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DAY

15 MAR 2016

Tuesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Amid criticism, DENR pursues antilogging drive in Sierra Madre

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—Teams from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have continued scouring the Sierra Madre mountain ranges in Quezon province to seek out illegal loggers amid criticisms from a group that it has failed to stop tree-cutting activities there.

On Friday, the DENR, police and military personnel recovered 80 pieces (1,324 board feet) of abandoned lumber sawn from hardwood species in the mountains of General Nakar town in Quezon, said

Miliarete Panaligan, head of community environment and natural resources office based in the neighboring town of Real.

The renewed anti-illegal logging operation last week was met with strong resistance from illegal loggers and their security men, Panaligan said. "One of our teams was fired upon by armed men protecting illegal loggers. Thank God no one was hurt," she said.

She described the DENR's task to protect the Sierra Madre as "too risky for the faint-hearted."

Panaligan also refuted an INQUIRER report on the return of

illegal logging operations in the Sierra Madre but admitted that illegal loggers might have taken advantage of her recent absence when she took an official leave for one and a half months.

Last month, Zander Bautista, assistant executive director of Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance (SSMNA), reported the return of illegal logging in the mountains of General Nakar.

Bautista took photos of several piles of illegally cut lumber in the mountain trails, rivers and a shack. He also saw illegal loggers in the act of processing trees toppled by chain-saws.

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Amid criticism, DENR pursues anti-logging drive in Sierra Madre

Citing his interviews with Agta natives and other mountain dwellers, Bautista learned that businessmen from lowland areas had been hiring them as workers in the illegal logging trade.

Panaligan invited the group of Fr. Pete Montallana, SSMNA chair, to a dialogue on the reported resurgence of illegal logging in the Sierra Madre, but the Franciscan priest asked her instead to focus her efforts on how to stop these activities.

"She should concentrate ... on the ground to stop the rape of the Sierra Madre. She should not waste her time with us," Montallana said by tele-

phone interview on Saturday.

Citing his group's past experiences, he said most meetings with the DENR on environmental concerns had often ended with "self-serving press releases from the government."

"Most of the meetings and dialogues were useless," he said.

But Panaligan said her agency's campaign against illegal logging was successful, noting that she was able to stop these activities by uniting groups of Agta natives. Montallana dismissed the claim.

"The tribe has long been united even before she came. The Agta has its own indige-

nous practices on how to unite the tribe," the priest said.

Panaligan said the DENR has been providing alternative livelihood to mountain dwellers through the National Greening Program (NGP). Under the program, 1.5 billion trees are to be planted in 1.5 million hectares of land in the country until June this year, when President Aquino's term ends.

In a DENR audit report in 2013, however, the Commission on Audit described the NGP as "unsuccessful."

Montallana said the program's budget had turned into a "fat milking cow of ... corruption." He did not elaborate.

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

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Green movement.

Concepcion Industrial Corp., through subsidiary Concepcion-Carrier Air Conditioning Co., launches the Green Footprints Movement, an advocacy campaign that seeks to galvanize the general public into action towards reducing their environment footprint. Shown are (from left) Manila Fashion Observer blogger Christine Dychiao, Environmental Management Bureau assistant director Eva Ocfemia, celebrity host and World Wide Fund for Nature - Philippines national ambassador Marc Nelson, CIC chief executive Raul Joseph Concepcion, CIC executive vice president for business development Rafael Hechanova Jr. and CCAC director and head of consumer solutions group Harold Pernikar Jr.

THE REPORT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

15 MAR 2016

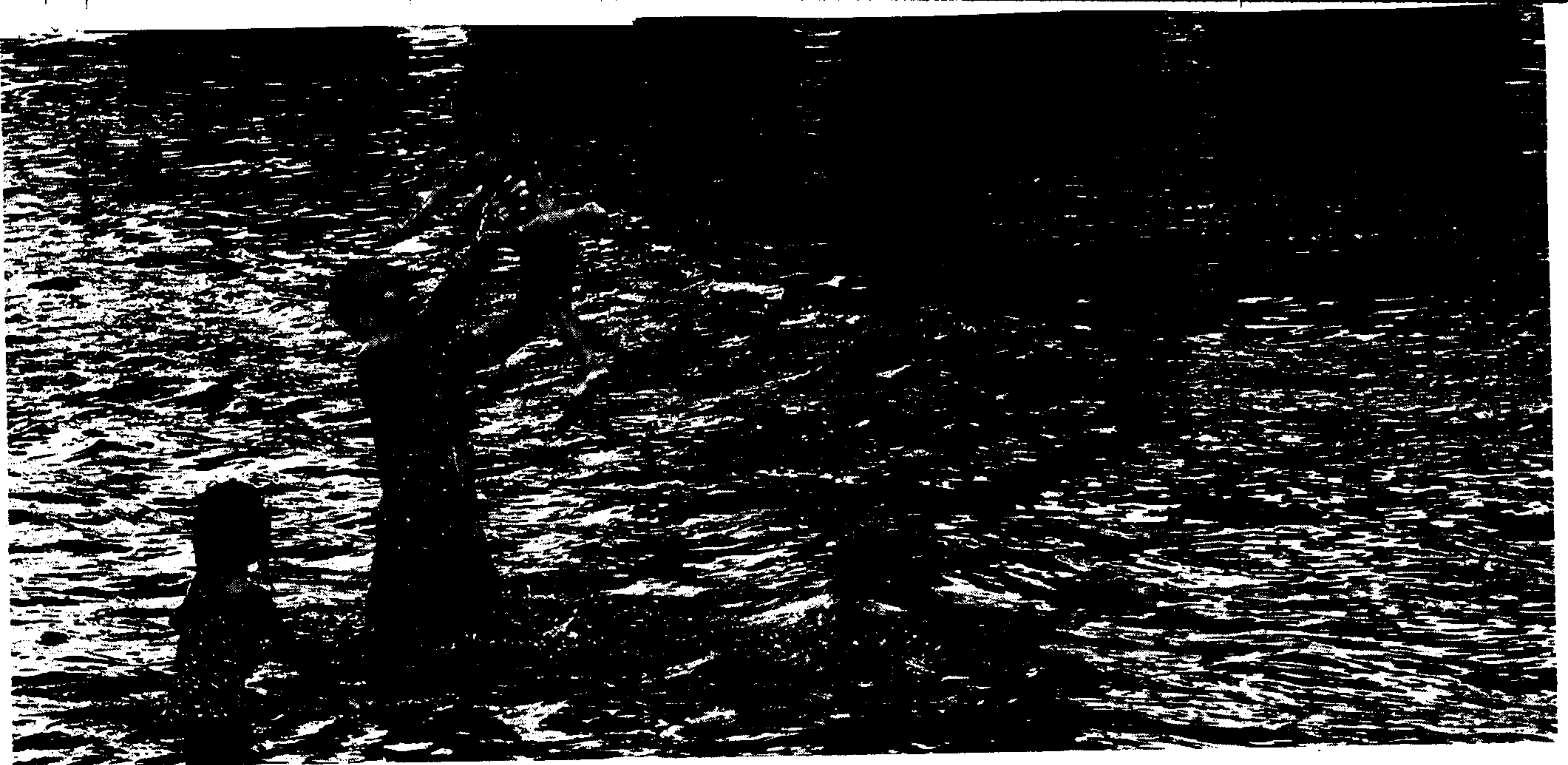
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



OBLIVIOUS -A father takes a dip with his two children in the Guadalupe River, apparently unaware that the Environmental Management Bureau in Central Visayas (EMB-7) has already called for urgent action to clean up the mouth of the river located in Cebu City's Barangay Pasil-Ermita. The river, littered with trash, has been found toxic to marine life and is an eyesore. EMB-7 has set a clean-up of the river this Saturday, March 19. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

'Protected areas'

FACILITATING wildlife conservation efforts remains a massive undertaking in this graft-prone and impoverished Southeast Asian nation of more than 100 million people.

So, it's a most welcome news that the government has launched a web-based mobile application that can provide accurate information about the status of "protected areas."

A project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), it is called the "Lawin Forest and Biodiversity Protection System" (LFBPS).

Various quarters, including environmentalists, said the undertaking should prove to be vital in strengthening the national government's multi-pronged wildlife conservation efforts.

"Technology and its applications, like the LFBPS, will surely allow us to cope with the different challenges the environment faces," according to DENR Secretary Ramon Paje.

In fact, Secretary Paje said "we see it as a way for us to come up with better ways to reverse environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, and at a faster pace."

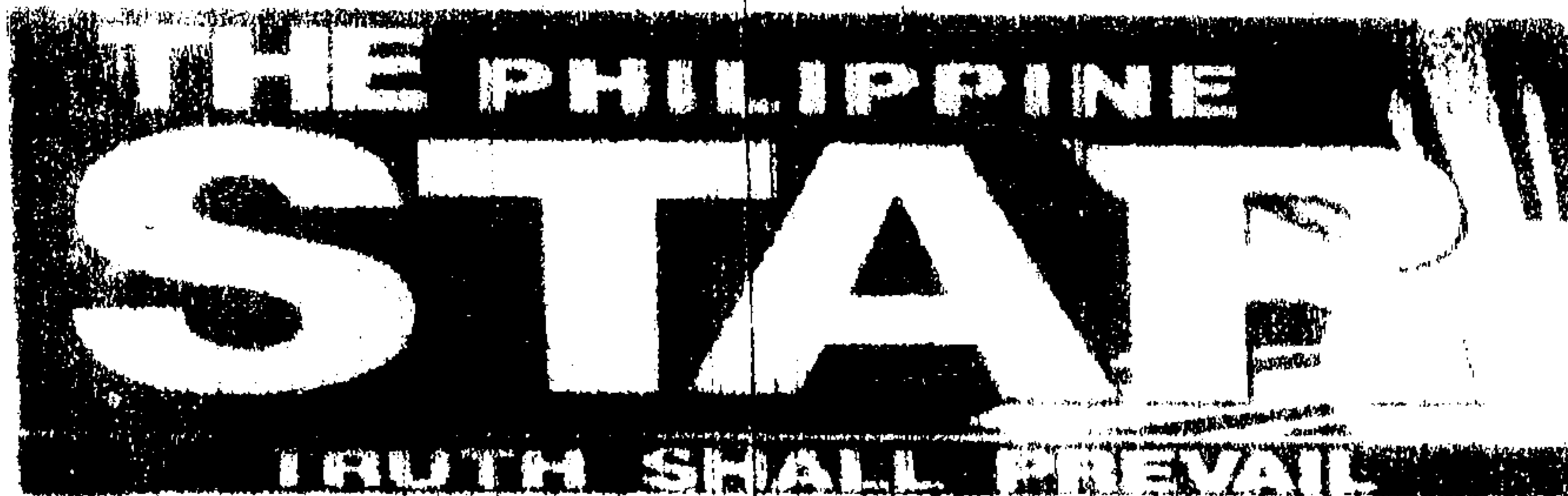
The DENR and the B+WISER Program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) developed "Project Lawin."

