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18 MAR 2016

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IN THE NEWS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Camiguin gets recognition as key part of biodiversity in PH

By Robert Jaworski L. Abaño
and Jigger Jerusalem,
Inquirer Mindanao

MAMBAJAO, Camiguin—
A Northern Mindanao province
formed by nature's wrath has
been officially recognized as the
center of one of the most di-
verse protected landscapes in
the country.

On Wednesday, environment
officials, the Camiguin provincial
government, the Asean Centre
for Biodiversity (ACB) and their
partners gathered in this provin-
cial capital to witness the launch
of the Mounts Timpoong Hibok-
Hibok Natural Monument (MTH-
NM) as the Philippines' eighth
Asean Heritage Park (AHP).

These natural wonders in the
volcanic island province of
Camiguin, which were officially
recognized as AHP in October
last year, are the third AHP
landmarks in Northern Min-
danao, after the Mt. Kitanglad
Range Natural Park in Bukid-
non province in 2009 and Mt.
Malindang Range Natural Park
in Misamis Occidental in 2011.

The Association of Southeast
Asian Nations (Asean) has re-
cognized 37 AHPs in Southeast
Asia since 1984 when it named
the first 11 protected areas in
the region.

A fact sheet from ACB, the
secretariat for the AHP Pro-
gramme, described AHPs as
"protected areas of high conser-

vation importance, preserving
in total a complete spectrum of
representative ecosystems of
the Asean region."

"These areas are established
to generate greater awareness,
pride, appreciation, enjoyment
and conservation of Asean's rich
natural heritage, through a re-
gional network of representa-
tive protected areas," it said.

Markers recognizing MTH-
NM as AHP have been installed
in Sitio Itum in Barangay Bay-
lao here to recognize the areas'
importance to the country's bio-
diversity.

At ceremonies at the Camigu-
in provincial convention center
here, lawyer Roberto Oliva,
ACB executive director, credit-

ed the Camiguin local govern-
ment with its work on the decla-
ration of MTHNM as AHP.

Oliva said with the declara-
tion, Camiguin should expect
technical assistance, informa-
tion sharing and support from
the international community to
preserve the heritage park.

"My coming here demon-
strates how serious we are in re-
alizing your dreams in (preserv-
ing your natural resources)...
The MTHNM will be the next
wonder Asean park," he said.

Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus
Romualdo said while his province
is the second smallest in the
country in terms of population
and land area, this "paradise" is
packed with natural wonders.

Gov. Jurdin Jesus Romualdo
described the AHP declaration
as another feather in the cap of
Camiguin, which was a result of
cooperation between officials
and different groups to preserve
the local environment.

Merlyn Dumalahay, provin-
cial environment and natural
resources officer of Camiguin,
said the declaration would
boost not just the morale of
Camiguinons but improve
tourist traffic as well.

These areas, she said, have
view decks and other basic
amenities for tourists but facili-
ties should be improved and de-
veloped to attract more Filipino
and foreign visitors to enjoy the
heritage park.

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DENR allots P100 million for Camiguin's coastal rehab

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

MAMBAJAO, Camiguin—Camiguin Gov. Jurdin Jesus M. Romualdo is eyeing to access a P100-million budget allocated for the rehabilitation of the province's marine and coastal ecosystem within the year.

Speaking during the declaration of the Mounts Timpoong-Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument (MTHNM) as the 37th Asean Heritage Park (AHP) on Wednesday, Romualdo said that no less than Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Field Operations Demetrio Ignacio assured him that the funds will be downloaded to the province soon.

Interviewed by the BUSINESSMIRROR, Ignacio confirmed the budget allocation for Camiguin under the 2016 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

"That is in the GAA. The downloading will depend on the work and financial plan. It will not be downloaded all at once. It depends on the program. The LGU [local government unit] will be the one to implement it. We promised to expedite the release, but not necessarily the whole budget," he said.

"We are hoping we can download some of the fund before March 25. But not all of it. It depends on what is needed," Ignacio added.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) ban on release of fund starts on March 25. Camiguin Provincial Environment Officer (PENRO) Merlyn Dumalahay said the work and financial plan is still a work in progress.

"The budget for marine and coastal rehabilitation will be for marine protected areas [PAs] within the province," she added.

According to Dumalahay, the province has a total of 31 marine PAs or sites

and the budget will have to be spread out based on the need.

She said the budget will be used partly for awareness campaign, social preparation and actual rehabilitation of affected coastal and marine ecosystems.

Both Romualdo and Ignacio were special guests during the event, wherein the province's top official also announced the plan to shift from conventional agriculture to organic agriculture.

"Starting in June, we will start to go organic," Romualdo said.

Romualdo noted that because of excessive use of fertilizers in some areas, some of the province's corals are dying.

