agreements should not be canceled on the alleged ground that the contract areas of the MPSAs are situated within watershed areas.

"All the MPSAs, which were subjected to the rigorous process prescribed by applicable law and regulations which included obtaining the requisite regulatory clearances that the areas covered by the MPSAs are open to mining, are valid and legal," Philex said.

Philex noted that mining is also not prohibited in all watershed areas.

"Under Philippine law, only watersheds that are proclaimed, designated or set aside pursuant to law or presidential decrees, presidential proclamations or executive orders as watershed forest reserves or as critical watersheds are closed to mining operations. None of the MPSAs' contract

areas are situated inside proclaimed watersheds, forest reserves and critical watersheds where mining is prohibited," Philex said.

"The threatened cancellation of the MPSAs has no legal and factual basis whatsoever, yet the DENR secretary unceremoniously held a press conference announcing their cancellation three days prior to the actual personal service of the DENR letters to SMMCI and PGPI, resulting in not just in actual losses but in significant damage to the reputation of both companies and the erosion of investor confidence without affording them their due process rights and any opportunity to be heard," Philex added.

A mining industry source, meanwhile, said Lopez's granting of an en-

vironmental compliance certificate (ECC) to her company-owned geothermal company was a clear case of conflict of interest, because there were other pending ECC applications that should have been acted upon first.

The Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, meanwhile, urged the government to amend the Philippine Mining Act to require prospective investors to not just mine ore but to produce the final downstream products.

"We want the mining of natural resources to be given to companies who will produce the final products. We should not just get the ore, export them and import the finished products. Filipinos will not learn anything," Chamber president Jose Luis U. Yulo Jr. said.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lopez on her own in CA

PRESIDENT Duterte yesterday defended his choice of Regina Lopez as Environment Secretary, but said Lopez



LOPEZ

is entirely on her own in hurdling problems in the Commission on Appointments (CA).

Several members of the commission have voiced their opposition to her confirmation because of what they said were her policies on mining.

"That's another thing because you know this is a democracy. I do not control the career of people through and through. There are processes to be observed," he said.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE CONFIRMATION OF DENR SECRETARY GINA LOPEZ

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, communities and stakeholders, express our full support for the confirmation of the appointment the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources Secretary, Regina Paz Lopez.

Her track record in protecting the environment and ending the suffering of the poor and vulnerable sectors of our society for the past two decades is unprecedented.

She holds the indispensable qualities to head a very sensitive agency such as the DENR, with her unsullied integrity and competence, to effect positive change in the country.

She has empowered the ordinary masa and locals from different regions to take care and sustainably develop their natural sites. This proves that Sec. Lopez's causes are aligned with the President's commitment to malasakit, pagbabago at kaunlaran.

Sec. Gina has introduced stronger environmental measures and support for sustainable projects like community-based ecotourism – all within the framework of genuine partnership with NGOs, church academe, youth, farmers and fisherfolks.

She has achieved in a short time the seemingly insurmountable tasks of defending the environment and the basic needs of Filipino, and she has given hope to many that a truly sustainable path to development will indeed be undertaken by the current administration.

Her unshakable faithfulness to the mandate of the department shows her profound understanding of integrated and holistic approach to resource conservation and environmental management.

Her leadership at DENR portends the end of destructive practices and heralds the beginning of more sustainable ways of utilizing our natural resources. With her political will, she has enforced the law without fear or favor.

We support her leadership in promoting responsible stewardship and we believe the current administration will benefit having someone with an unquestionable track record in promoting environmental conservation and social justice.

We have worked with her in the past in different campaigns and we know that she is a determined leader who only has the best interest of the Filipino people in her mind and heart.

We continue to stand firm by her side in this crucial fight for the environment and for future generations of Filipinos.

We thus call on the members of the Commission on Appointment to demonstrate resolute leadership by striving to hear the earnest cries of our people. We believe that our esteemed legislators share the same principles and vision that Sec. Gina continues to valiantly and tirelessly champion.

At this time when our nation faces the challenges of vanishing resources and biodiversity, climate change impacts and a degraded environment, with consequences that are real threats to our food and national security, she is unquestionably what we need in a public servant: pro-poor, pro-environment — a true Filipino.

SIGNED:

Oceana Philippines	Marinduque State University	Conservation International Philippines	Levi Sailago
Rare	Visayas State University (VSU)	Foundation	Environmentalist
Green Thumb Coalition	Alternate Forum For Research In Mindanao	Sibol Ng Agham At Teknolohiya (SIBAT) 5	Environmental Legal Assistance Center, Inc. (ELAC)
Artisanal Fisherfolk Sectoral Council – National Anti-Poverty Commission	Mindanawon Initiatives For Cultural Dialogue	Multi-Sectoral Action Group Of Aurora (MSAG)	University Of The Philippines Baguio
Green Convergence	Negros Organic Agri Movement (NOAM)	Sangguniang Laiko Ng Pilipinas	Freedom From Debt Coalition (Fdc)
Bolboc San Juan Batangas Heritage	Transparency Accountability Network (Tan)	Hills Of Maia Alta Homeowners' Association	Disaster Risk Reduction (Drr), Bayay Sibuyan
Catholic Bishops Conference Of The Philippines-National Secretariat For Social Action (CBCP-NASSA)	Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC)	Cagayan Valley Partners In People Development, Tuguegarao City	Indigenous People's Rights Program Coordinator, Tebtebba
Institute of Social Order	Nassa/Caritas Philippines	Center For Cagayan Valley Program For Environment And Development, Isabela State University - Cabagan Campus	Green Convergence
NGOs for Fisheries Reform	Catholic Bishops Conference Of The Philippines	Mabuwaya Foundation, Ccvped, Isabela State University - Cabagan Campus.	Consumer Rights For Safe Food
Pangisda Natin Gawing Tama (PaNaGaT) Network	Green Convergence For Safe Food, Healthy Environment And Sustainable Economy	Pambansang Kilusan Ng Samahan Ng Magsasaka (Pakisama)	Bantoxics
Pangisda Pilipinas	Auxiliary Bishop Of Manila	Ecological Society Of The Philippines (ESP) Iucn Commission On The Environment, Economics And Social Policy	Climate Reality Project
Artisanal Fisherfolk Sectoral Council- National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)	Ateneo De Davao University (ADDU)	Center For Empowerment And Resource Development, Inc. (CERD)	Zero Waste Philippines
National Movement For Food Sovereignty	Citizens' Environment Network (CEN)	Bayay Sibuyan Inc.	Philippine Association For Intercultural Development, Inc.
Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Samahan ng Kanayunan	Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance Inc. (SSMNAI)	The Climate Reality Project Philippines 6	Marikina Valley Ministerial Fellowship
Sanlakas	Vicar General Of San Pablo Diocese	International Visitor Leadership Program- Philippines (Ivlp-Phils.)	Communication Foundation For Asia
Center For Ecology And Energy Development (CEED)	Laudato Si' San Pablo	Women In Development (Wid) Foundation	Environmental Educator
Philippine Movement For Climate Justice	Philippine Human Rights Information Center	Pozorrubio Institute Of Development Alternatives (PIDA)	Diwang Lunti
Ban Toxics	Buklod-Tao Kalikasan, Inc.	Kalikasan People's Network For The Environment (KPNE)	Joint Ateneo Institute For Mindanao Economics
Healthy Energy Initiative	Center For Emergency Aid And Rehabilitation, Inc. (Concern, Inc)	Philippine Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service (PhilCCRS)	Ateneo De Davao University
Health Care Without Harm	Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM)	Federation Of Transparochial Charismatic Communities (FTCC)	Philippine Women's University College Of Arts And Sciences
Freedom From Debt Coalition	Economics Department	Saniblakas Para Sa Inang Kalikasan (Salika)	Philippine Women's University Environmental Science Society
Greenpeace Southeast Asia	Ateneo De Manila University	Concerned Citizens Of Sta. Cruz, Zambales	Unahin Natin Lagi Ang Diyos - Bito Lake Fishers And Farmers Association (Unlad-BLFFA)
Bayay Sibuyan Inc.	Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM)	Bicamm-Ancestral Domain	The Haribon Foundation
The Climate Reality Project Philippines	Kinaliyahan Foundation, Inc.	Ipilan, Brooke's Point, Palawan	Consumer Rights For Safe Food (CRSF)
ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, Inc.	Woman Health Philippines	Asian Social Institute	Center For Power Issues And Initiatives
Ecowaste Coalition	Greenresearch	Institutional Researcher, St. Paul College Pasig	Philippine Association For Intercultural Development, Inc. (PAFID)
Integrated Rural Development Foundation	Actionaid	Mother Earth Foundation	Coalition Against Land Grabbing (CALG) - Philippines
WWF Philippines	Center Of Cagayan Valley Program For Environment And Development 4	Ecological Society Of The Philippines 7	Marian Women Producers Cooperative
Pambansang Koalysyon Ng Kababaihan	CCMCL Baywatch Foundation	Ang Aroroy Ay Alagaan, Inc. (4a's), Aroroy, Masbate	University Community Engagement And Advocacy Council
Sa Kanayunan (PKKK)	Foundation For The Philippine Environment (FPE)	Unified Civilian Society, Inc.	Ecoteneo
ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, Inc.	Mindanao Regional Unit	Philippine Social Enterprise Network, Inc. (Philsen)	Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance Inc
Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement	Communication Foundation For Asia	Saligan	Homonhon Environment Rescuers Organization (Hero) Homonhon
Aksyon Sa Kahandaan Sa Kalamidad At Klima	Integrated Rural Development Foundation, Inc. (IRDF)	Mining Watch Canada	Clean Water Coalition
Risk-Laguna Lakes (Reporma Isusulong Ng Survivors Ng Kalamidad)	Homenet Philippines		Alyansa Tigil Mina
Haribon Foundation	Alyansa Laban Sa Mina (Alamin-Mindoro)		
Aniban Ng Mga Manggagawa Sa Agrikultura (AMA)	Concerned Citizens Of Sta. Cruz, Zambales		
Action For Economic Reforms (AER)	Convergence Of Initiatives For Environmental Justice (CIEJ), Inc.		
Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement	Manila Observatory		