The project aims to improve the response mechanisms to address observed threats and ensure the sustainability of conservation efforts inside the country's "protected areas."

Likewise, the LFBPS enables the country's park rangers and planners to access critical information in real time and share information about what they find in the field.

Certainly, "Project Lawin" is a big help to park rangers and planners in identifying and prosecuting wildlife crime across the country.

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The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Phl Eagle Pangarap turns 17

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – Philippine Eagle “Pangarap” is now 17 years old, giving hope to efforts to stem the fast dwindling population of the giant raptor, the country’s national bird.

Pangarap was born seven years after “Pagasa,” the first Philippine Eagle successfully hatched and bred in captivity at the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Barangay Malagos, Calinan district here.

Pangarap is one of 35 Philippine Eagles at the Malagos Center run by the non-profit Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF).

Pangarap is a product of the PEF’s captive-breeding conservation program through natural pairing.

PEF chairman Carlos Dominguez has cited the importance of the captive breeding program in addressing the problem on the decreasing population of the Philippine Eagle.

Dominguez said they are also intensifying the education, research and development programs of the PEF.

In order to augment the dwindling population of the species, the PEF has been working on Pangarap to produce its first offspring through cooperative

artificial insemination (CAI).

Pagasa has also been worked up as one of those in the gene pool of the Malagos Eagle Center’s existing captive breeding program.

“Now that Pangarap has fully bonded with her keeper, we are hoping that she will finally lay a fertile egg in the next breeding season,” said PEC curator Anna Mae Sumaya.

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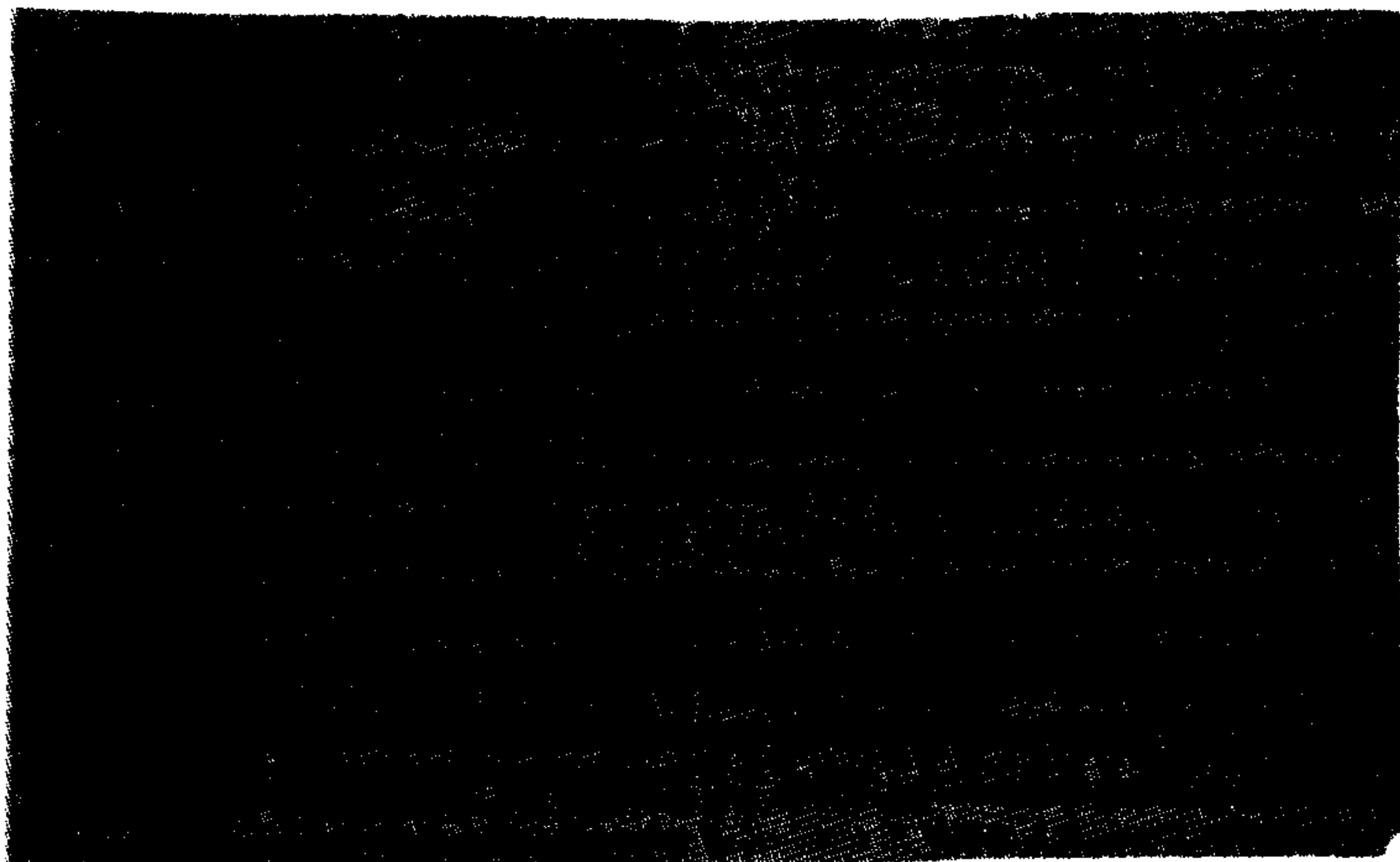
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Business World

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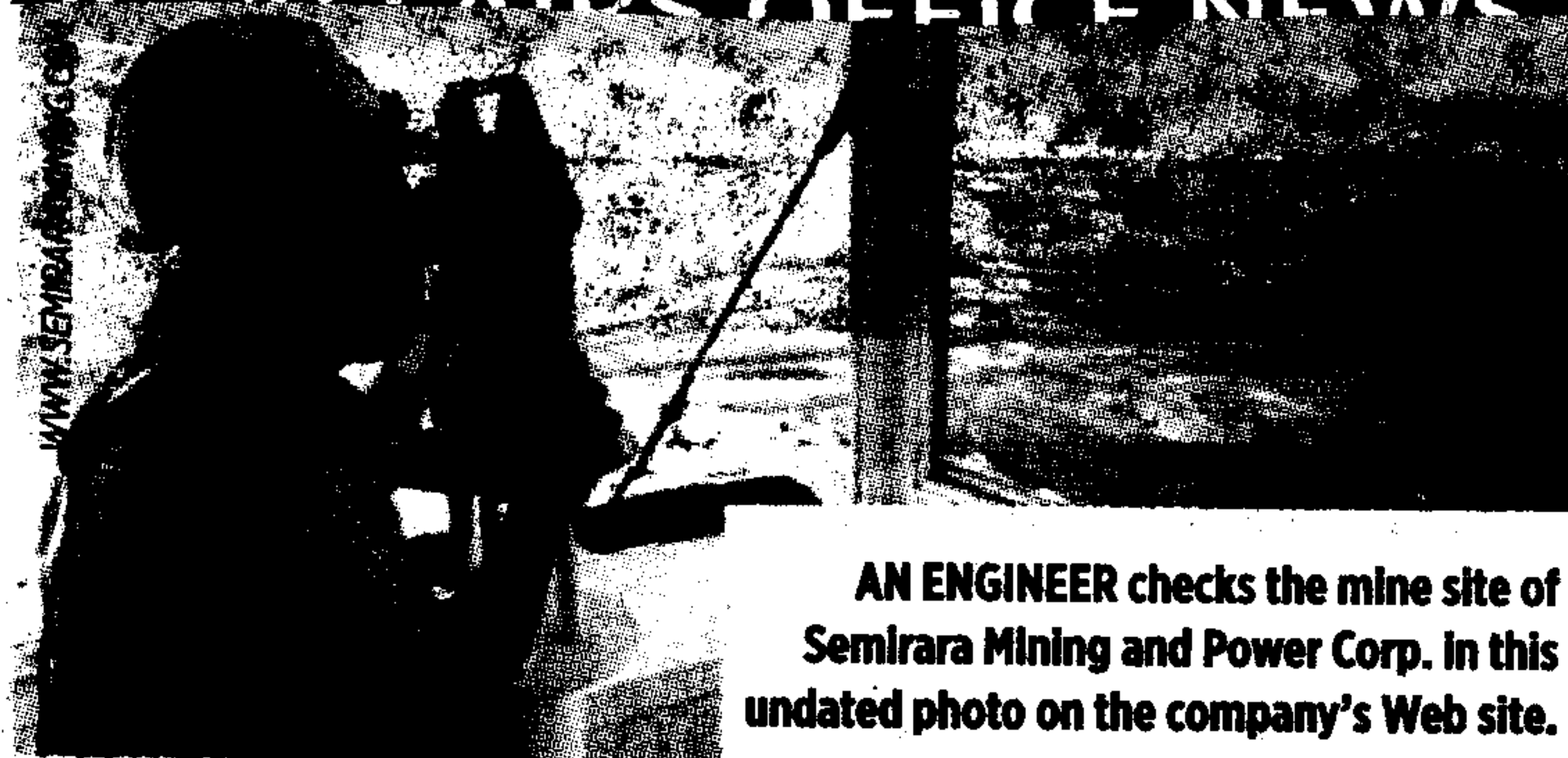
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AN ENGINEER checks the mine site of Semirara Mining and Power Corp. In this undated photo on the company's Web site.

Semirara's Molave mine gets ECC, tax incentives

By Janina C. Lim

THE government has given the go-signal for Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) to pursue its Molave coal mine project in Caluya, Antique, after granting its environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

In a disclosure to the stock exchange on Monday, the Consunji-led company said it received the ECC dated Feb. 12 from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the Environmental Management Bureau, for the existing coal mining operations and proposed Molave project in Barangay Semirara.

The ECC covers 3,825.25 hectares within the coal operating contract no. 5 awarded by the Department of Energy (DoE).

Aside from the Molave pit (West Panian), the permit also covers the company's existing coal mining operations — Panian pit and Narra pit (East Panian).

"The (Molave) project shall have a total annual maximum production rate of 12 million metric tons of coal using the open pit mining method," the ECC read.

In July 2015, the DENR suspended the ECC of SMPC's Panian pit after a landslide at the northern edge of the mine site killed nine workers.

The suspension order was lifted by the DENR a month later

after it found there was no adverse effect or damage to the environment in relation to the landslide.