"They [corals] are becoming brittle. That is the effect of chemical fertilizers that ends up in our coastal waters," he said. Severely affected, he added, are corals in the town of Mahinog.

Romualdo underscored the need to prevent further damage to the province's marine ecosystem for the long-term benefit of the people in the province, including fishermen and those who depend on ecotourism.

"I am proud to say that what other provinces in Mindanao, we also have here in Camiguin. We have white-sand beaches with pristine waters," he said.

The province's top official is confident that farmers in the province will do what is good for them.

"I am confident they will abide by the policy," he said.

Camiguin was put in the limelight because of the recent declaration of the MTHNM as an AHP. The prestigious title is expected to boost tourist arrivals in the province. AHPs represent the best of the best protected areas in Southeast Asia.

The Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), which acts as secretariat of the Asean Heritage Parks Programme helps promote conservation effort of AHPs.

THE RECORD OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



PROTECTING NATURE'S GIFTS – Photo shows the Buhisan Watershed Forest Reserve which is part of the Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL). The Cebu Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office has laid down efforts, including allotting at least ₱1.5 million to protect and enhance the CCPL. CCPL is home to the Buhisan, Mananga, and Kotkot-Lusaran watershed forest reserves. Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office Chief Federico Carreon said efforts are being done to continue its reforestation activities in the CCPL. (Juan Carlo de Vela)

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EDITORIAL

Ardent partners for climate protection

OVER 700 "climate warriors" are now in the Philippines from all over Asia for training by the Climate Reality Leadership Training Corps., a program of the Climate Reality Project founded by former United States Vice President Al Gore, today the world's foremost champion of climate protection.

The Philippines is a specially apt site for the training program. It is particularly vulnerable to Pacific typhoons but it displayed courage and resilience in the wake of super-typhoon Yolanda which hit the Visayas in November, 2013, Gore said. The Philippines also has advanced climate change laws which are now seen as models for the rest of the world, he added.

Scientists predict that typhoons which come sweeping westward from the Pacific Ocean are likely to become stronger with the continued warming of the oceans. More than 90 percent of the heat trapped by global warming goes into the oceans and the waters around the Philippines are now warming faster than anywhere else on the planet.

Philippine waters are not only warming. They are also rising. Our own Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources Ramon Paje disclosed the other day that satellite data from 2002 to 2014 showed that sea levels around the Philippines rose by 14 millimeters a year, higher than the average global sea rise of three millimeters a year. Coastal communities are, therefore, at risk, he said.

For its worldwide campaign against climate change, Al Gore's Climate Reality Project now has about 6,000 grassroots leaders conducting training sessions such as the one held in Manila. They are in over 57 countries working on every level of society. They seek to convince the nations of the world to reduce their current heavy reliance on power produced in coal, oil, and gas plants, and shift to renewable energy.

The Philippines still has many coal-powered plants but it is moving in a big way towards solar, wind, and geothermal energy plants. In the last five years, the Board of Investments approved P170-billion investments in 144 renewable energy projects. We have a National Greening Program with a target of reforesting 15 million hectares of denuded lands this year. The new forests will serve to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, one of the principal causes of global warming.

Al Gore and his Climate Reality Project will find in the Philippines a ready and ardent partner in the global effort against climate change. We have suffered from its worst effects but we are determined to do what we can to mitigate its continuing threats with our steady development of our renewable energy resources.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

and shine a light
on Climate Action

Earth Hour

SM
CARES

Supporting Communities.
www.smcares.com.ph

Earth Hour rekindles SM's climate change advocacy

All 56 SM malls around the country, plus seven in China, will be turning their lights off at exactly 8:30 PM on March 19 in observation of Earth Hour. This is the 8th year that SM has supported the world's largest public campaign for the environment. The Philippines was one of the top 10 countries with the highest number of participants in 2015.

This year's theme, "Shine a Light on Climate Action", reiterates Earth Hour's goals of not only getting public support for climate change mitigation and adaptation but also getting individuals and groups to do their share beyond the one-hour symbolic switching off of lights.

...the public to visit the nearest SM

has been part of SM's business strategies for decades. Natural disasters will happen, and we all have to be prepared not just for our business but also for the communities we serve" SM Prime Holdings President Hans T. Sy said.

For many years now, SM has been taking sustainability initiatives that include water recycling facilities, rainwater catchment tanks, and LED lighting systems. Regular Trash to Cash activities are also conducted wherein the public can exchange specified recyclable or reusable trash for cash. In 2014, SM North EDSA installed the country's first and biggest commercial solar rooftop at 1.5MW. Soon, more SM malls around the country will have solar panels on its

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Earth Hour prepares to shine light on climate action

AS the world enters a new era of climate action, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) again urges its supporters to switch off and shine a light on climate action. From 8:30 to 9:30 pm on March 19, Saturday, Earth's most iconic landmarks will once more switch off their lights for Earth Hour 2016. WWF-Philippines revealed its campaign plans recently at a kick-off at the Raffles and Fairmont Hotel in Makati City. It was led by its National Ambassadors Marc Nelson, Rovilson Fernandez and Iza Calzado, plus Earth Hour Steward Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski. Earth Hour, which began as a single-city event in 2007, celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2016.