UP students oppose Gina's confirmation

By Jaymee T. Gamil
@jaymeegamilINQ

Several students and a professor of the geosciences department of the University of the Philippines are oppose the permanent appointment of Gina Lopez as Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), following her controversial orders to close 23 mines and suspend five others.

In a press conference at the UP National Institute of Geolog-

ical Sciences (UP-NIGS) in Diliman, Quezon City, on Monday, the UP Geology Majors' Society, the Juvenis Orbis Geological Fraternity, the UP 49ers, Stand-Firm and former UP-NIGS head and now professor Carlo Arcilla made known their positions against Lopez's confirmation by the Commission on Appointments.

The UP groups were joined by representatives of the Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship and the Cham-

ber of Mines, as well as indigenous peoples' leaders from mining communities in Surigao del Sur and South Cotabato, who had likewise registered their strong opposition to Lopez's confirmation.

"With the DENR Secretary-designate Gina Lopez's persistent unscientific and illegal actions, we found her unworthy to remain in that position," said geology student Ralph Lauren Abainza, reading out the statement of the UP Geology Majors' Society.

Abainza called out Lopez for her "absurd" and "misleading" statements on geology, such as when Lopez erroneously linked earthquakes to mining processes.

"As geology students, we, too, are environmentalists. We love the environment so much that we chose to dedicate our lives studying its process," Abainza pointed out. "If we have very strict laws with responsible mining, then, we, too, shall uphold high standards for responsible environmentalists."

"My main purpose for opposing Gina Lopez is because of students who will be losing jobs. We are not bad people. We do not teach our students to do bad, to rape our environment," said former UP-NIGS head and now professor Carlo Arcilla.

"We are looking at the wrong problem and putting the blame on mining, when this has been happening in the past. We should look at the root of biodiversity loss, which is deforestation, 'kaingin,' and illegal log-

ging," Arcilla said.

While admitting that irresponsible mining also had adverse environment impacts and "give us a bad name," Arcilla underscored that "only in 3 percent of 30 million hectares of land are there mining tenements, so that's less than one percent of 30 million. So how can something being done in only one percent of the country be responsible for such massive pollution and degradation of the environment?" INQ

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BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

'Miners doomed to fail as DENR's audit biased'

TRADERS and scientists are clamoring for a re-audit of mineral resources and policy, as industry players and the government continue to lock horns on the future of the country's mining sector after the release of the results of what was deemed as a "biased" audit.



ARCILLA: "A proper audit should be done, not only to determine the status of mining, but also to allow millions of Filipinos to continue working."

Director Marco Arcilla told reporters in a news conference.

Arcilla called the government's audit as "bad", as Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez "have
SEE "MINERS," A2

The head of the National Institute of Geological Sciences (NIGS) on Monday called for a "proper audit" on the mining industry.

"A proper audit should be done, not only to determine the status of mining, but also to allow millions of Filipinos to continue working," NIGS

Miners...

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included in her audit team people who are ideologically against mining. "Basically, we don't turn our backs to science and engineering," he told reporters. "In the final analysis, who will clean and actually do the job are engineers and scientists."

According to Arcilla, Lopez's audit had been biased from the start because she included among them Alyansa Tigil Mina (alliance to stop mining) and former Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Director Leop L. Jazareno, whom Lopez appointed DENR consultant.

"The MGB could have done the audit as long as they are transparent from the start, but Jazareno

worked under the previous administration of former President Benigno S. Aquino III before he was appointed by Lopez, which means he approved a lot of contracts that are now being questioned," Arcilla told the BUSINESS MIRROR.

On February 2 the DENR announced the closure of 23 mining operations, saying many of them were operating in "functional watersheds."

Off-limits

ON Monday the Silangan Mindanao Mining Co. Inc. (SMMCI) and Philex Gold Philippines Inc. (PGPI) filed separate letters in response to the show-cause orders (SCOs) the DENR issued on February 13.

The mining contracts of SMMCI and PGPI were among the 75 mineral production sharing agreements (MPSAs) threatened to be

canceled as Lopez alleged their mining operations are situated within or near watersheds.

SMMCI and PGPI are both wholly owned subsidiaries of Philex Mining Corp., which operates the Padcal mine in Tuba and Itogon, Benguet.

Covered by the SCOs are the MPSA (149-99) of SMMCI for the Silangan Gold Project. The order for PGPI covers MPSAs for its following projects: Sibutad (063-97-IX), Vista Alegre (096-97-VI), Tambis (344-2010-XII) and Lascogon (148-99-XIII).

Prior to issuing the SCOs, Lopez earlier ordered the suspension or cancellation of 28 mining operations purportedly to protect watersheds from the adverse impact of mining to the environment.

More than a week later, the

DENR chief came up with a decision canceling 75 mining contracts awarded to various mining companies—27 in Luzon, 11 in the Visayas and 37 in Mindanao.

In their letter responding to the SCOs, the SMMCI and PGMI said they were awarded the MPSAs after being subjected to the rigorous process prescribed by applicable law and regulations, which included obtaining the requisite regulatory clearances.

The two companies insisted that the areas covered by the MPSAs are open to mining, are valid and are legal.

"Mining is not prohibited in all watershed areas," the company said. "Under Philippine law, only watersheds that are proclaimed, designated or set aside pursuant to law or presidential decrees,

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miners doomed to fail as DENR's audit
biased

presidential proclamations or executive orders, as watershed forest reserves or as critical watersheds are closed to mining operations."