In February 2013, Semirara's mining operations were also halted after an accident at the western portion of the Panian mine left five workers dead and five more missing. Two months later, the DoE issued a clearance resuming operations at the mine's northern portion.

TAX PERKS

At the same time, SMPC said its Molave project will be entitled to government incentives such as an income tax holiday.

In a separate disclosure, the miner said it received a certificate of registration from the Board of Investments dated Feb. 24, certifying SMPC as a "new producer of coal on a non-pioneer status" under the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987 (Executive Order 226) for its Molave mine.

"In the grant thereof, the Corporation shall enjoy income tax holiday for four years from January 2017 or actual start of commercial operations, whichever is earlier but in no case earlier than the date of registration," the mining firm said.

"Other incentives with no specific number of years of entitlement may be enjoyed for a maximum period of ten years from the start of commercial operation and/or date of registration."

Shares in SMPC lost 0.37% to close at P135.40 each on Monday.

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Responsible mining: Can it be done?



Ernesto M. Hilario

ABOUT TOWN

THE World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 acknowledged that mining, minerals and metals are important to the economic and social development of many countries. At the same time, the meeting emphasized the need to address the environmental, economic and health impacts of mining, and to promote the participation of stakeholders throughout the life cycles of mining operations.

In other words, governments should practice responsible mining, defined as mining that adheres to the three principles of sustainable development: economic growth, environmental protection and social equity.

Responsible mining can create jobs, generate foreign exchange to enhance the country's socioeconomic development and contribute substantially to winning the war against poverty.

Here in the Philippines, mining companies are becoming increasingly aware that they must implement programs that not only protect the environment but also promote social and community development.

A case in point is Philex Mining Corp.'s corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, which won in the Asia Corporate Excellence and Sustainability Awards in Singapore last year.

Philex practices sound environmental management aimed at optimizing resource utilization through conservation and enhancement. It has supported the government's re-

forestation program by reforesting over 3,000 hectares and planting over 8 million trees of various species in its Padcal Mine and various project sites.

Last year the mining firm spent P269 million for its Environmental Protection and Enhancement Program. Of this amount, P7.57 million went to various reforestation and forest-protection initiatives within the concession area of Padcal Mine.

Philex Gold is also an active participant in the government's National Greening Program (NGP) through agroforestry and mangrove reforestation. It uses its Bulawan and Sibutad mine sites for income-generating projects like organic farming.

Philex's Padcal Mine in Benguet has recently added 100 hectares as a new plantation area in addition to the 330-hectare existing plantation, including 75 hectares of agroforestry. It planted some 205,000 assorted seedlings last year, and maintains bamboo plantations and vegetation at its decommissioned tailings

storage facility. It is also engaged in management of solid waste, water resources and air quality.

Bulawan Mine in Negros Occidental operated by Philex Gold is also a participant in the NGP through its ongoing agroforestry project. It maintains a 12-hectare coffee plantation and fruit-bearing trees in the project area, as well as a nursery for seedling production. It is also engaged in the production of organic vegetables, rice, poultry and livestock and aquaculture.

Sibutad Mine in Zamboanga del Norte implements a mangrove-reforestation project in Barangay Kanim and has propagated thousands of seedlings. The mine site can be transformed into alternative use for ecotourism. It started with pocket thematic gardens employing organic technologies.

The mining firm is also active in community and development through what it calls Pusong Philex. It invested P98.7 million in its HELP program, consisting of health and sanitation, education, livelihood and skills development, and public infrastructure and support programs in project sites.

In Padcal, Philex implemented projects worth P90 million. In Philex and Philex Gold's Vista Alegre, Cayas, Bulog projects in Negros Occidental, HELP projects totaled P5.2 million.

In Philex Gold's Sibutad Mine, Zamboanga del Norte, education and public infrastructure projects amounted to P347,000, while Las-cogon Mining Corp.'s mining site in Surigao del Norte embarked on various projects worth P3.27 million last year.

Of top of these, the mining firm

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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Responsible mining: Can it be done?

spent P18.6 million for information, education and communication (IEC) and development of mining technology and geosciences (DMTG).

The IEC program aims at increasing public awareness and providing useful, timely and factual information about the company's activities and its impact on the community.

On the other hand, the DMTG program focuses on research on mining technology, mining operations, environmental protection, advanced studies on mining by qualified researchers, and expenditures for mining scholars and trainees.

Philex applies the participative approach in community development. By fulfilling its obligations and strategically working for countryside development in its areas of operation, it has gone beyond the traditional notion of being an obligated provider and has become a partner for development not just of its host but also of its neighboring communities.

Since the Padcal site is nearing the end of its mine life, Philex has embarked on preparatory work for eventual decommissioning. The mine rehabilitation and decommissioning plan aims to prevent long-term environmental impacts by returning mining-disturbed land to a physically and chemically stable, visually acceptable productive or self-sustaining condition, taking in consideration the beneficial uses of the land and surrounding areas. The decommissioning plan will also ensure that sustainable alternative livelihoods are left behind to the host and neighboring communities.

E-mail: ernhil@yahoo.com.

DEFINING THE NEWS**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

Laguna Lakeshore auction reset again

By Darwin G. Amojelar

THE government deferred for the fourth time the bid submission for the P122.8-billion Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Diike Project because of minor changes in the terms of the contract, the Public Works Department said Monday.

Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson said the bid submission for the largest toll road project under the public-private partnership scheme was moved by two weeks to March 28 from March 14.

"We have to give time for the bidders to discuss a minor change in the concession agree-

ment on termination payment provision," Singson said.

This was the fourth time the agency extended the bid submission deadline. The last one was deferred to Jan. 7, 2016 from Nov. 6.

Under the original schedule, pre-qualified bidders had until July 6 to submit their technical and financial proposals. Techni-

cal proposals were supposed to be evaluated between July 7 and July 26, while the financial proposals would be examined between July 27 and Aug. 10.

The Public Works Department planned to award the project on Aug. 21 and sign the concession agreement on Sept. 20 last year.

The three prospective bidders were San Miguel Holdings Corp., Alloy Pavi Harshen LLEDP Consortium and Team Trident.

Team Trident is composed of Trident Infrastructure and Development Corp., Ayala Land Inc., Megaworld Corp., Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. and SM Prime Holdings Inc.

The Alloy-Pavi Hanshin LLEDP Consortium consists of

Malaysia's Alloy MTD Capital Berhad, Prime Asset Venture Inc. and Hanshin Engineering Construction.

The LLED project is the largest public-private partnership venture so far, involving construction of a flood control dike, an expressway on top of the dike and the reclamation of over 1,000 hectares of land for commercial development.

The LLED concession will last for 37 years, including seven years for design and construction and 30 years for operation and maintenance.

It will be financed mainly by private capital with no government subsidy, except for right-of-way costs.

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Laguna Lakeshore project bidding moved to March 28

By LOUELLA DESIDERIO

Firms bidding for the P122.8-billion Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike project are being given more time to prepare their offers with the deadline for bid submission again moved to a later date.

Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson said in a text message the new bid submission date for the project is on March 28. The deadline for the submission of bids for the project was supposed to be yesterday.

The deadline to submit bids for the project has been moved several times with interested firms having concerns on the deal.

"We have to give time for the bidders to discuss a minor

change in the concession agreement on termination payment provision," Singson said.

PPP Center executive director Andre Palacios said the Department of Public Works and Highways decided to make a modification to the contract to better manage the project risks.

"The extension will give bidders time to review and make the necessary adjustments," he said.

Under the deal, the winning bidder will finance, design, construct, operate, and maintain a 47-kilometer flood control dike with expressway toll roads.

Through the project, the high standard highway is expected to reduce the travel time from Metro Manila to Laguna from 90 to 35 minutes.

It is likewise seen to pave the way for better traffic flow and prevent flooding from Taguig in Metro Manila to Los Baños, Laguna.

Three groups have been prequal-

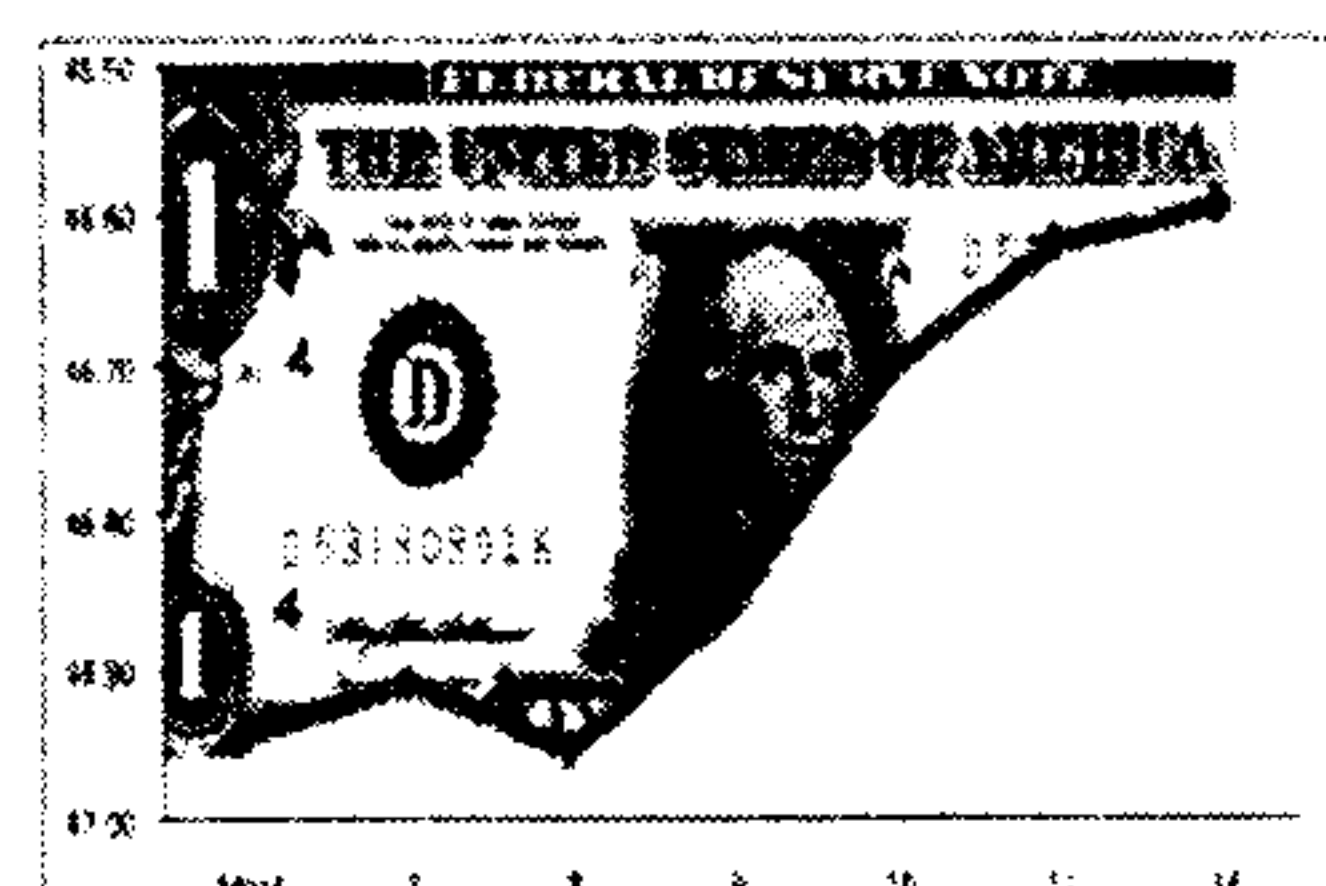
ified to bid for the project. These are Alloy-PAVI-Hanshin LLEDP Consortium (composed of Alloy MTD Capital BHD, Prime Asset Ventures Inc., Hanshin Engineering Constructions), San Miguel Holdings Corp.; and Team Trident (composed of Trident Infrastructure and Development Corp., Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., Ayala Land Inc., Megaworld Corp., and SM Prime Holdings Inc.).