Earth Hour Philippines's main switch-off event shall be held at the Quezon City Memorial Circle from 7 to 10 pm on March 19.

"It shall be a showcase of climate solutions," Earth Hour Philippines Director Atty. Gia Ibay explained. "Stationary bikes will partially power this year's event to show that, united, Pinoys can light up this country with their collective energy. Together, anything is possible." Earth Hour uses the simple action of turning off lights for 60 minutes to deliver a powerful message

about the need for decisive climate-change solutions. In the past decade, the movement has grown from a symbolic switch-off event in Sydney, Australia, to the world's largest open-sourced environmental campaign mobilizing hundreds of millions of people in over 7,000 cities and 172 countries.

The Philippines has been championing the switch off since 2008 and has topped participation records from 2009 to 2013, earning it the title of Earth Hour Hero Country. A growing list of allies has pledged to support this year's efforts, led by government partners, such as the Climate Change Commission, departments of Budget and Management, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs, Health, the Interior and Local Government, National Defense, National Economic and Development Authority, Science and Technology, League of Cities of the Philippines, League of Provinces of the Philippines, Local Government of Quezon City, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

Corporate champions include ArthaLand, Banana Peel, Coca-Cola, Healthy Options, H&M Philippines,

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Earth Hour prepares to shine light on climate change



EARTH Hour is championed by a host of celebrities and opinion leaders who have pledged to fight for climate change. Shown with World Wide Fund's (WWF) Chi-Chi the Panda are WWF-Philippines National Ambassadors Marc Nelson and Rovilson Fernandez, plus WWF-Philippines Climate Solutions Steward Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski.

Philips, Starbucks and White Gold Club.

Technical partners include Anakata, Bemac, Global Electric Transport, Pivot Edutainment, Renewable Energy Association of the Philippines and Solar Solutions.

Earth Hour is a media-driven campaign and shall be promoted through strong alliances with ABS-CBN, ABS-CBN RNG, ABS-CBN Sports and Action, BUSINESSMIRROR, BusinessWorld, CNN

Philippines, Eagle Broadcasting Corp., Eagle News, dzUP, FleishmanHillard, FocusMedia, Global News Network, Leo Burnett, Net25, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippine Star, Orange Magazine TV, QCreativs, Radyo Pilipinas, Radyo Agila, Radyo Veritas, Rappler, Tech2Go, TV5 and Yuneoh. WWF is seeking more government, corporate and media support. Social-media users can promote their commitment to the planet by

donating their Facebook feeds to spread climate awareness and action in a few clicks on earthhour.org/climateaction.

Users can also use the hashtags #EarthHourPhilippines, #ChangeClimateChange and #RenewableIsDoable to promote climate solutions. "Social media knows no physical boundaries and neither does climate change," Earth Hour Global Executive Director Siddarth Das says. "A simple action on social media is the kind of powerful statement that can excite friends and communities to be a part of the climate action we need to take on this global challenge."

Since 2007, WWF and Earth Hour teams worldwide have harnessed the power of the movement to raise support and funds for access to renewable energy, protection of wildlife and their habitats, building sustainable livelihoods and driving climate-friendly legislation and policy. WWF Philippines, in turn, celebrates its 20th anniversary this 2016.

Earth Hour 2016 will be celebrated on March 19 between 8:30 and 9:30 pm in the Philippines and across the globe.

Visit www.earthhour.org and wwf.org for more stories on Earth Hour and climate solutions.

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Makiisa sa Earth Hour Bukas

Isang oras na makabuluhang pagpatay ng ilaw ng bawat indibidwal, komunidad maging ng mga businesses ang paanyaya ng World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature para sa ikasampung selebrasyon ng Earth Hour, bukas Marso 19.

Sa inyong local time zone, i-set ang 8:30 hanggang 9:30 ng gabi para makibahagi sa pagkilos na ito bilang pakikiisa ng lahat para protektahan ang nag-iisang planeta na tugma para sa atin, ang Planet Earth.

Ang Earth Hour ay nagsimula bilang lights-off event noong March 31, 2007 sa Australia para ipakita ang pagsuporta nila sa climate change action. Mahigit sa 2.2 milyong in-

dibidwal ang nakibahagi rito, at 2,000 businesses ang nagpatay ng kanilang ilaw sa loob ng isang oras sa unang pagkakataon.

Nakita ng WWF ang importansiya ng payak na pagkilos na ito, dahilan para ipagpatuloy nila ang kampanya at maging bahagi na ito ng bawat katapusan ng Marso.