Middle ground

WHILE thinking along the same line as Arcilla's, some traders are offering a middle ground.

The Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands (CCPI), the country's oldest, is encouraging government to issue a regulation of the country's mineral resources that is geared toward building up the local industrial supply chain, suggesting a review of the mining law.

CCPI President Jose Luis U. Yulo Jr. said the Chamber is espousing a "balanced view" of encourage more in-country manufacturing.

"We shouldn't just get the ore and export it to other countries, and import the finished products," Yulo told reporters. He explained that private companies "should commit to making these in the country and when they do so, they can have access to the mines".

"In turn, when they build up the factories in these areas near the source, you need to take care of the area and this area will develop," Yulo said. "But make sure you follow environmental rules."

Enticing companies to build up the supply chain using mineral ores as raw materials—such as copper and nickel—will not just increase employment in the industrial sector but scale up human resource skills in the sector, according to Yulo.

Once the country builds enough capacity to be able to produce finished products, there can be a minimal allocation of the mineral ores to countries in need of the raw resources, he explained.

This proposal merits a review of

the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, the Chamber president said.

"Anyone that is given a mining permit must consume the ore that he gets in manufacturing finished products," Yulo said. "If there's a surplus, then you can export."

Political decision

ARCILLA said if the earnings are averaged for the entire country, "it would appear that the Philippines earns only 1 percent [from mining], but since mining is occurring in only 3 percent of the country, those 3 percent will lose a lot."

He cited as example Palawan. Arcilla said in 2015 the province earned P23 billion from laterite mining while its tourism receipt was only P10 billion.

This meant "mines earn twice more than tourism," he said.

Arcilla added the richest mining is in eastern Mindanao and the Caraga region for its rich chrome, copper and chromite deposit.

"The country will not lose much if these mines are closed but pity the 1.2 million workers who would be affected," directly and indirectly," Arcilla said.

He added that small-scale mining operations for gold in Davao represents 80 percent of the country's total gold production, while 20 percent comes from all of the country's biggest mines.

"These small miners are not taxed. If we allow the big mine operators to extract the gold, we will earn taxes from but would deprive 100,000 people of their jobs."

"This is a political decision and President Duterte knew the big-time miners there," Arcilla said. "He [Duterte] could solve the problem, provided that we solve the sharing scheme." *Recto Mercene, Catherine N. Pillas and Jonathan L. Mayuga*

BUSINESS

B3

Striking a balance in the mining issue

The recent act of Secretary Regina Lopez of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to suspend or close the operation of 28 mining firms for their alleged failure to comply with environmental laws seem to have all the more heightened the struggle between those who would want to preserve the environment and those who favor mining.

Aside from environmental issues raised by those against mining, they are also critical of the shortcomings of the present revenue-sharing system.

Like elsewhere in the world, mining contributes little to job generation. It has very little contribution to the country's economy. Thus, critics argue there is not much to lose should the government refuse to give in to the demands of mining.

The Philippines is the fifth most mineral-rich country in the world for its combined deposits of gold, nickel, copper, aluminum and chromite resources with an estimated value of \$1.4 trillion.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) also says the coun-



MARKET RIDER

DEN SOMERA

try is second and third in the world in gold and copper resources, respectively. The metal deposits are placed at 21.5 billion metric tons while non-metallic minerals are estimated at 19.3 billion metric tons. These resources are located in some 30 million hectares of land areas in the Philippines.

The prevailing mining law allows foreign ownership of mining assets and exploration permits. Available industry's data show the mining sector has a 0.7 percent contribution to the country's GDP and comprises 5.6 percent of the country's total ex-

ports. It has created average employment of 236,400 jobs from 2011 to 2015. In 2016, however, it created 218,000 jobs only and produced a gross production value of P100.6 billion. Miners have blamed the previous administration's mining ban for this.

Bottom line spin

Many seem to take for granted, or maybe simply oblivious, of the fact that at the heart of our daily lives is the mining industry. All the metals and minerals, needed and used in agriculture, housing, telecommunications, construction, space exploration, medicine, leisure and—most of all—by the environmental industry, originate from the mining industry.

Even in music, the mining industry is an integral part. The guitars, violins and other string instruments together with the electronic gadgets employed to add richness to the melodies are made of metals and minerals.

Telecom giant PLDT top honcho and pro-mining advocate Manuel "Manny" Pangilinan was even more graphic in driving home the significance of the min-

ing industry to our daily lives when he reminded everyone of the cell phone, which is said to contain about 24 mg of gold, 250 mg of silver, 3,800 mg of cobalt and 9 mg of palladium. This simple example would show the extent of how the mining industry has become a part of our present daily life.

In the same forum, he told his audience that "even to protest against mining," you need to use materials that come out of mining.

Evidently, the issue on mining is not just about the simple question of whether to favor "No Mining" or "Allow Mining." The stakes in the issue goes beyond that as both alternatives are but about serving the interest of humanity. It must then be considered beyond the limits of just choosing between the alternative but by striking a balance between them—as in to protect the environment and at the same time foster development.

INQ



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Philex units say DENR's cancellation of MPSA's illegal

By JAMES A. LOYOLA

Philex Mining Corporation's wholly-owned subsidiaries Silangan Mindanao Mining Co., Inc. (SMMCI) and Philex Gold Philippines, Inc. (PGPI) told the government that it will be illegal to cancel their mining contracts.

The firms filed separate letters responding to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) show cause letters which directed them to explain why their Mineral Production Sharing Agreements ("MPSAs") should not be cancelled on the alleged ground that the contract areas of said MPSAs are situated within watershed areas.

In their respective letters, SMMCI and PGPI said "the threatened cancellation of the MPSAs has no legal and factual basis whatsoever, yet the DENR Secretary unceremoniously held a press conference announcing their cancellation three days prior to the actual personal service of the DENR letters."

They said the announcement resulted "not just in actual losses but in significant damage to the reputation of both companies and the erosion of investor confidence without affording them their due process rights and any opportunity to be heard."

The two firms emphasized that all their MPSAs, which were subjected to the rigorous process prescribed by applicable law and regulations which included obtaining the requisite regulatory clearances that the areas covered by the MPSAs are open to mining, are valid and legal.

"Mining is not prohibited in all watershed areas. Under Philippine law, only watersheds that are proclaimed, designated or set aside pursuant to law or presidential decrees, presidential proclamations or executive orders as watershed forest reserves or as critical watersheds are closed to mining operations," they said.

They noted that, "none of the MPSAs' contract areas are situated inside proclaimed watersheds forest reserves and critical watersheds where mining is prohibited."

They also pointed out that "DENR's precipitate action and announcement also disregarded the mandatory dispute resolution provisions that the DENR itself had written into the MPSAs."

These provisions entitle SMMCI and PGPI to a one-year cure period within which to amicably settle their disputes with the DENR, failing which the parties must submit and resolve the disputes in good faith through mandatory arbitration.

LEGAL REMEDIES

PHILEX UNITS CONSIDERING COURT ACTION

By Ronnel W. Domingo
@ronwdomingoINQ

Two subsidiaries of Philex Mining Corp. are considering civil and criminal cases against "all parties" responsible for Environment Secretary Regina Lopez's announcements that their mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) should be canceled as these cover watersheds where no mining should be done.

Silangan Mindanao Mining Co. Inc. (SMMCI) and Philex Gold Philippines Inc. both received from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources show-cause notices, asking both to explain why their MPSA should not be cancelled.

Danny Y. Yu, Philex senior vice president for finance, told the Philippine Stock Exchange

that both subsidiaries had sent their replies, addressed to Lopez herself.

