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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Germany donates P200 M for Panay forest protection program

The German government has provided a P200-million grant for a forest protection project in Panay Island.

The agreement for the implementation of Forest and Climate (FORCLIM) Protection Panay Phase II was signed by Bernd Markus Liss of the German Development Cooperation-Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Environment Secretary Ramon Paje on Friday.

"Germany has remained consistently involved in the

country's forest conservation efforts," Paje said.

The project is seen to boost the country's compliance with its commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity as well the implementation of its intended nationally determined contributions to global greenhouse gas emission reduction under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

It is also targeted to contribute to the stabilization of the local climate, ensure water

supply for local households and rice production in the lowlands and reduce siltation in coastal areas caused by erosion in the uplands.

"With the accord, Panay Island is assured that its forests and biological diversities therein are well protected during the next three years and nine months," Paje said.

German Ambassador Thomas Ossowski, who witnessed the signing of the agreement, said the project is another step in the "excellent

cooperation" between the two countries.

"The Philippines has become a strategic partner of Germany in biodiversity protection and climate change efforts," Ossowski said.

The GIZ, Forest Management Bureau, Biodiversity Management Bureau, Western Visayas regional office, peoples organizations and concerned local government units will jointly implement the project.
- Louise Maureen Simeon, Rhodina Villanueva

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The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PH, Germany link to protect Panay forests

BY JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ
REPORTER

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the German government have signed an accord for a P200 million financial grant to boost forest protection efforts in Panay Island, one of the largest islands in the Visayas region.

German Ambassador Thomas Ossowski witnessed as GIZ Director and Principal Advisor on Climate Program Dr. Bernd Markus Liss signed, in behalf of GIZ Country Director Dr. Andreas Kalk, the agreement with DENR Secretary Ramon Paje, of the Forest and Climate (FORCLIM)

Protection Panay Phase II, to provide 4 million euros or roughly P200 million for the project.

"With the agreement, Panay Island is assured that its forests and their biological diversities are well protected during the next three years and nine months," Paje said following the ceremony at the

Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City.

Panay Island is the sixth largest island in the country and the third largest in the Visayas, next to Samar and Negros Islands. It is comprised of four provinces – Aklan, Antique, Capiz and Iloilo.

"We are deeply appreciative of the continuing assistance of the German government to the country, particularly the DENR, to ensure the protection of the remaining blocks of forests in the Panay Mountain Range, including the varied biodiversity therein," Paje added.

Germany has remained consistently involved in the country's forest conservation efforts not only through GIZ but also in other multilateral funding

organizations like the Global Environment Facility, which is a significant contributor to foreign-assisted projects on forestry.

Ambassador Ossowski said the project is another step in the "excellent cooperation" between the two countries, adding that the Philippines has become a "strategic partner of Germany in biodiversity protection and climate change efforts."

He also described the country's rich biodiversity as a "garden of Eden, where one can really admire God's creation, and worthwhile to protect."

The FORCLIM project seeks to conserve the last remaining larger block of natural forest with globally important biodiversity on Panay Island.

It is also seen to boost the country's compliance with its commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the implementation of its intended nationally determined contributions (INDC) to global greenhouse gas emission reduction under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

"Despite limited resources, the Philippines has been making remarkable strides in the fight against climate change, among which is the National Greening Program which enabled us to expand our forest cover by more than 1.3 million hectares from 2011 to end of December last year," Paje said.

"Yet, at the same time, we will

continue to seek, along with other developing countries, for assistance, whether financial or technology transfer, in order for us to attain our INDC of 70 percent emission reduction," he added.

Paje represented the country in the Convention of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, France in December last year, where he strongly pushed for the inclusion of adaptation finance in the global climate deal.

The project will be jointly implemented by the Forest Management Bureau, Biodiversity Management Bureau's Western Visayas regional office, the GIZ, local government units and the people's organizations.



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**Pilipinas, lalagda sa
Paris climate accord**

Lalagdaan ng Pilipinas sa New York sa susunod na buwan ang climate change agreement na pinagtibay ng international community sa Paris noong Disyembre.

"President Benigno S. Aquino III already gave the go-signal for such signing," inihayag ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Ramon Paje nitong Huwebes nang selyuhan ng ahensiya at ng development arm ng Germany na Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) sa Metro Manila ang P200-million agreement sa forest and biodiversity protection and conservation sa Panay Mountain Range (PMR).