Ang event na ito ay paghikayat na ang bawat isa sa atin ay may magagawa kahit sa pinakamaliit na paraan para maalagaan ang mundo, at ito ay nagsisimula sa simpleng pagpatay ng ilaw kasama ang iba pa sa iba't ibang bahagi ng mundo.

Ang Earth Hour ay nasa kanyang ikasampung taon na ngayong 2016.

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All-out gov't fight vs climate change urged

By Bernadette E. Tamayo

VICE presidential candidate Senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr. has underscored the need to integrate climate change mitigation in all aspects of governance in the country.

He aired the call after the visit to the country of environment advocate former US Vice President Al Gore who has been call-

ing for united global action on the effects of climate change.

"It is imperative for us to consider the effects of climate change in the planning and implementation of practically all government programs," said Marcos, chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Works.

He said that government infrastructure projects should be designed and implemented

to mitigate the effects of natural calamities brought about by climate change.

He cited the 2015 report of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction saying the Philippines was the fourth in the world among countries hit by the highest number of disasters.

"We should use the lessons learned from Super Typhoon Yolanda to

enable us to build structures that are designed to withstand natural disasters such as typhoons and floods," said Marcos.

He noted that many of the casualties of Super Typhoon Yolanda, which devastated the Visayas region in November 2013, perished in evacuation centers that collapsed due to strong winds or were submerged in the storm surge.

"We should make a

careful study to determine what needs to be done for disaster mitigation so that our infrastructures would be able to withstand natural calamities that could strike our country," said Marcos.

He also said that all concerned government agencies must improve their preparedness to launch relief and rescue operations during times of natural calamities.

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Hotel 101 backs Earth Hour

Hotel 101, the newest Filipino-owned and managed hotel group of Edgar "Injap" Sia, joins the worldwide Earth Hour celebration this March 19, 2016.

"We are proud to participate in the global call to change climate change and own up to our actions in lessening our carbon footprint," Hotel 101 general manager Lei Policarpio said.

"All our hotels, Hotel 101 Manila, Jinjiang Inn Ortigas, Jinjiang Inn Makati and Injap Tower Hotel in Iloilo, will simultaneously switch off non-essential hotel lights for an hour, which will start at 8:30 in the evening," she says.

"Similarly, we have a turn down invitation encouraging our guests to switch off room lights and switch on to social media and join us during this year's Earth Hour celebration," Policarpio said.

Hotel 101 manages several hotels in the Philippines, which includes Injap Tower Hotel, a 194-room hotel in the heart of the Iloilo Business District, Jinjiang Inn Makati and Jinjiang Inn Ortigas, with 59 and 95 business rooms and suites respectively and Hotel 101 Manila with 518 rooms in the Mall of Asia Complex.

Hotel 101 is a subsidiary of Hotel of Asia, Inc., which envisions having a total of 5,000-room inventory by 2020.

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Al Gore urges world leaders to sign Paris climate deal

WORLD leaders must show their commitment to tackling global warming by signing the Paris climate agreement at a ceremony in April at the United Nations, climate change activist and former US Vice President Al Gore said yesterday.

Gore said there was a "tremendous push" for heads of government to formally ink the accord, to keep up momentum for the deal struck by around 195 countries in December and to avert the worst impacts of climate change on vulnerable nations.

"There is an overwhelming amount of hope that the Paris climate agreement could be a turning point toward a more resilient, low-carbon future," Gore told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview. "While the deal is not enough by itself, it is a major step forward."

At the Paris climate talks, governments agreed to limit global temperature rise to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial times and pursue efforts to keep it to 1.5 degrees.

April 22 signing

Segolene Royal, France's environment minister who recently took over as chair of the UN-led climate negotiations, has said that between 80 and 100 countries are expected to sign the agreement in New York on April 22.

The agreement is due to take effect in 2020, but requires at least 55 countries representing at least 55 percent of global emissions to ratify it first.

Gore, who was in Manila to lead training for more than 700 local advocates for climate action under an international program he launched in 2006, praised the efforts of countries at high risk of climate impacts that had pressed for the lower 1.5 degree cap in Paris, led by the Philippines.

"I certainly hope that we can meet that 1.5 degrees goal, and I am very grateful to the Philippines for helping to include that goal in the Paris agreement," Gore said.

"Conventional economic analysis has convinced many people that it's not a realistic goal," he added.

But "nonconventional analysis that takes into account the unconventional dramatic change in renewable energy competitiveness has convinced others that actually we may have a chance to meet that goal," he said.

Renewable energy

The key is for countries to switch to renewable energy, Gore said. "With the Paris agreement, we send a signal to the business community that the way to a low-carbon future is going solar or wind or geothermal," he said.