"The letters also reserved SMMCI's and PGPI's civil and criminal rights and remedies against all responsible parties, including rights for enforcement and compensation under applicable investment treaties," Yu said.

Last Feb. 14, Lopez said she wanted one MPSA for SMMCI and four MPSAs for PGPI cancelled.

The contracts pertain to projects in Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte and Negros Occidental.

In the letter to Lopez dated Feb. 24, SMMCI chief finance officer Jerome Jovellana told Lopez that, first, there was no legal basis for the MPSA cancellation.

He argued that the MPSA was issued following all relevant legal requirements and procedures including regulatory clearance that the areas covered by MPSAs are open to mining—that the area was not part of a watershed that was declared part of a forest reserve.

Also, Jovella told Lopez that she "ha(d) not observed due process."

"Your actions have been taken with a complete and wanton disregard of all these basic considerations and for the fair treatment of a party whom the Republic has contracted ... which have resulted not just in actual losses in billions of pesos but in significant damage to the reputation of the company and the erosion of investor confidence," the CFO said. INQ

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Philex units' MPSAs valid, legal

BY JED MACAPAGAL

PHILEX Mining Corp. is firm on its stand the mineral production sharing agreements (MPSAs) of its subsidiaries Silangan Mindanao Mining Co., Inc. (SMMCI) and Philex Gold Philippines, Inc. (PGPI) should not be cancelled for being located within watershed areas contrary to an order of the

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The companies said they are reserving civil and criminal rights and remedies against all responsible parties, including rights for enforcement and compensation under applicable investment treaties on the issue.

In a statement, Philex Mining said the

MPSAs are valid and legal after having subjected to rigorous process prescribed by law and regulations which included obtaining requisite regulatory clearances.

Among the affected MPSAs affected by the cancellation order are SMMCI's Sibutad project in Zamboanga, Vista Alegre

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PHILEX

project in Western Visayas, Tambis project in Soccsksargen and Lascogon project in Caraga.

The company added that under Philippine law, only watersheds that are proclaimed, designated or set aside pursuant to law or presidential decrees, presidential proclamations or executive orders as watershed forest reserves or as critical watersheds are closed to mining operations.

"None of the (company's) MPSAs' contract areas are situated inside proclaimed watersheds forest reserves and critical watersheds where mining is prohibited," said Danny Yu, Philex Mining senior vice president for finance, in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Philex Mining said the cancellation of the MPSAs has no legal and factual basis but DENR secretary Regina Lopez announced the cancellation three days before the orders were served to SMMCI and PGPI.

The move, Yu said resulted "in not just in actual losses but

in significant damage to the reputation of both companies and the erosion of investor confidence without affording them their due process rights and any opportunity to be heard."

Yu added DENR's precipitate action and announcement also disregarded the mandatory dispute resolution provisions that the DENR itself had written into the MPSAs entitling SMMCI and PGPI to a one-year cure period within which to amicably settle disputes with the DENR, failing which the parties must submit and resolve the disputes in good faith through mandatory arbitration.

"The DENR acted with apparent bad faith because (a) all of the relevant documents or records and the facts and the law confirming the validity and legality of the MPSAs are on file with and are known to the DENR and (b) the DENR acted in complete disregard of the MPSAs' mandatory dispute resolution mechanisms which preclude precipitate unilateral action," Yu said.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Philex says DENR acted with 'bad faith'

PHILEX MINING Corp. slammed the Environment Department's order to terminate the mining contracts for five of its projects, saying Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has acted "with apparent bad faith" for failing to uphold the sanctity of the contracts.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange on Monday, Philex Mining Senior Vice President for Finance Danny Y. Yu said its wholly-owned subsidiaries Silangan Mindanao Mining Co., Inc. (SMMCI) and Philex Gold Philippines, Inc. (PGPI) insisted the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has "no legal and factual basis" for cancelling their mineral production sharing agreements (MPSA).

"The DENR acted with bad faith because all of the documents, the facts and the law confirming the validity and legality of the MPSAs are on file with and known to the DENR

and the DENR acted in total disregard of the mandatory dispute resolution mechanisms of the MPSAs which preclude precipitate unilateral action," Mr. Yu said in the disclosure.

Mr. Yu noted the permits were issued "following all relevant legal requirements and procedures, including regulatory clearance that the areas covered by MPSAs are open to mining."

The Philex Mining official said the DENR had violated the provisions on mandatory dispute resolution. Under the contract, parties involved are required "to confer in good faith to settle any dispute regarding the validity of the MPSAs while observing a one-year cure period and failing agreement, to resolve their dispute by arbitration through a three-man tribunal."

The DENR had sent show-cause letters dated Feb. 13 to 75 mining projects, including those

of SMMCI and PGPI, to explain why their MPSAs should not be cancelled "for being located within watershed areas." The DENR had claimed that given mining's "extractive and disruptive nature," the projects are "likely to cause impairment of the ecological functions of that watershed" once it goes through operations.

The MPSAs cover SMMCI's Silangan project, a 2,879-hectare site in Surigao del Norte, as well as PGPI's projects in Sibutad, Zamboanga del Norte; Vista Alegre in Sipalay City, Negros Occidental; as well as Tambis and Lascogon.

SMMCI and PGPI submitted their replies to the DENR last Feb. 24, wherein they maintained the agreements are "valid and legal" since they are not located in any proclaimed watersheds, forest reserves or critical watersheds where mining is banned.

"Mining is not prohibited in all watershed areas. Under Philip-

pine law, only watersheds that are proclaimed, designated or set aside pursuant to law or presidential decrees, presidential proclamations or executive orders as watershed forest reserves or as critical watersheds are closed to mining operations," the miners said.

SMMCI criticized Ms. Lopez for announcing the cancellation of the MPSAs three days prior to sending the department's show-cause letters, "resulting in not just in actual losses but in significant damage to the reputation of both companies and the erosion of investor confidence without affording them their due process rights and any opportunity to be heard."

Both SMMCI and PGPI reserved their civil and criminal rights and remedies against all responsible parties, including rights for enforcement and compensation under applicable investment treaties.

SMMCI's Silangan project, initially slated for operation by 2016 but was delayed anew to 2020, involves the development of Boyongan and Bayugo mineral deposits comprised of gold, copper, and silver, with estimated reserves of five billion pounds of copper and nine million ounces of gold in its 25-year mine life. The estimated cost of developing the Silangan mine is at \$900 million.

The project is expected to re-

place Padcal, whose mine life is expected to end by 2020.

Philex Mining is one of three key Philippine subsidiaries of First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being MPIC and PLDT. Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has a majority stake in *BusinessWorld*.

Shares in Philex closed at P9.37 each on Monday, up 2.97% from its previous finish of P9.10 apiece. — **Janina C. Lim**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Biz group seeks review of mining law

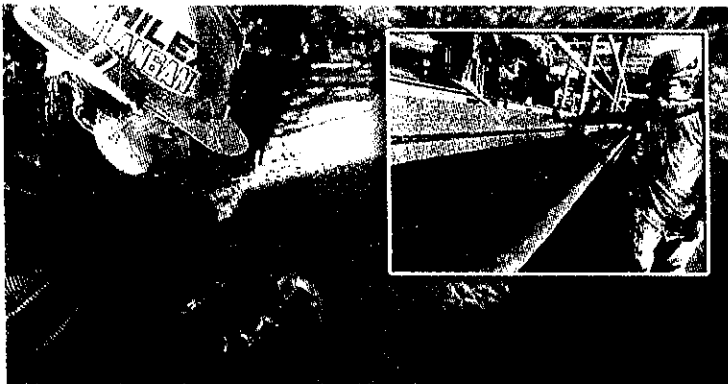
A BUSINESS group is pushing for the review of the Philippine Mining Act to make conversion of ores into manufactured goods a requirement for companies that would mine in the country.