Sinabi ni Paje na itinalaga siya ni Pangulong Aquino bilang opisyal na lalagda sa kasunduan para sa Pilipinas sa Abril 22 sa pagdiriwang ng mga bansa ng Earth Day.

Layunin ng Paris Agreement na maibaba ang greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions ng mundo matapos magbabala ang mga eksperto na nag-iipon at nagkukulong ito ng init sa atmospera, na nagdudulot ng global warming na nagpapalala sa climate change.

Sa Paris, nangako ang Pilipinas ng 70 porsiyentong pagbawas sa GHG emissions nito pagsapit ng 2030.

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A greener Asean for biodiversity

STORY & PHOTO BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

Conclusion

Regional perspective

CHARLES BESANCON, program officer of LifeWeb of SCBD, acknowledged that progress has been made toward meeting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and actions have been undertaken to improve the status of biodiversity in Southeast Asia. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets were adopted in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, in October 2010.

However, Besancon said in his talk on Global Biodiversity Outlook, that biodiversity indicators point to continued decline, because of multiple pressures.

While many Asean member-states have earned "high scores" or "green light" in improving the protected areas (PAs) management in Southeast Asia, particularly in Asean Heritage Parks (Aichi Target 11), many countries have earned the "red-light tag," a failing mark in preventing pollution (Aichi Target 8), particularly inland water pollution, said Sheila Vergara, director of ACB Biodiversity Information Management, in an interview.

Aichi Target 11 states that by 2020 at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of PAs and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.

Vergara explained the light tag based on the positive impact of policies or actions implemented by Asean member-states. "Red" means it appears on the reports submitted to the SCBD that issues are not a priority or the actions of

the member-states are not making positive impacts.

"Yellow" means member-states know what to do and has somehow put into action policies, but positive impacts have yet to be fully realized. "Green" means that because of the policies, put in place, there is already positive impact on biodiversity. Based on the Fifth National Reports submitted by the 10 Asean member-states, Vergara said majority earned the yellow light.

"We are definitely on track in the establishment of protected areas. In the region, out of the target of 17 percent for terrestrial, we already have 14 percent. In coastal and marine areas, we have 4.5 percent," she said.

Aichi Target 8, states that by 2020, pollution, including those coming from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity. Among countries that got poor scores in addressing pollution, as indicated in Aichi Target 8, are the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia. She explained that some cities like Manila and Jakarta are highly industrialized and are thickly populated.

"We are doing fairly well in terms of mainstreaming biodiversity in our plans and programs. About half of the member-states have recognized that they are incorporating biodiversity conservation in their

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y? A greener Asean for biodiversity

plans and programs," she said.

According to Vergara, there is a need to intensify communication, education and public-awareness campaign, noting that indicators suggest there are still a big number of people who are not fully convinced of the values of biodiversity.

She is confident that, with sustained effort of Asean member-states, there will be a greener picture of the region in terms of biodiversity conservation.

Asean member-states' initiatives

ASDAPORN KRAIRAPANOND, deputy secretary-general at the Office of Natural Resources and Environment Policy and Planning of Thailand's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, said Thailand has succeeded in reducing the loss of natural habitat and enhanced management of PAs in Thailand. She said Thailand has also put in place a strong policy to conserve threatened species and has implemented various programs.

Ratna Kusuma Sari of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia said Indonesia's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2020 has been integrated into the country's national long-term development plan 2005-2025 and national midterm planning. These plans are designed to enhance conservation and utilization of biodiversity, being Indonesia's basic capital for development.

Where is the Philippines in biodiversity conservation?

OFFICIALS of the Philippines's Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the country has put in place policies geared toward conserving its rich biodiversity.

Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance Corazon C. Davis is confident that the Philippines is well on its way in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, considering that the policies, including environmental laws, are backed with budgetary support.

One of the strengths of the Philippines, Davis said, is in terms of public awareness. "People are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it substantially.

A communication plan on biodiversity conservation has been adopted as early as 2012," said Davis, the DENR's focal person for environmental education.

She said the DENR has gone a long way in educating the people of the values of biodiversity through various programs that "holistically" address environmental problems, along with hunger and poverty, citing the National Greening Program (NGP). The Philippines has one of the most numbers of environmental laws in Asean. These include laws promoting clean air, clean water, ecological solid-waste management, fisheries, renewable

energy and climate change.

The Aquino administration has also put in place the policy declaring total log ban on natural forest through Executive Order (EO) 23 and the policy promoting the massive reforestation of the country's denuded forest through Executive 26, which established NGP. EO 193, signed by President Aquino in November 2015, expanded the NGP. Aquino's EO 97, meanwhile, declared 84 percent of the country's total land area "off limits" to mining activities.