As more and more people become aware of the challenges posed by the "climate crisis," more legal changes can be expected that support action, he noted, citing moves by China to adopt a national carbon emissions trading scheme next year.

"If you and I had been told three or four years ago that China would have a nationwide cap-and-trade program, it would have been hard to believe—but they will, and many other countries are moving in the same direction," Gore said.

Philippine Climate Change Commission Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman told the Thomson Reuters Foundation his country would sign the Paris agreement in April.

The Philippines has pledged to cut its carbon emissions by 70 percent from business as usual by 2030, conditional on international financial support, as part of the Paris deal. *Thomson Reuters Foundation*

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Climate change governance urged

BY JAIME R. PILAPIL REPORTER

CEBU CITY: Vice presidential candidate Senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. on Thursday called for integration of climate change mitigation in all aspects of governance from national to barangay level.

"It is imperative for us to consider the effects of climate change in the planning and implementation of practically all government programs," said Marcos, chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Works.

No less than former US Vice President Al Gore had visited Tacloban City recently to urge everybody to make concrete actions to

prepare for any eventuality. Thousands of Tacloban residents died when Typhoon Yolanda battered the city and the nearby islands in Nov. 2013.

Marcos said government infrastructure projects like classrooms should be designed and implemented to mitigate the effects of natural calamities brought about by climate change.

He cited the 2015 report of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction saying the Philippines was the fourth in the world among countries hit by the highest number of disasters.

He noted that many of the casualties of Yolanda perished in evacuation centers that collapsed due to strong winds or were submerged in the storm surge.

"We should use the lessons learned from super-typhoon Yolanda to enable us to build structures that are designed to withstand natural disasters such as typhoons and floods," he said.

Marcos said all concerned government agencies must improve their preparedness to launch relief and rescue operations during times of natural calamities.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Ardent partners for climate protection

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The Philippines is a specially apt site for the training program. It is particularly vulnerable to Pacific typhoons but it displayed courage and resilience in the wake of super-typhoon Yolanda which hit the Visayas in November, 2013, Gore said. The Philippines also has advanced climate change laws which are now seen as models for the rest of the world, he added.

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by 14 millimeters a year, higher than the average global sea rise of three millimeters a year. Coastal communities are, therefore, at risk, he said.

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The Philippines still has many coal-powered plants but it is moving in a big way towards solar, wind, and geothermal energy plants. In the last five years, the Board of Investments approved P170-billion investments in 144 renewable energy projects. We have a National Greening Program with a target of reforesting 15 million hectares of denuded lands this year. The new forests will serve to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, one of the principal causes of global warming.

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Marcos calls for integration of climate change mitigation

By Charlie V. Manalo

Vice presidential candidate Sen. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. yesterday called for integration of climate change mitigation in all aspects of governance in the country.

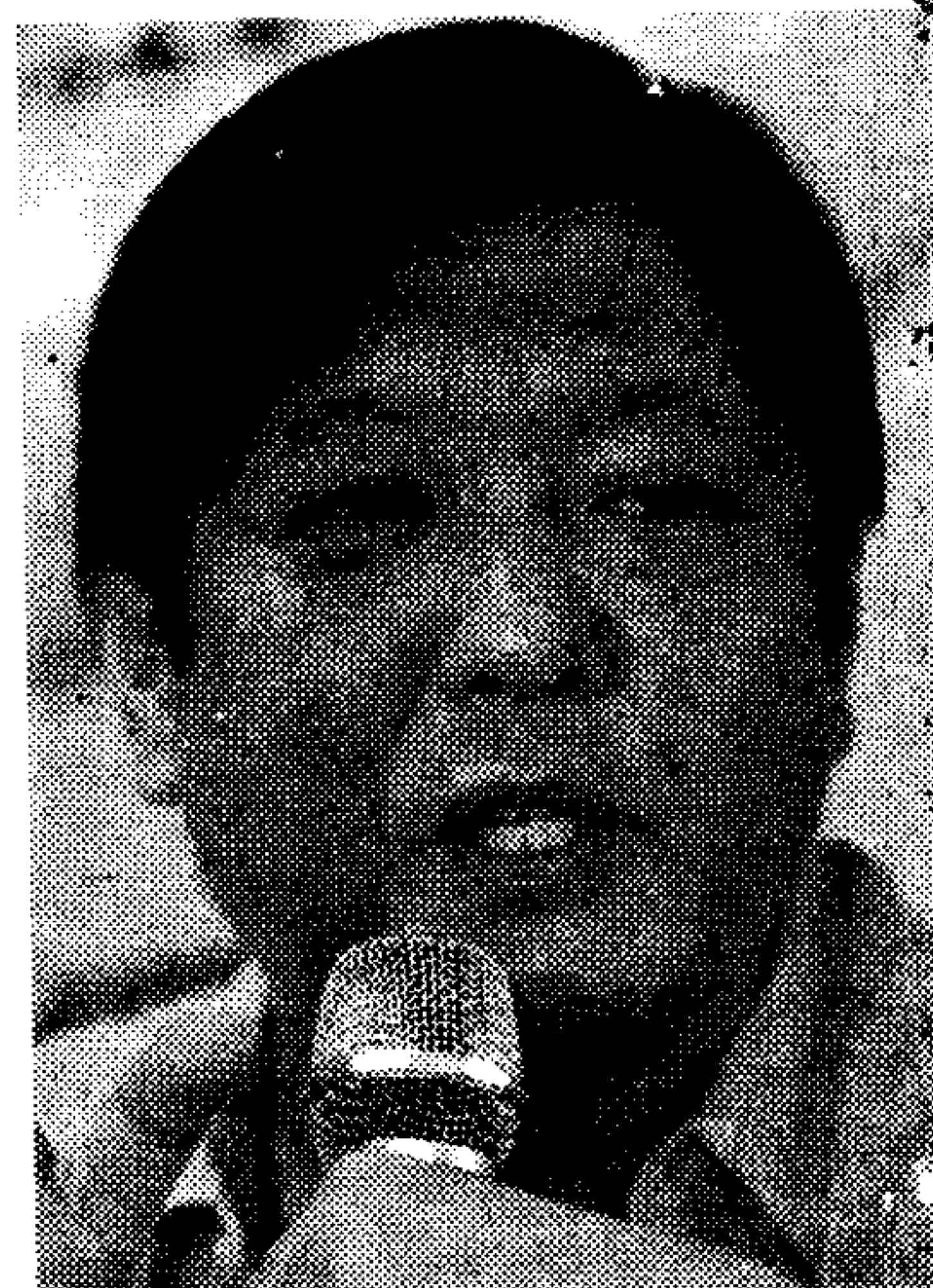
Marcos aired the call in the wake of the visit to the country of environment advocate, former US Vice President Al Gore, who has been calling for united global action to mitigate the effects of climate change.