Jose Yulo Jr., president of the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands, in an interview said the government should put a stop in granting mine permits to companies which simply export the ore without any value addition to the economy.

He pointed out Filipinos did not go beyond digging the ores when other mineral-rich countries have learned industrial engineering and design, important downstream industries in mining that employ 20 times more people and pay higher salaries.

Yulo said: "Why give away natural resources that cannot be replaced?"

He said there should be a paradigm shift that mines of the



Mining companies should commit to produce end products from ore before they are granted mining permits.

Philippines will only be given to end producers.

Mining permit applicants, he said, should give a list of commitments which products they will manufacture in the Philippines. They should also bring affiliates or clients which will put up factories and manufacture finished goods using the ores they will mine in the country.

Once the commitment is obtained, only then will they have access to the country's ores, he added.

Yulo noted this scheme

would address concerns on environment, an issue which has gained controversies following the closure and suspension of certain mining operations.

"Miners end up putting factories near the source which will reduce the cost of transportation. They will take good care of the area where they operate. The area will develop and they will make sure they will follow environment rules. Because if not, it is not only the mines that

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BIZ

would be closed down. The factories will shut down as well. They will have more to lose, so it is to their benefit that they protect the environment," Yulo added.

He said: "That is where we want (Environment secretary) Gina Lopez should go towards... not just about following the laws on environment."

Today mineral processing is just promoted as government, in drafting the mining law, has been more concerned of its share, Yulo said.

Mining companies tend not to invest in factories here because this will take even much longer and costlier for them.

With mineral processing, Yulo said more Filipinos would be employed and their skills would be upgraded.

"It is not enough to follow the laws on environment, we should use them to produce end products and export end products as well," he said.

"The raw materials of, say, eyeglasses come from our mines but we cannot even manufacture eyeglasses, we cannot even make ballpens when all the metals come from the Philippines," he added.

While bulk of ores would stay and be processed locally, Yulo said the Philippines as a good neighbor can allocate certain portions of ores for export to countries with no minerals.

Revise mining law, gov't urged

By Roy Stephen C. Canivel
@roycanivel_INQ

The oldest business chamber in the Philippines has called for the revision of the mining law, asking for new guidelines that will require the mining sector to focus first on manufacturing finished goods before exporting raw materials.

There should be a paradigm shift, says the Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands (CCPI), in the way firms approach mining projects in the country.

"The law should now be that the mines of the Philippines would only be given to

end-producers," CCPI President Jose Luis U. Yulo Jr. told reporters last week.

Revising the decades-old law, he said, will force the companies to sustain the development of their mining areas since failure to do so will mean "not only closing down the mine, but also closing the factory that makes the end products."

The chamber's recommendation comes amid an ongoing crisis within the mining sector, where other business groups have demanded for due process following the ordered shut down and suspension of 28 mining firms across the country.

The Philippine Mining Act of 1995 outlines guidelines for the processing of minerals, but does not require firms to process the raw materials in order to do a mining project, he noted.

The revision, Yulo said, should instead require mining firms to consume the raw materials they extract through manufacturing before exporting a portion to countries that do not have the end-products.

Apart from an added incentive to develop the area of their host communities, Yulo said the new requirement would also mean more jobs for Filipinos. INQ

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CCPI wants mining permits only for end-manufacturing

By RICHMOND MERCURIO

The oldest business chamber in the country wants government to issue mining permits only to those eventually setting up factories to manufacture finished products from the extracted minerals.

"It's a paradigm shift," said Chamber of Commerce of the Philippine Islands president Jose Luis Yulo Jr. as he called on the government to revisit the country's mining laws.

"The law should now be the mines of the Philippines will only be given to end producers or those who will put up factories. Anybody who will be given a mining permit must consume the ore he gets in manufacturing of finished products. And then maybe

a part, if there are excess, we can export to countries who do not have it," he added.

Yulo said the way the Philippines does its mining at present is against the people.

He said it is a shame for the country and its citizens simple products such as eyeglasses, pens and watch bracelets are not manufactured here when in fact, minerals used in these products come from the Philippines.

Instead of simply importing these finished products, Yulo said the government should invite companies to set up manufacturing plants with access to the country's ore and other resources serving as incentives.

"We should not just get the ore and export it and then import back the finish product.

The Filipino people will not learn anything except to dig, while other countries learn how to do industrial engineering, design, and they will employ 10 to 20 times more people in the manufacture of goods and they get a higher pay," Yulo said.

"Imagine how many Filipinos will be employed if we manufacture here, and they will learn higher skills. Why are we not doing that is something that I cannot comprehend," he added.

Yulo said the group's proposal would be discussed with Environment Secretary Regina Lopez in the coming days.

By setting up their factories for manufacturing beside mine sites, Yulo said companies will feel more responsible in taking care of the environment as far as their mining operations are concerned.

Abante

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Pondo sa minahan, pinasisilip

Hiniling kahapon ni Ako Bicol Rep. Rodel Batocabe sa Kamara na imbestigahan ang estado ng Mine Rehabilitation Fund sa harap na rin ng kawalan ng maayos na sistema sa pag-audit dito.

Sa House Resolution 0041 na inihain ni Batocabe iginilit nito na walang safeguard sa paggamit ng mine rehab fund kaya naman lantad ito sa anomalya.

Sa ilalim ng Philip-

pine Mining Act ang mga mining companies ay inatasan na magtabi ng 10% sa kanilang pondo o nasa P5M para sa environmental protection and enhancement programs, ang nasabing pondo ay itatagbi bilang rehab fund sakaling magkaroon ng aberya o anumang problema sa operasyon ng kanilang minahan.

Ang nasabing pondo ay hindi sakop ng audit

ng Commission on Audit (CA) kaya naman bukas umano ito sa anomalya.

Ang House inquiry ay isinusulong ni Batocabe matapos ihayag ni Environment Secretary Gina Lopez na nasa P500M lamang ang mine rehab fund gayong dapat ang pondo ay nasa P3B na. (Tina Mendoza)

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Green projects seen to fill up job losses from mine closures

By CZERIZA VALENCIA

Job losses from mine closures can be easily replaced by green projects approved by the environment department, said Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia.

While there is still no full tally of the total number of workers to be affected by the closure order slapped by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on 23 mining firms, Pernia noted the entire mining and quarrying industry employs only around 217,000 workers, accounting for "half of one percent of total persons employed."

"Gina (Environment Secretary Gina Lopez) says she has alternative employ-

ment for them. She is into local area development to make local areas more attractive for tourism," he said in a recent interview. "We also have a lot of construction projects."

Lopez said last week her department is looking at the development of several mined out areas into ecotourism zones to rehabilitate the former mines and provide livelihood to affected communities.

Around 13 towns in Dinagat and Surigao are being considered for development into ecotourism sites integrated with organic farms. These, she said, would give residents a sustainable source of livelihood.

"In mining, the money goes out (of the community) but here in a green economy, 95 percent of the money is retained (in the community),"

she said.

Lopez said the DENR is also coordinating with the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Social Welfare and Development for the provision of emergency employment to workers who will be affected by the closure order.

DENR's harsh stance against the mining industry is unlikely to severely hurt the economy, according to Pernia, since the extractive industry only makes up 0.99 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) as of 2016. This corresponds to a contribution to the economy of \$8.3 billion.

The multiplier effect of the industry is also "relatively small," Pernia said.

He recognized, however, the ill-effects of the jobs loss at the family level.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mining stalwart speaks up



Ernesto M. Hilario

ABOUT TOWN

AT the recent Saturday Forum@Annabel's, we tackled the mining issue in the wake of the order of Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez to shut down 23 mining firms and suspend five others, and to cancel more than 70 mineral processing sharing agreements (MPSAs) for alleged violations of environmental laws.