Palacios said the postponement of bid submissions for the project is not seen to adversely affect the target to award at least 10 more PPP projects before President Aquino steps down on June 30.

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

MARCH 14, 2016

46.595



OPEN 46.500
HIGH 46.440
LOW 46.610
AVERAGE 46.506
VOLUME \$673.600 M
Source: PDEX

CURRENCIES

MARCH 14, 2016

COUNTRY	UNIT	PESO	DOLLAR	EURO
JAPAN	YEN	0.4099	0.0088	0.0079
UK	POUND	67.1478	1.4381	1.2899
HONG KONG	DOLLAR	6.0174	0.1289	0.1156
SWITZERLAND	FRANC	47.5140	1.0176	0.9127
CANADA	DOLLAR	35.2872	0.7557	0.6779
SINGAPORE	DOLLAR	34.0147	0.7285	0.6534
AUSTRALIA	DOLLAR	35.2478	0.7549	0.6771
BAHRAIN	DINAR	124.0951	2.6577	2.3838
SAUDI ARABIA	RIAL	12.4519	0.2667	0.2392
BRUNEI	DOLLAR	33.8912	0.7258	0.6510
INDONESIA	RUPIAH	0.0036	0.0001	0.0001
THAILAND	BAHT	1.3186	0.0282	0.0253
UAE	DIRHAM	12.7143	0.2723	0.2442
EMU	EURO	52.0569	1.1149	1.0000
KOREA	WON	0.0394	0.0008	0.0008
CHINA	YUAN	7.1911	0.1540	0.1381
MALAYSIA	RINGGIT	11.4273	0.2447	0.2195
TAIWAN	NT DOLLAR	1.4301	0.0306	0.0275

BSP REFERENCE RATE: P46.60 GOLD: \$1,253.30 SILVER: \$15.50
ANALYST: CLODIA GARCIA SOURCE: BSP

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICES

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PH sea levels rising 5 times more than global average

The threat of climate change has become no more evident than in the Philippines, as sea levels at the country's shores have risen by more than 14 millimeters per year, or five times more than the global average.

This was disclosed by Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Ramon Paje who noted that satellite data from 2002 to 2014 showed sea levels near the Philippines rising by more than 14 millimeters per year.

The average current global sea rise is roughly three millimeters per year. This

average has doubled since the start of the 20th century.

Coastal communities are at risk of higher sea levels due to more frequent and destructive storm surges during the onslaught of typhoons.

Super typhoon 'Yolanda' (Haiyan) provided a sobering reminder of what the country should do to deal with climate change, according to Paje.

On November 8, 2013, the powerful cyclone triggered storm surges in the coastal communities of Eastern Samar and Leyte provinces. Almost all structures and vegetation were brought down by the powerful winds, and a four- to seven-meter storm surge smashed into vulnerable communities without warning. The government placed the death toll at 6,340 with over a thousand missing.

"There is increased urgency

to act on climate change, and while Earth Hour is symbolic, we must go beyond one hour each year," he said, adding that the Philippines has been doing its share beyond local boundaries.

The country will once again join the Earth Hour movement on March 19.

"Climate change is our planet's biggest environmental challenge, and to fight it requires mass participation across all continents, even in countries like the Philippines which has a very small carbon footprint," Paje said.

"Earth Hour is but only one response by our country and the rest of humanity," he added, referring to the global annual event where millions of people switch off their lights for one hour to show their concern for the planet.

The country has been participating in the Earth Hour since 2009, and is consistently one of the biggest advocates of what has been dubbed as the world's largest climate movement organized by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Although it has smaller carbon footprint compared to industrialized nations, the Philippines is considered an important player in the fight against climate change because it is one of the countries most vulnerable to the global phenomenon.

Since joining the movement in 2009, the country consistently had the biggest Earth Hour participation and has been very active in the global fight against climate change.

"We have actually been 'waking the talk' beyond merely pledging to limit our carbon emissions," Paje said.

He said the biggest action the government has taken was to implement the National Greening Program (NGP) that is set to surpass its target of reforesting 1.5 million hectares of denuded lands by June this year.

"Our new forests will greatly increase the capacity of our carbon sink to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thereby mitigating climate change," Paje said.

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PAG-ASA: Mas matinding init, mararanasan

NI ROMMEL P. TABBAD

Nagbabala ang Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) sa mas mainit na panahon na mararanasan sa bansa.

Ayon kay PAGASA weather specialist Aldczar Aurelio, posibleng umabot sa 40 degrees Celsius ang mararamdamang temperatura sa mga susunod na araw sa pagsisimula ng summer season.

Nagbabala rin siya sa publiko laban sa posibleng idulot nitong heat cramps at heat exhaustion na maaaring mauwi sa heat stroke kapag tuloy-tuloy ang aktibidad sa ilalim ng matinding sikat ng araw.

Binanggit ni Aurelio na tumataas na rin ang nararamdamang heat index sa Metro Manila na aabot sa 35.8 degrees Celsius, at mas titindi pa ang mararanasang init ng panahon sa paghina ng amihan sa kalagitnaan ng Marso bunsod ng pagpasok ng

easterlies.

Huling naitala ang 40.4 degrees Celsius sa Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija

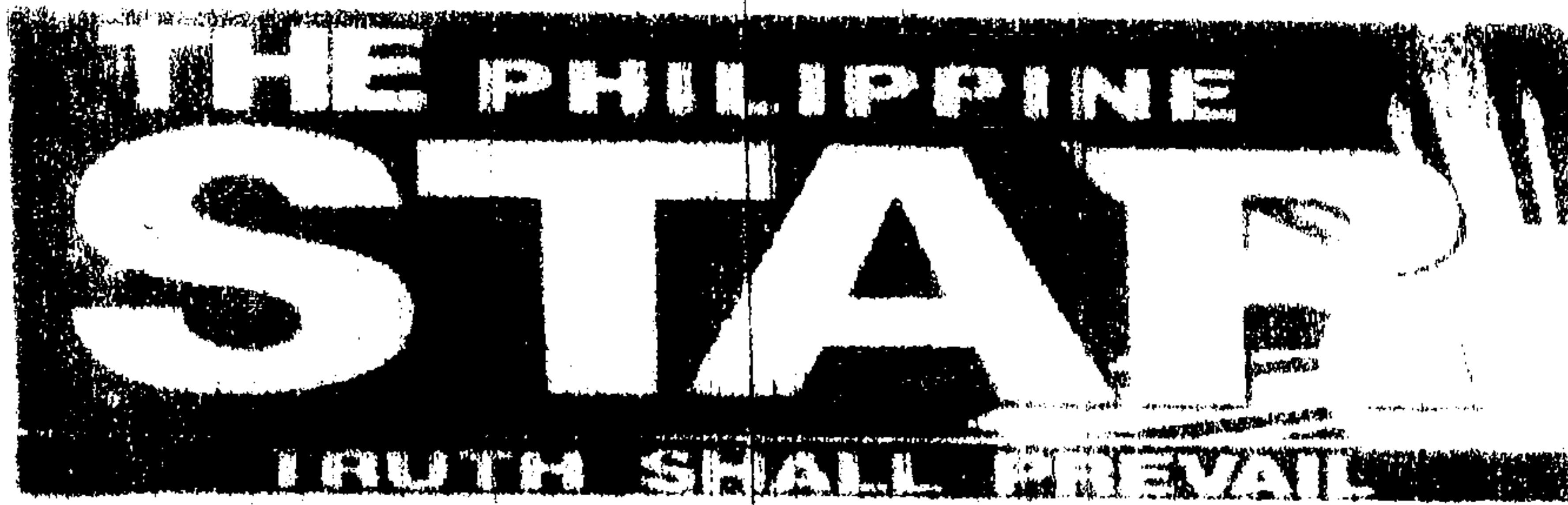
noong Mayo 11, 2012 at ang pinakamainit na klima na 42.2 degrees Celsius sa Tuguegarao City noong Mayo 11, 1969.



WE NEED TO CHANGE Nagbibigay ng kanyang presentation si dating United States Vice President at climate change advocate Al Gore sa 31st Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training sa Sofitel Plaza sa Pasay City nitong Lunes ng hapon.

JOHN JEROME GANZON

15 MAR 2016



The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Davao beaches 'highly polluted'

DAVAO CITY – Beaches in Davao City have high levels of coliform bacteria, a study conducted by the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) released on Friday showed.

Davao City's beaches have high coliform content because Davao River is highly polluted with coliform and the city lacks septage treatment facilities, said Gloria Raut of the Department of Health.

Coliform bacteria are commonly associated with feces of animals and humans.

The highest fecal coliform reading in a sampling station in Davao River amounted to 16 million mpn (most probable

number) per 100 liters, said Maria Socorro Mallare of the EMB in the Davao region. The passable standard is only 200 mpn per 100 liters.

Liberty Beach near the mouth of Davao River is most polluted with total coliform reading of 160,115 mpn/100 liters and fecal coliform reading of 123,433 mpn/100 liters.

Talomo Beach Resort's coliform level is at 36,971 mpn and fecal coliform of 21,984.

Guinoo, Bonguyan, Seagull, Coaco, Bago and Lanang Aplaya beaches as well as Kalayaan Beach Resort, Mergrande and Marina Azul I were also tested for coliform level.

Meanwhile, a study on the waters in the Island Garden City of Samal showed that only Camp Holiday Resort has a higher than standard fecal coliform content at 237 mpn/100 liters.