"It is imperative for us to consider the effects of climate change in the planning and implementation of practically all government programs," said Marcos, chairman of the Senate committee on public works.

In particular, Marcos said government infrastructure projects should be designed and implemented to mitigate the effects of natural calamities brought about by climate change.

He cited the 2015 report of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction saying the Philippines was the fourth in the world among countries hit by the highest number of disasters.

Marcos said we should use the lessons learned from supertyphoon "Yolanda" to enable us to build structures that are designed to



MARCOS

withstand natural disasters such as typhoons and floods.

He noted that many of the casualties of Yolanda perished in evacuation centers that collapsed due to strong winds or were submerged in the storm surge.

"We should make a careful study to determine what needs to be done for disaster mitigation so that our infrastructures would be able to withstand natural calamities that could strike our country," Marcos said.

Likewise, Marcos said all concerned government agencies must improve their preparedness to launch relief and rescue operations during times of natural calamities.



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Green energy

In Pililla, Rizal, 27 wind turbines are not only generating 54 megawatts of electricity but are also turning into tourist attractions. Over in Bangui, Ilocos Norte, a combined solar and wind power plant – said to be the first of its kind in the world – has been providing energy to the province. In nearby Pagudpud, also in Ilocos Norte, another wind farm is generating 81 MW of power.

Alternative energy is gaining ground in the Philippines, and the government must provide the sector sufficient support. The other day, a 63.3-megawatt solar farm was inaugurated in Calatagan, Batangas. The largest of its kind in Luzon, the farm uses 200,000 solar panels and has the capacity to supply power to the entire western Batangas.

Clean energy can require a substantial amount of initial investment, and most developing countries are not ready to be weaned from cheap coal. But technology is rapidly catching

up with aspirations for green energy. Wind power is gaining popularity and investments continue to expand in geothermal power and natural gas. If the price of solar panels can be brought down, many Filipino households are sure to invest in the items that can mean significant reductions in their electricity bills.

Affordability remains the principal consideration when trying to sell clean energy to the people. Taxi drivers have embraced biodiesel because it is cheaper and so far has not destroyed their vehicle engines. Consumers now invest in more expensive but longer lasting and energy-efficient LED lights.