"Our strategy is incorporated in the policies and programs not only as environmental investment but also as a poverty-reduction strategy. Through this program, we are also able to mitigate climate change, reduce risk of disasters, fight hunger and poverty, and conserve biodiversity," she said.

On top of the NGP, she added that the DENR also allocated P1 billion for Mangrove and Beach Forest Development Program, which she said, would have positive impact on the country's coastal marine environment. While the country's own assessment revealed that it failed in terms of addressing pollution and its impacts on ecosystems, Davis said various programs and initiatives are dedicated to addressing soil, water, as well as air pollution, as mandated by law. Director Theresa Mundita Lim of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB)

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p. 2 A greener Asean in 2016



ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity Executive Director Roberto V. Oliva (right) checks a crab at an exhibit during the Asean Conference on Biodiversity held in Bangkok, Thailand.

said various environmental laws and policies, particularly on PAs, boost the country's biodiversity-conservation efforts.

"All our environmental programs are now being aligned to our international commitments, including the Aichi targets," she said.

According to Lim, the DENR is now in the process of developing a National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (Nissap), which aims to provide an enabling policy and institutional framework for coordinated and multisectoral management of pesky species, another major driver of biodiversity loss.

The action pertains to Target 9 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Nissap, she said, is also being incorporated in the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (PBSAP). To further boost the country's PAs management, the DENR, through the BMB, is supporting the passage of the Expanded National Integrated PAs System bill, which seeks to strengthen the protection and conservation of 100 PAs.

"We are also pushing for the integration of biodiversity conservation in the National Climate Change Action Plan," she said.

The initiative, which covers Aichi Target 15, aims to enhance the adaptive capacity of communities and the resilience of natural ecosystems to climate change.

The Philippines is one of the 17 megadiverse countries in the world, yet, it is also one of the 34 countries identified as biodiversity hot spots because of the rapid rate of biodiversity loss.

Protecting and conserving the country's rich biodiversity reflects the country's commitment to good environmental governance.

Oliva said Asean, including the Philippines, can be greener with sufficient budgetary support to enhance conservation efforts through the PAs system.

"Our protected area should be given more budget. In the Philippines alone, our protected areas need at least P3 billion annually, but it is getting only P1 billion," he said.

Lim also said increased budgetary allocation is needed to sustain the operation of the country's PAs, whether they are backed by laws, to ensure that the Philippines's ecosystem and the wildlife will continue to thrive.



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Banahaw off-limits to trekkers, pilgrims until 2019

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Mt. Banahaw will remain closed to trekkers and pilgrims until February 2019.

The Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of the Mounts Banahaw-San Cristobal Protected Landscape (MBSCPL) passed a resolution extending the ban on trekking and pilgrimage to the mountain, Reynulfo Juan, executive director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) said yesterday.

Juan said board members agreed to allow concerned local government units (LGUs) undertake the necessary preparations before lifting the ban under a MBSCPL-PAMB ordinance.

Mt. Banahaw straddles the towns of Lucban, Tayabas, Sariaya, Candelaria and Dolores in

Quezon; San Pablo City, Nagcarlan, Liliw and Majayjay in Laguna as well as parts of Rizal.

Part of the protected areas in Lucban and Dolores are prone to landslides, flash floods and fire.

Juan said the PAMB also recommended water quality and biodiversity monitoring and assessment in the protected areas.

Oliver Viado, chief of DENR-Calabarzon conservation and development division, expressed optimism that the assessment on biodiversity and the preparation of a management plan could be finished in one year.

Randy Matibag, municipal environment and natural resources officer of Dolores, said the PAMB has to be provided with a concrete basis before it could lift or extend the moratorium.

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Manage water wisely, ex-gov't official warns

A FORMER environment secretary said on Friday Filipinos should be "very concerned" in light of global warming.

"Global warming has led to climate change. We now have more extreme weather, intense and longer droughts, and higher temperatures. Because molecules of the sea are expanding, we have rising sea levels. For Filipinos, we should be very concerned. The highest sea level monitored in the whole world is in the Philippines," Elisea Gozun, secretary of the environment and natural resources in the Arroyo administration, said at the 2016 Rotary International Presidential Conference on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools.

The two-day conference—at the Marriott Hotel in Pasay City—was aimed at rallying stakeholders around the "critical global problem of water," Rotary International said in a statement.