Who else would be our surprise but a big name in the Philippine mining industry: Dr. Walter Am Brown, the president and CEO of Apex Mining Co., which is based in the mining of gold, silver, copper, lead and other precious metals and operates a mining concession in the Ampostela Valley in Mindanao. With him during the news forum was Dr. Graciano Yumul, a former Undersecretary for Research and Development at the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the executive vice president for Geology and Exploration of Apex Mining.

Both resource persons said they respected the authority of Lopez to impose sanctions on mining firms that violated environmental laws, expressed hopes that the affected firms would be given due process. Like the position taken by the member of Mines of the Philippines, which Apex Mining is a member, Brown and Yumul said their company adheres to responsible mining and complies with the environmental standards set by mining laws and the rules and regulations of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Brown admitted that his mining company had no choice but to pay the "revolutionary tax" demanded by the communist-led New People's Army (NPA) in Mindanao, but later decided not to pay anymore as the rebels later were "asking too much".

Brown said he has worked in the private sector under seven administrations: Ferdinand E. Marcos, Corazon C. Aquino, Fidel V. Ramos, Joseph Estrada, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III and Rodrigo R. Duterte, and wants to be remembered—he is now 78 years old—as someone who helped the country move toward economic development.

Brown told the forum that despite his Western-sounding name, he is 100-percent Filipino.

Brown, who also owns the restaurant that bears his wife's name—Annabel's—where the Saturday news forum has found a new home after many years at Sulô Hotel also in Quezon City—boasts of extensive experience in both the mining and oil-exploration industries in the Philippines. He has served as the president of Acoje Mining Corp., Surigao Consolidated Mining Co. Inc., Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp., and I Vantage Corp. (formerly, Palawan Oil and Gas Exploration).

He has also served as executive officer, consultant and director to companies involved in mining, petroleum exploration and development, real-estate development and manufacturing.

Brown holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Science in 1959 and in Geology in 1960, both from the University of the Philippines, a Master of Science degree in Geology

from Stanford University in 1963, and a Doctorate in Geology in 1965, Major in Geo-Chemistry, from the same university.

Will this work?

If the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) had its way, a parallel campaign would be carried out in the war on illegal drugs, this time by plastering official "drug-free home" stickers on residences certified by the local Peace and Order Council as free of illegal drugs.

This, after President Duterte directed the Philippine National Police to suspend all antidrug operations in the aftermath of the abduction-murder of Korean national Jee Ick-joo in October last year.

I recall that then-Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim adopted a similar approach during his term, by spray-painting the homes of suspected drug users and pushers.

Lim's "shaming" campaign was assailed as a violation of human rights as it arbitrarily judged an individual as guilty of a drug offense without due process. The DILG's plan to plaster "drug-free home" stickers is a variation of Lim's spray-painting tactic, but from a different angle.

But essentially, the DILG proposal would shame everyone in residences without the "drug-free home" stickers as drug addicts and/or pushers.

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mining stalwart speaks up

without due process and leave them vulnerable to rogue law enforcers who could extort money from them or even kill them outright as part of the administration's brutal war on drugs.

We have grave apprehensions over the DILG proposal as this would embolden unscrupulous elements to resort to criminal acts against people whose homes do not have the "drug-free home" stickers.

The DILG should study the implications of this planned campaign as it could infringe on civil and political rights and the guarantee of due process embodied in the Constitution.

E-mail: ernhil@yahoo.com.

PILIPINO MIRROR

• SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

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RESEARCH, COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSION SERVICES

SENTIDO KUMON ni Rey Briones



BIBIG, UTAK, TAINGA NI SEC. GINA

HINDI nagkoordineyt ang bibig at utak ni Sec. Gina Lopez, ang hepe ng DENR.

Nang ibuga ng kanyang bibig ang mga salitang "fifty million pesos" na suhol ay hindi ito kumonsulta sa kanyang utak.

Hindi humingi ng payo, Suki, ang bibig ni Madame Gina sa kanyang utak.

Kung kailangan bang iladlad ang napik-ap ng kanyang tainga na milyones ang iniaalok sa bawat onorabol sa Kamara na boboto laban sa kanyang kumpirmasyon sa CA.

Kaya nakompromiso, Suki, ang kredibilidad ng "katipunera" na umaaktong tagapagligtas ng Inang Kalikasan.

Ang masaklap, Suki, ay ang diyarista ang pinagbuntunan ng sisi ni Madame.

Kung hindi umano inilathala ng diyaryo ang mga lumabas sa kanyang bibig ay sana'y hindi siya napahamak. Hohum!

Ang teyk ko naman ay ito:

Kung hindi sana naging padaskol-daskol 'yang bibig mo, Madame, sa napik-ap na tsismis ng 'yong tainga, eh, sana ay 'di ka napagbintangan na isang iresponsibol na taga-pagbalita.

oOo

Hinihintay rin ng mga Masbateño ang aksiyon ng DENR hinggil sa patuloy na pagsasalaula at panggagahasa kay Mother Earth ng mga minero sa bayan ng Aroroy.

Suki, libo-libong pamilya ang apektado sa open pit mining ng Filminera Resources.

Pero mistulang "bulag at bingi" ang opisina ni Madame Gina sa hinagpis ng libo-libong biktima ng mapanirang pagmimina sa nasabing lalawigan.

Noong unang sampa ni Madame sa DENR ay isinama na nito ang Filminera sa listahan ng mga sususpindehing kompanya.

Nagtaka na lamang ang mga pamilya sa mga apektadong lugar, Suki, nang biglang nabura sa listahan ang pangalan ng nasabing minahan.

Ang tanong ng isang naghihinagpis na konsehal sa bayan ng Aroroy:

Magkano ang dahilan?

Hindi ako naniwala na may milyon-pisong rason kung bakit bigla na lang tumahimik ang DENR sa reklamo laban sa Filminera mining.

Ang alam ko'y hindi 'yan magagawa ninuman sa mga nakapaligid kay Madame Gina.

Kaya lang ay kailangan ang pruwera na hindi pinagtatakpan ng DENR ang Filminera.

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DENR to return P74-M rhino horns

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is seeking to return P74 million worth of rhinoceros horns to their country of origin, a DENR official said yesterday.

Director Theresa Mundita Lim of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) said they would coordinate with Mozambique for the possible return of the specimens.

"Should the African state refuse to accept them, they would be disposed of properly or possibly destroyed," she said.

Lim received the horns yesterday from the Bureau of Customs (BOC), which seized the specimens at the Manila International Container Port in September 2012. They had been declared as cashew nuts and shipped by Chistevan Import and Export from Maputo City, Mozambique.

The BMB is responsible for the implementation of the Philippine commitment to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, an international treaty developed in 1973 to regulate commercial trade in certain wildlife species, including the critically endangered rhinoceros.

The Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act also designates the BMB's Wildlife Rescue Center as depository of seized wildlife specimens, their derivatives or by-products.

In June 2013, the DENR destroyed at least five tons of smuggled elephant tusks using a road roller, making the Philippines the first country in Asia to physically destroy the tusks to support efforts to stamp out the illegal trade in ivory.

The pulverized tusks were later incinerated and the ashes used to construct an elephant monument installed at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center. — Rhodina Villanueva, Louise Maureen Simeon

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P74-M seized rhino horns turned over to DENR

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) on Monday turned over its stockpile of seized rhinoceros horns worth P74 million to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Director Theresa Mundita Lim received the confiscated horns from the BOC, represented by its Environmental Protection Unit head Lt. Angelito Cruz.

Lim said the turnover of rhinoceros horns shows the country's strong resolve to end illegal wildlife trafficking and trade all over the world.

The Philippines is a member to the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora (CITES) since November 16, 1981.