Raut said the high fecal coliform content could be due to landing barges emptying their wastes into the sea.

She said resort owners should put up signs to warn people not to swim in highly polluted beaches. Swimming in beaches with high coliform causes diarrhea, skin rashes and sore eyes.

Raut said recent studies show that polio virus also thrives in dirty water.

– Edith Regalado

THE DISCERNMENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

• 50 hectares for
Mt. Samat dev't

DAVAO CITY, Philippines (AP) — Set on converting the historic Mount Samat site into an international tourism center, Mayor Alice Pizarro revealed yesterday that around 50 hectares of land will be allocated as the "creative" site. Pizarro said the huge tract of land will further entice investors to pour in their investment in Mt. Samat, a historic site where the famous "Araw ng Kagitangan" is being celebrated every year. She revealed that among the programs that have been proposed for the project are cable cars and a scenic viewing deck, aside from the already existing zip line, that was put up by former Mayor Charlie Pizarro. Now general manager of the Davao Region Development Authority (DRDA), Pizarro said the

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR-ARMM starts taking down campaign materials placed on trees

COTABATO CITY (PNA) — Environment officials in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) have formed a team that will remove political campaign materials placed on trees and other plants, and those that tend to threaten the environment, a ranking environment and natural resources official in the region said.

Forester Kahal Kedtag, regional secretary of the ARMM's Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), said the operation dubbed as "Oplan Baklas" (Oplan Remove) was started Monday.

Despite repeated reminders on broadcast media, social media and even by word of mouth that posting of campaign materials on trees will not be allowed during the campaign season, propaganda materials of local and national candidates were still observed either plastered or hung from trees and public places that pollute the surroundings.

"Oplan Baklas will be carried out region-wide," Kedtag said. ARMM is composed of the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

"The candidates should remind these supporters not to put propaganda materials on trees and plants because it has negative implications on their candidacy," Kedtag explained.

Despite the laws prohibiting such acts, posters and propaganda materials of local and national candidates have lined the major highways in the region, including parks, and other public places. Even public toilets had the faces of candidates plastered on their walls.

Commission on Elections (Comelec) Resolution No. 7767 and Fair Election Act or Republic Act 9006 prohibit the display of election propaganda materials in areas outside "common poster areas" identified by the poll body.

He warned that there will be strictly no exemption in the removal of campaign materials on trees and plants.

The Manila Times

The real deal Native Pinoy trees

BY RAIZA ELUMBA
HARIBON FOUNDATION

CAN you name five Philippine native trees?

Ask this question to a Filipino and you are bound to get at least one correct answer—the popular Narra tree—among several wrong responses like Acacia and Mahogany.

Filipinos, especially students, think that commonly seen trees in school campuses, playgrounds and parks are native trees when in fact they are not. It is indeed disheartening to know that some of the biggest trees in the city are actually “foreigners” or introduced species in the country.

Introduction of exotic tree species in the Philippines started way back during the barter trade era. It became more prevalent when agricultural and forestry schools opened during the American regime and started teaching reforestation techniques using trees that are familiar to Americans—Continental American native trees and other exotics used in trade. Examples of these trees are Mahogany, Gmelina, Mangium, Acacia and Ipil-ipil.

Furthermore, reforestation was done as a method to efficiently extract timber in the 1900s. This was synonymous to planting species that have: economic value; rapid growth for short cutting cycle, resistance to fire and other damage-causing elements; and easy growth and propagation.

Exotic trees further pervaded into Philippine forests through a law requiring the replanting of denuded (logged over) forests in the 1960s. Most timberlands and protected areas were planted with exotic trees as seen in the reforested areas in Minglanilla, Cebu, the Nasiping Reforestation Project in Cagayan, Paraiso reforestation in Ilocos Norte, Canlaon, reforestation in Negros, and Impalutao reforestation in Bukidnon.

These areas were planted with Mahogany, Gmelina and Mangium. By extension, exotic trees were then used in landscaping city sidewalks and parks. There was no public consciousness yet in ensuring the presence or conservation of native trees in public lands including the streets named

»»globalwarning

Years after, Mahogany trees were discovered to be especially invasive in Philippine forests. One Mahogany tree can disperse 3,000 seeds up to 40 meters away from the mother tree. Its seeds germinate in less than a month and thrive despite the lack of sunlight.

Competing with this exotic species is very dismal for native trees like the Philippine dipterocarps (e.g. Lauan, Apitong and Yakal), which irregularly produce fruits and seeds at intervals of four to five years. Native biodiversity is affected because exotic trees are alien to them. It is distinctly seen in Mahogany plantations when there is not much undergrowth and birds are rarely seen despite the lushness of the area.

It must be emphasized that this problem is entirely because of human interference and not because the Mahogany or Gmelina and other exotic species is innately “bad” or “good.” It just happens

that exotic tree species have evolved in another region, have their own roles or niche in their area that is quite deterrent for local biodiversity to thrive when grown in the Philippine environment.

Exotic trees may have its uses. Known to be fast growing, Mahogany lumber provides quick revenue. Most of the fruit trees were introduced to the Philippines and these have helped in the country's food security. Filipinos have created several delightful food and recipes because of exotic trees. An *adobo* dish will never be complete without the fragrant laurel leaves that come from the Sweet bay tree that has a Mediterranean origin.

However, planting native trees in cities, backyards, parks, protected areas even cemeteries far outweigh the advantages of exotic trees.

Exotic trees are more susceptible to disease outbreaks and extreme weather events. Native trees in contrast are more resilient and support a richer biodiversity. One of the reasons for this is that Philippine native fauna and flora have co-evolved for centuries.

An introduced species creates environmental changes that force native species to adapt or perish. Adaptation may take hundreds or thousands of years. If unable to adapt, a species can be rendered extinct or extirpated (locally extinct) from its original habitat.

Finding the right native tree species for people's needs might take some effort but it can be rewarding for Philippine biodiversity and it makes a better and sustainable society. Filipinos can ensure that these plants remain common to all people, across generations and inculcate greater Philippine patriotism.

So the next time you join a tree planting activity, make sure that you are planting the appropriate native trees.

You can plant Narra or Katmon trees instead of Acacia in wide-open spaces or backyards, or Banaba instead of Golden Shower along sidewalks. You can start learning the names of native trees and sharing nuggets of information with friends or online. You can support campaigns that bring native trees on the frontline in reforestation efforts, landscaping, urban gardening and city planning. You can collect seeds from native mother trees and plant these in appropriate areas, or better yet donate them to institutions or communities undertaking tree-planting programs.

By collectively mainstreaming these into society, Filipinos can ensure that Philippine native trees will thrive in forests and commercial centers.

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The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



■ Bantay-lasang forest guard volunteers

THE HIGAONON OF MISAMIS ORIENTAL *Guardians of our remaining rainforests*

BY MARJORIE MARASIGAN
FOUNDATION FOR THE PHILIPPINE ENVIRONMENT

IN 2010, the European Union (EU) and Anthropology Watch (AnthroWatch) spearheaded the program "Consolidating Forest Corridors through Sustainable Ancestral Domain Management" in northern and central Mindanao. The initiative was carried out in partnership with Upholding Life and Nature (ULAN), Rain Forest Restoration Initiative (RFRI) members, Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Program (NTFP-EP) and the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE).

The project had a reforestation component using "rainforestation," a forest restoration strategy promoted by the RFRI network that uses only native tree species to ensure the long-term sustainability and resiliency of the restoration efforts. Critical to the success of the program is the participation of indigenous groups: the Higaonon

(Misamis Oriental, Bukidnon) and the Subanen (Zamboanga Peninsula) as the primary implementers of its component activities.

After five years this article revisits one of the rainforestation sites established through the efforts of the MAMACILA (Mati, Manibay, Civolleg, and Langguyod communities) Apo Ginopakan Higaonon Tribal Council located in Claveria, Misamis Oriental.

MAMACILA has a total of 20 hectares of restoration sites divided into small areas and distributed across their ancestral domain. Dipterocarpaceae species like White Lauan and Red Lauan and other native trees like Ulayan and Bitag were propagated and planted by the community members.

Since their tribe is very dependent to the forest, another strategy in rainforestation in which communities plant agricultural crops

like yams, citronella and abaca, among others in between the tree species to meet their supply for food and livelihood was applied.

Because of this, community members can constantly check and protect the native trees while harvesting their crops. Moreover, the community also identifies members of the Higaonon Bantay-lasang or forest guards who are headed by an elder named Bae nay-akuman Puning Asenas, a messenger and guardian of the forest spirits. With her guidance, forest guards carry out their duties in conducting quarterly maintenance activities like brushing and weeding in their restoration sites.

At present, the young trees planted that now stand more than six feet add to the vegetation of MAMACILA's ancestral domain and serve as a home to small fauna. Further studies are required to assess the longer-term impacts of the project to date. Aside from this project, MAMACILA also engaged in the National Greening Program (NGP) of the Department of Environment and

Natural Resources (DENR) since 2012.

Haribon Foundation is currently the convenor of the RFRI network that has eleven environmental organization members that are based in the Philippines. This year, RFRI will publish a case study that showcases eight partner communities and their experiences and recommendations on forest restoration programs in the country.

Like this story, restoration efforts, sustainable practices, and effective strategies of communities on reforestation projects are highlighted and shared throughout various partners in both private and public sector.

With this kind of material, awareness on the appropriate tree species to be planted and effective practices will spread to prevent further failures of restoration programs in the country.

Haribon Foundation is a founding member of RFRI. For more information on RFRI, visit www.rainforestation.ph.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Gore warns PH of looming disaster

By Michael Lim Ubac

WHAT will an increase of 1 degree Celsius in global temperatures mean for the Philippines?

In an exclusive interview with the INQUIRER, Al Gore gave a bird's eye view of the projected impact in the Philippines should temperatures continue to rise despite the 2-degree lim-

it in carbon emissions set by the Paris Climate Accord in December 2015.

"We are seeing the loss of endangered species. Already, the Philippine eagle is endan-

gered," Gore said.

A Nobel peace laureate and global climate activist, Gore is in Manila to preside over the three-day "Climate Reality

GORE/A15

Why is PH building 25 more coal-powered plants?

- **Climate change now a simple choice between what is right and wrong, says Gore / A14**

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Leadership Training Corps," which started yesterday.

Mincing no words, Gore declared that 50 percent of all living species on the planet, including endemic birds in the Philippines, would be lost in a century "if we don't arrest this dangerous trend."

He was referring to the warming of the planet through the continued use of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the chief contributor to greenhouse gases, that traps excess heat in the atmosphere which, in turn, triggers global warming.