There's a big market for green products; environmental awareness has increased worldwide and consumers want to do their part in saving energy. The private sector has stepped in to meet the demand, and the government must provide all the necessary support.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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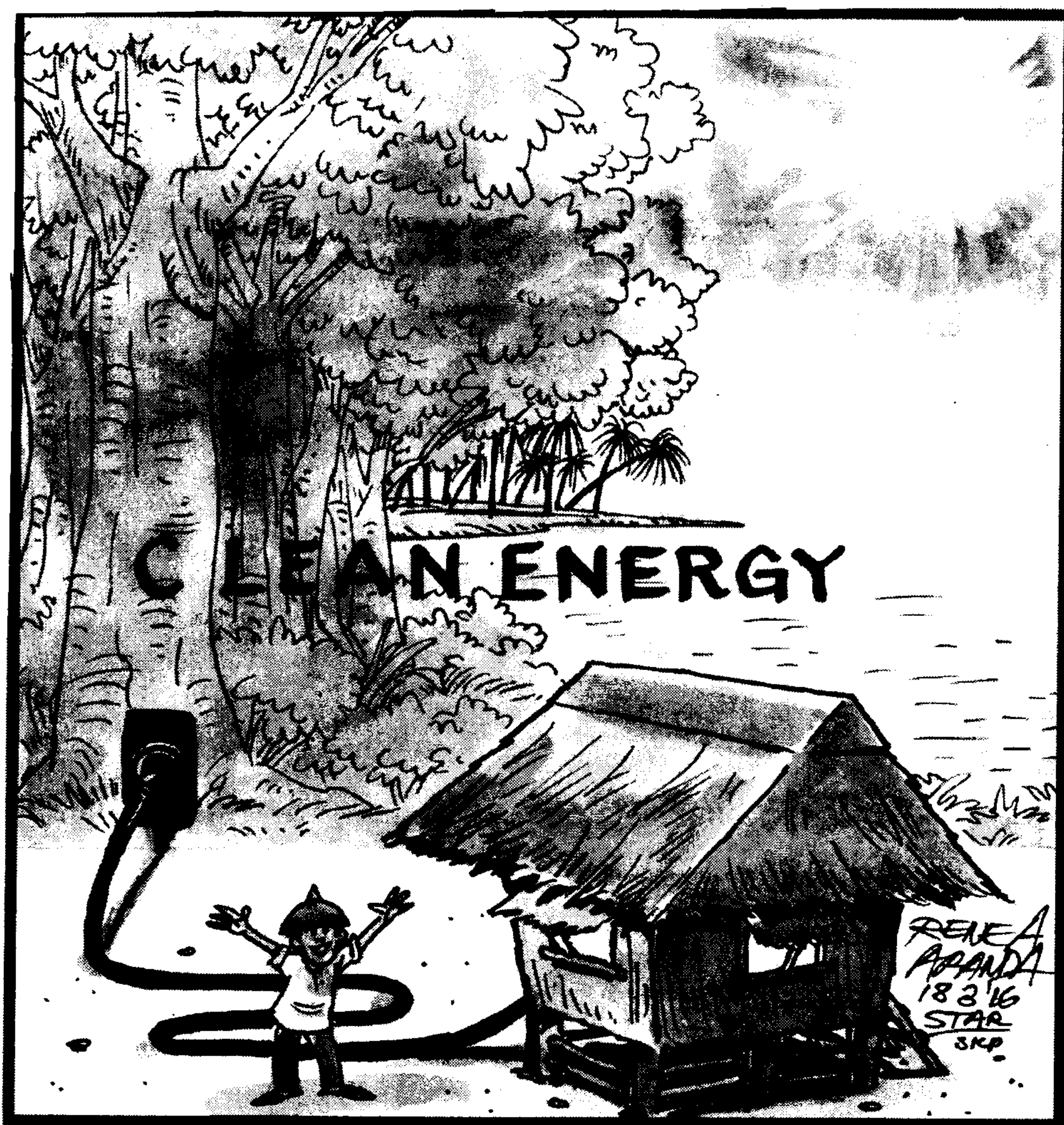
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PHL trails Asean neighbors even in UN happiness index

By CAI U. ORDINARIO

THE Philippines emerged as a regional laggard even in the World Happiness Index (WHI) 2013-2015 of the United Nations, another reflection of Filipinos' quality of life.

In the latest edition of the WHI, Philippines only edged Vietnam among the Asean-6 countries, with Singapore taking the top spot in the region.

The Philippines scored 5.27, with 10 as the highest, to rank 92nd among 157 countries. This is an improvement from being ranked 92nd among 156 countries in 2010-2012.

Singapore ranked 22nd with a score of 6.739, while Vietnam scored 5.61 points.

Globally, the happiest countries in the world are Denmark, with a score of 7.526, followed by Switzerland, with 7.5; Iceland, 7.501; Norway, 7.498; and Finland, 7.413.

We find that happiness is higher in countries closer to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals

[SDGs], as approved by the nations of the world in September 2015," the UN report stated.

The five countries at the bottom of the rankings are Burundi, with a score of 2.905; Syria, 3.069; Togo, 3.303; Afghanistan, 3.36; and Benin, 3.484.

The happiness index scores are explained by a country's GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity and perceptions of corruption, among others.