CITES is an international treaty to regulate commercial trade in certain wildlife species, including the critically endangered rhinoceros.

"We may not have rhinoceros in our country, but this does not mean we will allow others to use them and other such wildlife for unscrupulous gains and contribute to their extinction as a species," Lim said.

She disclosed that the BMB would coordinate with the country of origin, Mozambique, for the possible return of the specimens.

However, should the African state refuse to accept them, Lim said the rhinoceros horns would be disposed of properly or possibly destroyed.

The horns have been seized by the BOC in September 2012 at the Manila International Container Port. They had been declared as cashew nuts and shipped by Chistevas Import and Export from Maputo City, Mozambique.

BoC surrenders rhino horns to DENR agency

By Anna Leah E. Gonzales

THE Bureau of Customs on Monday turned over its stockpile of rhinoceros horns to the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The rhinoceros horns were seized by the BoC in September 2012 after they were discovered in a shipment from Maputo City in Mozambique at the Manila International Container Port. The shipment, valued at some P74 million in the black market, was declared as cashew nuts.

BMB Director Theresa Mundita Lim received the seized horns from the BoC, represented by its Environmental Protection Unit head Lt. Angelito Cruz.

Lim said the turnover of the seized rhino horns to the BMB is part of the Philippine commitment to the Convention on International Trade in Endan-

gered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna.

The CITES is an international treaty developed in 1973 to regulate commercial trade in certain wildlife species, including the critically endangered rhinoceros.

"We may not have rhinoceros in our country, but this does not mean we will allow others to use them and other such wildlife for unscrupulous gains and contribute to their extinction as a species," Lim said.

Lim said the BMB would coordinate with the government of Mozambique for the possible return of the specimens.

"Should the African state refuse to accept them, they would be disposed of properly or possibly destroyed," she said.

The BMB had been coordinating with the BoC for the turnover of the specimens since their seizure. The process was put on hold as the BoC management underwent some changes.



CONTRABAND. Theresa Mundita Lim (left) of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, inspects rhinoceros horns, seized by customs bureau, represented by Lieutenant Angelito Cruz, during a turnover ceremony in Manila. AFP

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PRESERVING TAYABAS BAY

HEALTHY BAY? COUNT THE TURTLES

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@dtmallarijrINQ

SARIAYA, QUEZON—Every January, just before sunrise, hundreds of "pawikan" (sea turtle) hatchlings race on the shores of Sariaya town in Quezon province toward the Tayabas Bay.

The annual spectacle "is a manifestation of our commitment to the protection and rehabilitation of the bay," said Edwin Frias, 46, a fisherman and Bantay Dagat (fish warden) from the village of Bignay II.

Frias and other villagers, local officials and environmentalists released 104 green sea turtles last month. Another batch of 115 were also released in the villages of San Roque and Guisguis.

Sariaya, which hosts beach resorts along the stretch of the province's ecotourism highway, has become a haven of green sea turtles and a model of public-private partnership for environmental protection.

The turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) are classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

The Tayabas Bay stretches from San Juan town in Batangas province to the towns of Sariaya, Pagbilao, Padre Burgos, Agdangan, Unisan, Pitogo, Macalelon, General Luna, Catanauan, Munay and San Francisco, and Lucena City in Quezon.

Illegal fishing, pollution

For decades, illegal and commercial fishing, and pollution had damaged the bay, which has an area of 287,332 hectares, according to a study of Tanggol Kalikasan (TK), a public interest law office which advocates environmental protection.

Moreover, reef conditions had deteriorated due to dynamite and cyanide fishing, while mangrove forests along the coastline had been degraded or destroyed, it said.



Sariaya Mayor Marcelo Gayeta (left) leads coastal villagers in releasing sea turtle hatchlings into Tayabas Bay. —DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

In 2000, TK started a rehabilitation project aimed at reducing threats and improving sustainable management of biodiversity in the Tayabas and Pagbilao bays.

Funds came from the US Agency for International Development through the Philippine-American Fund Project.

Not easy

A public-private partnership for the conservation of the Tayabas Bay was also initiated by lawyer Asis Perez, then with the legal defense center of Haringon Foundation in Southern Tagalog; Proceso Alcala, then a Lucena-based businessman; and other civic organizations.

Alcala would later become a congressman and agriculture secretary, and appoint Perez to head the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

The job was not easy at first. Juliet Borlon-Aparicio, TK-Southern Luzon director, said the group needed to guide local officials and Bantay Dagat members in the implementation of Republic Act No. 8550, or

the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, to stop illegal and unregulated fishing.

Information and education campaigns were launched and community linkages were established, said Janet Geneblazo-Buelo, a TK official.

Fishermen and local governments were fiercely protective of their fishing grounds, said Buelo, now the Quezon provincial government's public information officer. "They were receptive. We explained our projects and programs to protect the bay and they understood."

Frias said the residents became aware of the need to protect the environment after undergoing seminars, lectures and exposure trips given by government agencies and environmental groups such as TK.

Commercial fishing

Sariaya Mayor Marcelo Gayeta said the municipality and owners of resorts and other tourist-oriented businesses had already joined hands to protect and rehabilitate the bay.

A persistent problem, however, was the intrusion of commercial fishing vessels despite the ban imposed by local ordinances, Buelo said.

The latest release of baby turtles in Bignay II demonstrated anew the community's resolve to keep the bay healthy.

Fishermen would release turtles and other marine animals which accidentally get entangled in their fishing nets, Rosalie Salvan of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office in Pagbilao said.

From October to December, sea turtles of various species return to Sariaya's coastal villages to lay eggs.

Fishermen and fish wardens in Bignay II and in the nearby Monte Vista beach resort look after the nesting site.

Perez said fish sanctuaries should be established and mangroves should be rehabilitated to further protect the bay.

These efforts should be supported by heightened public awareness and strict law enforcement to check illegal fishing, he added. INQ



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

P74-M rhino horns kumpiskado

AABOT sa P74 milyon halaga ng rhinoceros horns ang nakumpiska ng Bureau of Customs kamakailan.

Ang nasabing mga rhinoceros horns ay itinurn-over ng BOC sa Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Isinagawa ang pag-

turn-over sa Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center sa Quezon City.

Tinanggap ni BMB Director Theresa Mundita Lim ang mga nasabat na kontrabando.

Ayon kay Lim, ipinakinakita lamang nila na mahigpit ang pagpapatupad ng Pilipinas sa pandaigdigang kampanya laban sa illegal wildlife trade.

May commitment din aniya ang Pilipinas sa Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species o CITES para sa pagsawata ng illegal wildlife trafficking and trade.

Ang rhino horns ay ginagamit umano bilang sangkap sa paggawa ng aphrodisiac product o pampagana sa pakikipagtalik.—*Radyo Inquirer*

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Policy clash drains drive vs climate change

AN expert raised urgency for harmonizing government policies relevant to bolstering Philippine agriculture's resilience to climate change.

University of the Philippines-Los Baños College of Forestry professor Dr. Rex Victor Cruz recommended such move, noting discord among some government policies at present slowed down the agricultural sector's resilience-building efforts.

"Government agencies concerned must coordinate with one another to avoid setting contradicting policies," he said Thursday on the side of a Philippine Agricultural Journalists Inc. forum in Metro Manila.

Increasing intensity of tropical cyclones in the country was one reason to better brace for climate change, Cruz said.

"Evidence points to the fact that such intensification can already be attributed to climate change," he said.

Previous TCs in the country weren't as frequent as these were at present, he said.

"Excessive rainfall events also increased in recent years and proved

ENVIRO-WATCH

damaging to agriculture," he also said.

Cruz noted among policy discords needing action is government's thrust under RA 8435 to protect agricultural land from unlawful conversion and LGUs' claim of autonomy under RA 7160 to convert land.