Gore said 2015 was the hottest year, and last month was the 372nd consecutive month with a global temperature higher than the 20th century average.

"We are already reaching extremes that really should set off alarm bells," he said.

"Already, the plant and animal species of the world are moving toward the pole in an average of 15 feet per day. Everyday. Microbes are moving also, and those that are carried by mosquitoes and ticks are becoming more threatening to human beings," he said.

Gore cited the spread of the Zika virus as the latest of many relatively new microbial threats spawned by extraordinary heating of the planet.

"That should give us pause because the relationship with humanity and the disease-carrying microbe is mediated by climate. We have the upper hand when the nights are cooler, and of course immunities are different in tropics, subtropics (regions)," he said.

"But the threat is the same everywhere, and you have now a much bigger threat from dengue and chikungunya, and some of the other diseases that were held back," he said.

"And the list of these problems is a long one," he stressed.

Close to danger zone

Gore provided these projected scenarios on the impacts of the increase of 1 C in global temperatures when asked how important was it for the world to abide by the Paris agreement to keep temperatures well below 2 C.

Gore, who actively took part in the Paris climate negotiations, noted that there was an agreement toward keeping a lid on temperature increase by trying to limit it even further to 1.5 C above preindustrial levels.

Compliance with the Paris agreement is "very important," he said.

"I am so happy that the 2-degree goal was modified with the reference to 1.5 (degrees). One way to think about this is this: We have already seen an increase in just about 1 degree, and the north polar ice caps are melting rapidly, the land-based size on Greenland and Antarctica is beginning to melt much more rapidly, sea level is rising," he said.

"We are getting closer to the danger zone with the melting of the arctic permafrost that could release a lot of methane emissions that are even more dangerous than CO₂," he added.

'Playing with fire'

He noted that all of these threats that the world was beginning to see were emerging and getting worse with only a 1-degree increase in temperatures.

"So [for] 1.5 degrees, we're playing with fire. And of course it's almost unimaginably difficult to change because 85 percent of world's economy comes from burning fuel. But we have to change. And the good news is we can change, we have this new technology that is good for us. And the only remaining question is will we change?" he asked.

Gore acknowledged that Filipinos had a firsthand experience with the disastrous effects of climate change in 2013, when Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan) inundated Eastern Visayas, displacing over a million families.

He predicted that these superstorms were "likely to come stronger still with the continued warming of the oceans."

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Gore warns
PH of looming
disaster

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Gore warns PH of
looming disaster

Risk to food security

During his presentation yesterday at the training program, Gore noted that rice, corn, maize and cassava would be impacted by climate change.

According to him, rice yields will be affected by nighttime temperatures, while cassava would be affected by the increase in plant pests, ~~with~~ the cassava's nutrients diminished by ~~the~~ high concentration of CO2.

"In the Philippines, ~~there's~~ risk to food security as a result of the climate crisis," said Gore.

Gore explained that the sea level was rising faster in the Philippines mainly because of thermal expansion and the melting of ice in Greenland and Antarctica.

Gore described this combination of higher sea levels and more powerful storms a "double whammy" for island-nations like the Philippines.

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BOMB DROPPED Former US Vice President Al Gore, an environment advocate, likens the effects of climate change to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in his speech before delegates of the Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training. RICHARD A. REYES

Climate change now a simple choice between what is right and wrong, says Gore

By Tarra Quismundo

IF THERE'S one renewable energy that could drive the movement for climate action, it is the people's will to act.

Former US Vice President Al Gore, Climate Reality Project chair, said this yesterday as he urged sustained action to arrest the worsening effects of climate change, pointing out the silver lining that the world is gradually shifting to renewable energy to cut down carbon emissions.

"There have been 'nos' after 'nos' after 'nos.' People have tried to confuse the issue, cloud the issue, put out falsehoods about issue. But now, because of the impact of climate-related weather, it has now become a simple choice between what is right and wrong," Gore said in an emphatic closing of his two-hour climate reality presentation yesterday.

loud 'nos' for decades, until after the final 'no' came a 'yes.' When women struggled for the right to vote and equality, there was 'no' after 'no' after 'no,' until after the final 'no' there came a 'yes.' In the struggle for civil rights, apartheid, every great moral struggle in the history of humanity has been met with 'no' after 'no,' until finally, when the question was ultimately resolved into a binary choice between right or wrong, the outcome became preordained because of who we are as human beings," Gore said.

He presented undeniable proof of climate change in the world. In Alaska, people can now sunbathe in the previously unlikely weather of 35.5 degrees Celsius; in Antarctica, researchers could walk around "in their shirts" with the temperature at one point reaching 17 C; in Norway and

"The will to act in itself is a renewable resource," he told some 700 participants from 58 countries gathered at the climate reality training.

He noted the "good news" that had come the way of the climate action advocacy, including the explosion in the global use of renewable sources like wind and solar power.

In wind power, the world achieved 14.5 times the 30-gigawatt target by 2010. In the area of solar power, the 2010 goal of producing 1 GW per year had been exceeded 17 times.

"The need to act is indisputable. So we have to change. We have a fork in the road. Luckily, we do have solutions at hand," Gore said.

He cited how "every great moral struggle" in history was faced with initial opposition until it reached a tipping point.

"When the world struggled to abolish slavery, there were

Greenland, glaciers are thawing; across China and Africa, lakes are experiencing extreme droughts.

Storms are stronger, droughts are longer, forest fires are becoming worse and sea levels are rising.

This, in turn, threatens food security, as extreme weather compromises crops. Water supply is also affected with water resources drying up. Vector-borne diseases are spreading worldwide under conducive warm weather. And infrastructure as we know it—houses, bridges, roads—can no longer withstand fierce floods and extreme heat.

Amid initial skepticism, 99.99 percent of researchers from around the world who produced papers from 2012 to 2013 believe that climate change "is happening and is primarily caused by human activity." Only a single dissenter stood out, Gore said.

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

The only paper you read from cover to cover!

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Rising sea levels threaten 13.6 M Pinoys – Gore

By HELEN FLORES and ALEXIS ROMERO

At least 13.6 million Filipinos living in coastal areas may have to relocate to higher ground due to the accelerating rise in sea levels brought by climate change.

This was the warning of

environmental advocate and former US vice president Al Gore during the opening of the 31st Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training in Pasay City yesterday.

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Former US vice president Al Gore addresses the audience during the Climate Reality Leadership Corps training at the Sofitel in Pasay City yesterday.

KRIZJOHN ROSALES

Rising From Page 1

Gore, founder of the non-profit Climate Reality Project, said sea levels are rising fast due to global warming.

"Sea level in the Philippines is projected to rise two to three times faster than the global average," Gore said, adding this exacerbates the country's vulnerability to natural disasters.

Scientists have blamed man-made climate change for the fast rise in sea level in the past 2,800 years.

Gore's documentary on global warming titled "An Inconvenient Truth" helped earn him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

He made a lengthy presentation on the extreme weather events brought by climate change in different parts of the world, particularly in developing nations.

The three-day workshop was attended by at least 700 climate activists all over Asia.

Sen. Loren Legarda, the event's keynote speaker, said she would file an energy efficiency bill in the 17th Congress, as part of the country's commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

Legarda said she would monitor the enforcement of laws that promote de-carbonization, including the Clean Air Act, Renewable Energy Act and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

"We will track compliance with equally important laws that help us prepare for climate realities, including the Clean Water Act, Climate Change Act, the Environmental Awareness and Education Act, the People's Survival Fund Law and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act," Legarda said.

She said she would push for the progressive reduction of least-efficient coal-fired power plants and work toward banning their construction.

Despite its commitment to reduce carbon emissions, the Aquino administration has approved 21 new coal-fired plant projects in the past five years.

Gore urged sectors demanding government action on climate change to continue what he described as a "moral struggle" amid the Philippines' continued support for coal-fired power plants.

He compared the climate movement to those who fought for the abolition of slavery, civil rights, and the right of women to vote, saying such advocacies faced stiff resistance before they succeeded.

Gore said the people should pressure their leaders to act on climate change despite efforts by skeptics to muddle the issue.

He said that while the Philippines has experienced a number of weather-related disasters in almost two decades, the country is still reluctant to use clean energy.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Why is PH building 25 more coal-powered plants?

By Tarra Quismundo

THE WORLD'S foremost advocate for climate action and the country's top environmental legislator yesterday called for a greater switch to renewable energy in the Philippines and around the world, citing a global trend to abandon fossil fuels for solar, wind and other zero-carbon energy sources.

Former US Vice President Al Gore, chair of the Climate Reality Project, and Sen. Loren Legarda pointed out the seeming paradox in the Philippines' stance on climate change yesterday at the opening day of the Manila leg of Gore's international climate action training.

For while the Philippines helped in reaching global consensus to limit the global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius at the historic Paris climate talks last December, it is forging ahead with the construction of 25 coal-fired power plants in the country in the next decade.

"Philippine consumption of coal has been on the upswing, which increased by 27 percent between 2012 and 2014. If global projections point to a decline in the share of coal in power generation, why is the Philippines taking the opposite track?" Legarda said in her speech.

25 coal plants

She said government's solution to the Philippines' projected need for 13,167 megawatts of power by 2030 was to resort to the "easy and affordable" yet pollutive solution of putting up more coal-fed power plants, contrary to the global direction it advocated in Paris.

The 25 planned facilities have been granted environmental compliance certificates and "are now either operational or under construction," Legarda said.

What the "easy and affordable" explanation fails to consider is the fact that there are external costs to coal, which, if considered, would render the coal-fired power plant as one of



CLIMATE CHANGE Sen. Loren Legarda talks about the "The Road to Decarbonization" during the Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training.

RICHARD A. REYES

the most expensive forms of power generation.

"Coal-fired power plants' impacts on health, air quality, climate and life—above anything else—are more vital considera-

tions," said Legarda, who helped organize Gore's three-day visit to Manila.

She vowed to spend her remaining three years in the Senate to work toward a ban on

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Why is PH building
25 more coal
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coal-fired power plants.

"We will push for the progressive reduction of least-efficient coal-fired power plants and will work toward banning their construction," said Legarda, the Global Champion for Resilience of the United Nations' International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

Gore hopes the Manila climate training could bring attention to the irony, saying in his two-hour presentation: "The Philippines is now about to build more coal plants. Maybe, maybe not. Maybe we can have an impact on that."

PH lagging

He presented slides that showed how the Philippines was lagging in the shift to renewable energy, even as developing countries like Pakistan, Chile and Bangladesh have increased use of renewable sources, primarily solar power.

The United States, one of the world's biggest energy consumers, is abandoning coal-fed power plants. Currently, coal-

sourced power accounts for 0.01 percent of the national total, while the highest are wind and solar energy, each accounting for a third of the supply.