“We find that happiness is higher in countries closer to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.”—UN

82nd

Rank of the Philippines in the UN World Happiness Index 2013-2015 that covered 157 countries

“To achieve happiness requires the cultivation of mindfulness and virtue, to be sure; but it also requires an adequate command over material resources, as emphasized by economists; decent work; personal freedoms; good governance; and strong social ties,” the report stated.

“Of course, there are difficult and unsolved complexities in meeting this multidimensional challenge, especially in a world of 193 countries and 7.3 billion individuals,” it added.

The report explained, however, that the SDGs can be used to achieve happiness, because it does not focus on achieving just one

development objective.

The 17 SDGs have economic and environmental objectives. The first six goals of the SDG focused on social concerns, such as economic concerns, and the last three on environmental issues.

“Many countries in recent years have achieved economic growth at the cost of sharply rising inequality, entrenched social exclusion, and grave damage to the natural environment,” the report said. SDGs are designed to help countries achieve a more balanced approach, thereby leading to higher levels of well-being for the present and future generations.”

Leading experts across fields such as economics, psychology, sociology, survey analysis, national statistics, health, public policy, and more—describe how measurements of well-being can be used effectively to assess the progress of nations.

The reports review the state of happiness in the world today and show how the new science of happiness explains personal and national variations in happiness. They reflect a new worldwide demand for more attention to happiness as a criterion for government policy.

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NG Bank anticipates more opportunities in 'green power' for the Philippines

“The Burgos Wind Project bears witness to ING's growing focus on renewable energy and sustainable businesses in the region, where we see more opportunities like this in the near future.”

—ERWIN MASPOLIM

IN the face of poverty, climate change and continuing resource scarcity, sustainable finance emerges as a way to future-proof banks and the businesses they cater to.

The World Economic Forum, for instance, projected that \$5.7 trillion in investments will be needed by 2020 to finance green infrastructure, much of which will be in developing nations.

The stakes are particularly high in countries like the Philippines, which ranked as the 13th most climate-vulnerable country in the world, according to the 2016 Climate Change Vulnerability Index. Its extreme vulnerability to climate change requires better risk management and preparedness against extreme events, such as drought, flooding, and sea-level rise. Island-wide power cuts lasting several hours in Mindanao also present the urgency for long-term and manageable energy development.

As green, clean projects heed the call of the times, ING Bank is committed to strengthen its footing in sustainable finance. A decade ago ING Bank introduced environmental and social-risk policies on a sectoral basis—from defense and energy to agriculture—in its lending.

It later decided to take this a step further by supporting clients in accelerating their transitions to sustainable business practices. As a financial institution, it believes it can play a role by financing change, by sharing knowledge and using its influence to contribute to positive change and help clients in their own shift towards sustainability.

As a result, ING Bank is steadily increasing its volume of financing to sustainable clients and programs every year, reaching over €23.8 billion sustainable transitions financed in 2015, 22 percent higher than in 2014.

“We want to be the go-to bank for our clients to support them in their sustainable transitions,” ING Wholesale Banking CEO William Connelly who visited Manila last September said.

He pointed to the growing number of clients ING is facilitating sustainable financing for in the Philippines, as well as stronger cross-border wholesale-banking services to local- and multinational-corporate clients in Asia and Europe

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keen to expand beyond their borders.

A showcase of its deepening roots in green financing is the 150-megawatt (MW) Burgos wind farm in Ilocos Norte, the biggest in the country and the first wind project nominated for the government's feed-in-tariff incentive scheme. ING Bank also brought its windmill-financing expertise from its native Netherlands to the Philippines, via raising \$315 million for Energy Development Corp. in February last year. The project was also named the "Asia-Pacific Renewables Deal of the Year" by Project Finance International in 2015.

"The Burgos Wind Project bears witness to ING's growing focus on renewable energy and sustainable businesses in the region, where we see more opportunities like this in the near future," Erwin Maspolim, head of ING Wholesale Banking Asia's Utilities and Infrastructure Finance, said.

Maspolim is one of the key sustainability experts driving ING Bank's mainstream portfolio to support clients' sustainable transitions.

Included in the global renewable financing portfolio completed are the \$143-million financing of Project Semangka, a hydroelectric-power plant in Indonesia, which will generate clean energy for the next three decades; the \$800-million solar-powered ITN Towers in Africa, expected to greatly improve telecom infrastructure across parts of the continent that have limited connectivity to power grids; and the Oita solar PV project which is one of the longest tenor solar PV project financings signed by a foreign bank in Japan.

"We are positive about the growth of our solar PV projects globally, and we hope to bring our experience to other Asian countries like the Philippines where we see it making a significant environmental impact," Maspolim said.

Aside from solar energy, he also expects emerging opportunities in wind energy in the country, which now has an operational wind-energy capacity of 400 MW, the highest so far in the Asean.

As one of 196 countries who are signatories to the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, the Philippines committed to cut carbon emissions and build a carbon-free world economy.