He believes enacting a national land use law will help address such conflict.

"A lot can be gained from zoning the entire landscape where agriculture operates," he said.

Such benefits could range from identifying crops suitable for planting in an area to improving farmers' income, he said.

Cruz said Department of Agriculture need not wait for government to enact a national land use law that'll help realize such benefits for the country, however.

DA itself could initiate and push for land use and zoning that would guide agricultural development nationwide, he said.

Climate change's manifestations

highlight need for smart agriculture, noted International Rice Research Institute senior scientist Dr. Reinér Wassman.

He sees need for sustaining initiatives that will help promote climate-smart agriculture, which is a means for guiding action needed to transform and re-orient agricultural systems towards ensuring food security amidst the changing climate.

"Agriculture must be sustainable also," he said at the forum.

Achieving smart agriculture and addressing climate change needs support at the local level, noted Dr. Julian Gonsalves who is a senior consultant at International Institute for Rural Reconstruction.

"What we need to do is bring action down to the local level where this is needed most," he said at the forum.

He noted location-specific solutions were necessary since climate change affected areas differently.

Incremental adaptation of such solutions would help scale up climate-smart agriculture at the local level, he added.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Cotabato landfill, pinuri ng UN

KORONADAL, South Cotabato (PIA) – Humanga ang mga opisyal ng United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) sa clustered sanitary landfill ng pamahalaang panlalawigan ng South Cotabato.

Sa isang pulong kamakailan, iniulat ni Mae Joy Emboltorio, environment management specialist I ng Surallah Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office na tatlong miyembro ng UNIDO ang bumisita sa clustered SLF sa Barangay Colongulo, Surallah.

Lahat sila pumuri sa prosesong ipinatutupad sa cluster SLF lalong lalo na ang agarang pagtatakip ng mga itinatapong residual waste sa Cell No. 1 ng nabanggit na lugar, ayon kay Emboltorio.

Kabilang sa mga UNIDO environment expert na bumisita sa clustered SLF ay sina National Project Manager Haidie Piniero, Environment Consultant mula AECOM Company na si Roes Elvin Sy Tanco, at Mercibel Pecideras na galing din ng AECOM.

Ang clustered SLF ng South Cotabato ay ginagamit na tapunan ng mga residual waste mula sa mga bayan sa upper valley area ng South. Isa itong Galing Pook awardee.



• Hot lumber

ALABEL, Sarangani – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to turn over to the provincial government here some 30,000 board feet of illegally-cut lumber which were seized by the anti-illegal logging task force here since last year. According to Sarangani Governor Steve Solon, the confiscated lumber will be used for the construction of bridges and school buildings. Provincial environment and natural resources officer Rolando Tuballes said the DENR regional office had already issued the confiscation order for the illegally-sawn lumber which were seized in a series of anti-illegal logging operations conducted by the Task Force 'Sulong Kalikasan' chaired by Sarangani Gov. Steve Solon. (Joseph Jubelag)

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



THE PHILIPPINE STAR

metro

EDITOR: DULCE A. SANCHEZ

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2017

A government employee guards rhinoceros horns as the Bureau of Customs turns them over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in a ceremony at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center yesterday.

MICHAEL VARGAS

The Manila Times

2/18/17
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



ENDANGERED The Department of Environment and Natural Resources receives P74 million worth of seized rhino stockpile from the Bureau of Customs on Monday. Director Theresa Mundita Lim of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (above), who received the horns at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife in Quezon City, said the BMB would coordinate with Mozambique for possible return of the specimen. The horns would be disposed of properly or possibly destroyed by the DENR if the African state refused to accept them. PHOTO BY MIKE DE JUAN

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INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rhino horns turned over to BMB

THE Bureau of Customs (BoC) formally turned over on Monday rhinoceros horns worth P74 million, seized in September 2012, to the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB). —Janina C. Lim

>> See full story on <https://goo.gl/0qHllw>



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DAVAO: DAVAO CITY

Happy Hatchday

This female Philippine eagle named Pangarap, adopted by Aboitiz Power Corp. (AboitizPower) and raised by the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) through a combination of hand and puppet rearing, celebrated her 18th hatchday anniversary on Feb. 23 with 60 students from different schools in Davao City, who joined in activities, including a talk on eagle and biodiversity conservation. Pangarap, which means ‘dream,’ is now ready for breeding through artificial insemination.

PEF PHOTO

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel Nos. (632) 929-66-26 to 29 | (632) 929-62-52
929-66-20 | 929-66-33 to 35
929-70-41 to 43

INVITATION TO BID

FOR THE SALE OF ONE (1) LOT UNSERVICEABLE CONFISCATED
CONVEYANCES

IB Reference No. 2017-02-003

"AS IS, WHERE IS" Basis

Date and Time of Bidding: 16 March 2017 10:00 a.m.

Legal Conference Room, 3rd Flr.

DENR Main Building, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Item No.	DESCRIPTION / LOCATION	Minimum Bid Price
1	One (1) lot consisting of seventeen (17) units unserviceable confiscated vehicles located at the compound of Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB)/ Parks and Wildlife, North Avenue corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Q.C.	Php455,000.00/lot

Article/Description	Plate No.	Article/Description	Plate No.
1. Isuzu 10 Wheeler Truck	UUM - 247	10. Isuzu Cargo Truck	WNT - 996
2. Fuso Forward Truck	UHF - 623	11. Isuzu Dropside Truck	UAS - 307
3. Isuzu Passenger Jeep	WGX - 243	12. Isuzu Canopy Truck 6 wheeler	NFH - 669
4. Isuzu Jitney	DRR - 523	13. Fuso Flat Bed Truck	UNT - 694
5. Isuzu Jeep	BVG - 317	14. Passenger Jeep	DMC - 560
6. Isuzu Jeep	BVL - 905	15. Mercedes MB / Ssanyong	RBL - 309
7. Hyundai Van	WLD - 861	16. Passenger Jeep	BBN - 514
8. Toyota Hi-Ace Van	WGK - 628	17. Passenger Jeep	BVD - 259
9. Isuzu Canopy Drop-side Truck	UEX - 518		

REQUIREMENTS FOR ISSUANCE OF BID DOCUMENTS:

The Bid Documents shall be issued to bidders upon application and payment of a non-refundable fee of ₱1,000.00 per set.

Sealed bid offers in the prescribed form shall be submitted from 8:00 a.m. and shall be closed at 9:30 a.m. on 16 March 2017 at the Property Management Section, PSMD, Basement, DENR Main Building, Visayas Ave., Diliman, Q.C.

ALL BIDDERS MUST SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING:

1. EMB Accredited Transporter/Treater/Storage Trading/Handling of Hazardous Waste
2. Cash Bond of in the form of Cash or Manager's check equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the total Bid price;
3. Bidder's proposal in the prescribed Price Quotation form
4. Financial Statement as of December 31, 2016 with Income Tax Return of the Bidder (stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions);
5. Duly signed Instruction to Bidders and Terms & Conditions of Sale; and
6. Duly signed Bidder's Inspection Certificate.

The highest calculated and responsive bidder shall pay the bid price immediately after receipt and acknowledgement of the Notice of Award and shall haul the items immediately. The Bidders bond will be issued with an official receipt which will form part of their payment.

Interested bidders may obtain additional information and/or may request for inspection of items and Sale of Bid Documents from **Ms. Arlene B. Arabejo** or **Mr. Mauricio M. Amorin** at the Property Management Section, Property and Supply Management Division (PMS, PSMD), Basement, DENR Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City or call Telephone Nos. 926-26-75 and 9883367 local 1156.

The DENR reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality found therein and to accept such proposals as may be advantageous to its interest.

(Sgd.) **CORAZON C. DAVIS**, CESO II
Chairperson, Disposal Committee