"All the proposed [coal-fired power] plants have been defeated by public opposition. These are all plants where retirement has been announced," Gore said.

In the Philippines, coal accounted for 29 percent of electricity production in 2014, while oil was the source of 23 percent of power. Hydroelectric power is at 18 percent, natural gas at 14 percent, geothermal at 10 percent, and waste at 4 percent.

Accounting for only 2 percent of electricity production are solar, wind and biomass altogether amid the global decline in fossil fuel use and the "exponential growth" of renewable energy use.

Gore said the sun produced "enough energy every single hour to provide the entire world's full energy use for a year."

AL GORE AND MY CLIMATE STORY



EAGLE EYES
DEAN TONY LA VIÑA

AS I wrote in my previous column, The Climate Reality Project is hosting a climate leadership training event in Manila this week. Participants came from all over the Philippines to learn about climate change and how to communicate about this challenge. The objective is to train many Filipinos to join the Climate Reality Leadership Corps, described by the Climate Reality Project as "a global network of activists committed to taking on the climate crisis and solving what is far and away the greatest challenge of our time." The aim is to catalyze a "dynamic group of world-changers shaping the conversation on climate in forums from family dinners to international summits and building a 21st-century movement for solutions."

The training program, being held in the Philippines for

the first time, forms leaders and makes them exceptional. Participants are exposed to climate science and provided communications and organizing skills so they can share the story of climate change. The hope is that these leaders will inspire communities everywhere to take action.

The idea, as the Climate Reality Project has articulated, "is to bring a global challenge down to street level." According to their website: "We hear it on the news and see it in the headlines: climate change is transforming our seasons and our planet. But in between all the media chatter, it can be hard to know what climate change actually means for our daily lives—or what we can do to solve it."

This is the role then of the Climate Reality Leadership Corps: "Climate Reality Leaders are messengers and activists personally trained by former US Vice President Al Gore to share the truth about what climate change is doing to our world and how we can stop it by shifting to

clean, renewable energy. Climate Reality Leaders break down the complex terms of science and policy into the language of everyday life so people everywhere can understand how climate change directly affects them and join the millions worldwide working for solutions. Climate Reality Leaders regularly hold public forums on climate change and solutions all around the world."

Its founder and Chairman Al Gore, former Vice President of the United States inspires the Climate Reality Project. He is leading the training in Manila, delivering several talks, including moderating the panel I will be joining on Wednesday.

On the first day of the training (that was yesterday, Monday), Mr. Gore presented the updated version of his "An Inconvenient Truth" which won him an Emmy and eventually the Nobel Peace Prize. Before the training, to be sure he could speak from experience about climate change and the Philippines, Mr. Gore went to Tacloban City and

toured the Yolanda/Haiyan-devastated city with Mayor Alfred Romualdez and Senator Loren Legarda. In his presentations yesterday, he also bothered to use the Filipino names of the biggest storms, again grounding the problem of climate change in our experience.

As I shared in the training yesterday, I must confess to being personally inspired by Al Gore. Among others, I did my doctoral dissertation in Yale University on climate change because of his book "Earth in the Balance." I remember particularly these words from that book:

"We can believe in the future and work to achieve it and preserve it, or we can whirl blindly on, behaving as if one day there will be no children to inherit our legacy. The choice is ours; the earth is in balance."

Later in Kyoto, Japan, when I negotiated the Kyoto Protocol for the Philippines, I rejoiced when Mr. Gore, then US Vice-President, instructed the American delegation to be more flexible

in the final stretch of the negotiations. That intervention was critical to get the Kyoto Protocol adopted.

I was working in Washington, DC in 2000 when Mr. Gore lost the presidential elections by act of the US Supreme Court. I was heartbroken with that, even as that later enabled me to meet him in person as he joined the board of the World Resources Institute where I worked as a senior fellow.

Finally, in 2006, having returned to the Philippines to become the Dean of the Ateneo School of Government, I was persuaded by Mr. Gore's documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" to jump back into the climate issue. Eventually, I returned to the climate change negotiations and have been a lead negotiator of the Philippines all the way to the Paris conference on climate change.

In Paris last December, I met Mr. Gore again and was touched by the empathy he showed when, as Rappler recalled, he told us "When the

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Al Gore... From A11

suffering of the people of Tacloban was understood and felt by people around the world, it had a profound effect on the way people understood the impact of this stronger storm."

In the final stretch of the Paris negotiations, as we went sleepless to nail down the historic agreement, I found myself recalling the opening words of Mr. Gore as he showed us the

iconic picture of our planet:

"You see that pale, blue dot? That's us. Everything that has ever happened in all of human history has happened on that pixel. All the triumphs and all the tragedies, all the wars, all the famines, all the major advances.... It's our only home. And that is what is at stake: our ability to live on planet Earth, to have a future as a civilization. I believe this is a moral issue. It is your time to seize this issue; it is our time to rise again

to secure our future."

His final words in that documentary are also memorable and inspired me to complete the work in Paris:

"Future generations may well have occasion to ask themselves, 'What were our parents thinking? Why didn't they wake up when they had a chance?' We have to hear that question from them, now."

"I believe this is a moral issue. It is your time to seize this issue. It is our time to rise again,

to secure our future."

Yesterday, here in Manila, Mr. Gore echoed this again. He quoting from a favorite American poet, Wallace Stevens: "After the final no, there comes a yes, and on that yes, the future world depends." Mr. Gore recalled the most important moral struggles of history—slavery, women's suffrage, racism, among others—and pointed out how the fight to change these was met by a no many times. Eventually

the tide was turn and the choice became binary—right or wrong, good or evil. We are at this moment on climate change, Mr. Gore said, and that is why we will win this fight.

I have worked on helping the world overcome the challenge of climate change for 25 years. With Gore's inspiring words, I can do another 25, even more.

Facebook: Dean Tony La Viña
Twitter: tonylavs

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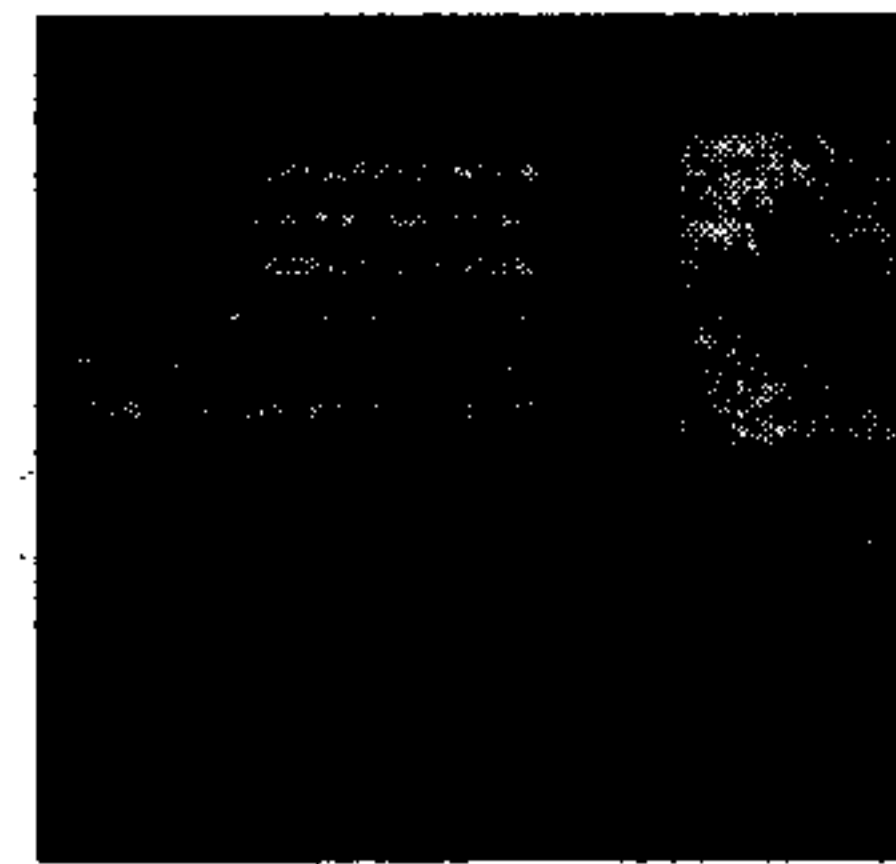
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

JOINT STEPS

US, Canada agree on methane emissions cut to fight climate change



WASHINGTON, DC, United States (Reuters) — The United States and Canada have agreed joint steps to fight climate change, including cutting methane emissions from existing oil and gas industry and signing the Paris climate deal “as soon as feasible,” the White House said on Thursday.

The agreement comes ahead of an Oval Office meeting between Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and President Barack Obama at the White House.

The two countries are seeking to improve cooperation on energy after Obama last year rejected the Keystone XL crude oil pipeline project aimed at bringing heavy Canadian oil to the United States which was promoted by Trudeau’s predecessor, Stephen Harper.

The countries committed to cutting emissions of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, by 40 to 45 percent below 2012 levels by 2025, to take steps to fight climate change in the Arctic, and to speed development of green technologies.

Under the agreement, the US Environmental Protection Agency will begin developing regulations for methane emissions from existing oil and gas sources immediately and “will move as expeditiously as possible to complete this process.”

Meanwhile, Environment and Climate Change Canada “intends to publish an initial phase of proposed regulations by early 2017,” and put in place national regulations in collaboration with provinces, territories, and indigenous groups.

After the US Supreme Court last month ruled to delay implementation of Obama’s Clean Power Plan on fighting emissions from power plants, moving ahead on cutting methane emissions could help Washington meet its pledges at last year’s global talks on climate in Paris. Obama has said he believes that plan is on secure legal grounds.

The United States and Canada also agreed on Thursday to work together to implement the Paris agreement and sign it “as soon as feasible.”

They agreed to endorse the World Bank’s Zero Routine Flaring initiative to reduce wasteful burning of natural gas at production fields, and to reduce emissions of hydrofluorocarbons or HFCs, which are industrial gases with a high potential to trap the earth’s heat.

In the Arctic, the countries agreed to set standards on shipping, fishing, and oil and gas exploration and development and to base decisions on scientific evidence.

That development will occur “only when the highest safety and environmental standards are met,” the agreement said.

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Looming water world

AL GORE was scheduled to speak at a conference in Manila this week, but news that the environmental activist and former US vice president arrived in the Philippines last Saturday still caught most of the media unaware. Gore first flew to Tacloban, Leyte, site of one of the world's most devastating storms on record; this week in Manila, he is presiding over the leadership training of some 700 "climate warriors" from all over Asia, organized by the US non-governmental organization Climate Reality Project which he founded and chairs.

The visit to Tacloban served to swerve the spotlight back to the province that, in 2013, bore the horrific brunt of Supertyphoon "Yolanda," the unprecedented scale and power of which, many scientists said, appeared to herald a new age of ever more destructive disruptions in the world ecosystem due to the damage created by climate change. Specifically, as the planet continues to grow warmer, its oceans are projected not only to rise to inundate vast tracts of coastlines and low-lying communities, but also to churn up storms of greater strength and ferocity, inflicting displacement and hardship on millions of people unprepared for such wrenching changes.

In this perfect storm of rising tides and bigger typhoons, the Philippines appears to be an unfortunate frontliner, as an archipelago in the Pacific. "The ocean waters around the Philippines are warming faster than anywhere else on the planet," said Gore. That is not an unsupported assertion. Just last October, Science Daily reported: "According to data by the World Meteorological Organization, the water levels around the Philippines are rising at a rate almost three times the global average due partly to the influence of the trade winds pushing ocean currents."

A study by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007 already mentioned that, with sea levels rising from 18 to 58 centimeters, the Philippines would rank as the fourth nation most vulnerable in the world, with 16 of its regions immediately at risk of being submerged. Another study by Climate Central, a US-based research group, warns that the continued rise in the world's temperatures would see New York, Shanghai, Hong Kong,

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Mumbai, Miami and other major cities inundated, along with countless smaller communities all over China, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, the Philippines and other places in Asia, which is "home to 75 percent of the populations that today reside in zones that would no longer be classified as land in a climate-altered future," according to the study as quoted by Agence France-Presse.

About 20 million of those people are in the Philippines, in megacities like Manila, a flood-prone area even in historic times, and Davao, which may see much of its city center progressively underwater once Davao Gulf begins rising. Many parts of Mindanao are also in danger—the islands of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Basilan, the coastal areas of Zamboanga and Maguindanao. The region is already in the grips of a relentless El Niño, another byproduct of climate change, which this year is said to have brought the strongest, most intense visitation of the phenomenon in the last 50 years.

In Manila, Gore has spoken out against the building of more coal plants, the industrial technology that burns greenhouse gases and contributes the most to global warming. Too bad he doesn't appear to have a meeting scheduled with President Aquino; he could bring the message directly to the apparently inattentive leader, who, not too long ago at the Paris climate talks, lamented that "countries like the Philippines bear a disproportionate amount of the burden when it comes to climate change," and also said his administration "continues to pursue vital reforms to address climate change" and "to make interventions that mitigate the impacts of climate change."

That was last December. Barely a month later, in early January, Mr. Aquino was in Davao to open a new coal-powered plant, among the 21 such projects that have been green-lighted by his administration.

There is no longer much to hope for in the current dispensation, it thus appears. If the Philippines must begin to seriously fortify itself against climate change, the electorate should demand of the five contenders for the presidency concrete, feasible policies on how they plan to save this country from the looming climate apocalypse.

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NOWHERE IN THE AGENDA

[EDITORIAL]

FORMER United States Vice President Al Gore visited Tacloban City over the weekend to see for himself how the people had rebuilt their lives after surviving one of the strongest weather events on record.

Upon his return to Manila, he led a three-day training among so-called climate warriors who would amplify calls on government, corporations and individuals alike to do something to mitigate the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Gore established the scientific link between the increase in global temperature and the occurrence of extreme weather events. He also emphasized that the Philippines tops the list of countries most vulnerable to the

effects of climate change even as its emissions, both historical and current, have been insignificant.

Talking about the climate is as timely as it is urgent. "We do not have centuries; we have years," Gore said. This backdrop sets the stage for a more popularized discussion of the effects of climate change and means of mitigation and adaptation.

But why isn't the discussion happening right now in the context of the Philippine elections, less than two months away?

Climate change is hardly mentioned as presidential candidates go around communities, shake the hands of voters and present what they intend to if they get elected. There is talk about addressing poverty,

improving education, upgrading infrastructure and pursuing some path or another.

There is no mention, however, of how to balance the country's power needs with the recognition that sources of energy should shift from coal-based to clean. Experience tells us that while renewable energy like solar and wind may cost more to establish, there is an ultimate hidden cost to sticking with fossil-fuel based sources. In fact, the Philippines—led by President Aquino himself—committed to this by signing the Paris agreement along with 195 other nations in December.

Disasters end lives and undo gains realized over decades, and it is a wonder that government officials only talk about reduc-

ing and managing disaster risk in the aftermath of such an event. There has also been no progress in proposals to institutionalize an agency that would lead DRR efforts. At present, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council is composed of several agencies that must hurdle coordination challenges on top of actually

addressing the needs of the affected communities.

A few weeks remain until the people are expected to cast their votes on May 9. There is still time to raise the questions that matter. The answers may not be as racy as those made attacking other candidates, but these responses will give us a better idea of how these aspirants regard the job they are applying for.

Nowhere in the agenda

OPINION



Daily Tribune

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Tourism Department and hotel owners commit to Green Building Code

ICE

The Department of Tourism (DoT) and the Philippine Hotel Owners Associations, Inc. (PHOAI) announced their joint commitment to ensure that hotels in the country adopt green practices and help curb greenhouse gas emissions during the "Forum on Greening the Hotel Industry" yesterday.

A joint statement was signed by DoT Undersecretary Maria Victoria Jasmin, representing Tourism Secretary Ramon Jimenez Jr., and PHOAI president Arthur Lopez, to pledge government and private sector commitment to abide by the Philippine Green Building (GB) Code issued by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in June 2015.

Undersecretary Jasmin lauded the presence of the hotel decision makers during the forum, citing it as "strong proof of their commitment" to the initiative. Tourism Secretary Jimenez said in an earlier statement read by Jasmin during the forum that "greening the hotel industry provides that one big window of opportunity to sustain the growth of this rising tiger in Asia. Through our collaboration with the hotel industry, we can offer cleaner air and a greener environment to travelers, and we help hotel owners bring down their electricity cost. That translates to a more competitive environment for the tourism industry."

PHOAI president Arthur Lopez pledged that the Philippine Green Building Code will be on "top of the list" of hotel owners. He also committed that the hotel owners "will improve energy efficiency" of their establishments and will use only "the best technologies and practices." According to him, this initiative is only the beginning as he expects this core group to cascade all the information from this forum to their colleagues.

In an earlier interview, Public Works Secretary

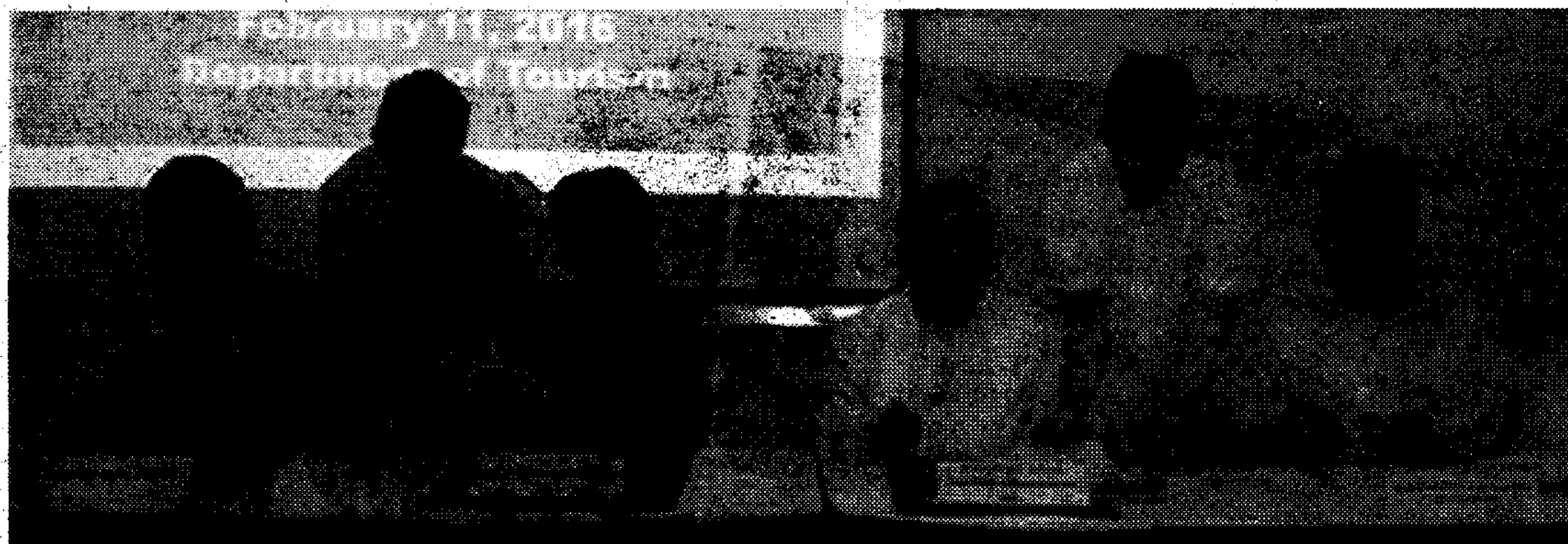
Rogelio Singson welcomed DoT and the hotel owners as "partners in greening the tourism industry and making it sustainable." According to him, this collaboration will position the hotel industry as a "major contributor in achieving the country's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution of 70 percent reduction in carbon emissions by year 2030."

The signing of the joint statement was witnessed by representatives of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the DPWH.

Jesse Ang, principal investment officer of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, called this joint partnership an important initiative that is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. "Increasing resource use efficiency, greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technology and industrial practices and reducing waste generation thru reduction, recycle and reuse" are, according to Ang, the requirements for "resilient infrastructure" as specified by the UN.

The forum also featured a presentation on Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies by Autif Sayyed of the IFC-WBG; and Sustainable Energy Finance by Julius Respicio of the Bank of Philippine Islands.

Issued in June 2015, the GB Code provides a framework of standards that will enhance sound environmental and resource management, including efficient use of materials, site selection, planning, design, construction, use, occupancy, operation and maintenance of buildings without significant increase in cost. By 2030, the Code estimates to increase energy savings by 3.9 million megawatt hour annually and reduce greenhouse gas emission by 1.87 million metric tons.



Signing the joint statement between the DoT and the PHOAI are DoT Undersecretary Maria Victoria Jasmin of the Tourism Regulation, Coordination and Resource Generation (second from left) and PHOAI president Arthur Lopez (second from right). Witnessing the signing are (leftmost) Jesse Ang, Principal Investment Officer of the International Finance Corporation-World Bank Group (IFC-WBG), and Johnson Domingo of the Department of Public Works and Highways (rightmost).