Gozun said the effects of climate change had "major consequences for water management."

"Flooding can wash away our pipes and other water systems. There will be changes in water supply, rain variability."

She said that as a result, "we can't go on consuming water, living the way we do."

"Otherwise, water will be at greater risk...we should work on this, government, and all other groups all over the world. This is our shared responsibility. We need to work and plan together," she said.

Each individual, she said, "should go on a low-carbon diet" and conserve water.

"We should make sure we protect the watersheds. We should get involved in protecting watersheds, prioritize the protection of those that are already standing," she said.

Gozun said that apart from these "mitigating measures," there was a "need to adapt."

"Let's stop paving every single place. We should shift to using pavers. We should promote water management which is making the most of water," she said.

"The world has changed, so too should we. Let's remember that the actions you and I take have a cumulative impact on our water resources. The future is in your hands."

Kristine Felisse Mangunay

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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Zambales to require miners for ISO compliance

By HENRY EMPENO | Correspondent

IBA, Zambales—The Zambales provincial government will set a stricter policy on mining in the province, which will require mining companies to comply with international safety standards in their operations.

Gov. Hermogenes E. Ebdane Jr. said in his "Ulat sa Bayan" (Report to the People) address last Thursday, that his administration will require mining firms operating

in Zambales to conform with ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001.

"From now on, 'No ISO certification, no mining operation' will be our policy," Ebdane told his au-

dience of mostly government officials, employees and residents.

"This is our challenge to the companies that were given permit by the national government to mine in Zambales: The bottom line is they should be ISO 14001 certified and OHSAS 18001 compliant."

ISO 14001 sets out the criteria for an Environmental Management System (EMS) and maps out a framework, which a company or organization can follow to minimize how their operations negatively affect the environment; comply with applicable laws, regulations and other environmentally oriented requirements; and continually improve in the above.

OHSAS 18001, or the Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems-Requirements,

is an internationally applied British Standard for occupational health and safety management systems. It provides a framework that helps to identify and control health and safety risks; reduce the potential for accidents; aid legal compliance; and improve overall performance.

Ebdane said that requiring the internationally accepted standards from miners would be the logical next step after the provincial government sought a moratorium on mining in November last year because of damage caused by mining operations on communities in Santa Cruz town.

Among the ills that residents blamed mining for were air pollution, destruction of roads and the nickel siltation of rivers, farms, fishponds and coastal areas in com-

munities near mining sites.

In a public hearing last year, Ebdane directly called for a halt in mining operations, saying there is a need to draw an action plan that would prevent environmental problems spawned by mining activities.

He added that safety measures should be in place first before mining companies are allowed to operate again, but the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, which regulates all large-scale mining operations, had thus far failed to implement the moratorium sought by the Zambales government.

On Thursday, Ebdane recalled that mining explorations began in 2005 under then-Gov. Vicente Magsaysay, while full-blast operations started in 2007 under

former Gov. Amor D. Deloso.

"My bad luck was that environmental problems began to manifest under my watch," said Ebdane, who first won as governor in 2010. "But we should not blame my two predecessors because it is the national government, not the local government, with jurisdiction over large-scale mining."

"The truth is we cannot declare Zambales to be 'mining-free' because the province, as well as the national government, earns from this industry. But we can ask companies to conform to standards that would protect the environment," he said. "Responsible mining is what we need for our province to fully develop. Mining should not destroy our mountains and neither should it abuse the environment," Ebdane said.

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Amendment to Biofuels law now in effect

By **MADEL SABATER NAMIT**

President Aquino has allowed a bill amending the Biofuels Act of 2006 to lapse into law, which will be known as Republic Act (RA) No. 10745.

It particularly amended Section 5, Paragraph 5.3 of the Biofuels Act of 2006 which exempts natural gas power-generating plants in the country to use neat diesel as an alternative fuel.

Under Section 5 of the Biofuels Act of 2006, it said "all liquid fuels for motors and engines sold in the Philippines shall contain locally sourced biofuels components."

Under paragraph 5.3, Section 5 of the Biofuels Act, a minimum of two percent blend of biodiesel by volume was increased after two years since its implementation, taking into account considerations including but not limited to domestic supply and availability of locally sourced biodiesel component.

"Provided, That natural gas power

generating plants may use neat diesel as their alternative fuel during shortages of natural gas supplies: Provided, however, That the DOE shall ensure that the authority granted herein shall only be availed of, directly or indirectly, by natural gas power plants," the amended Biofuels Act read.

Signed by former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the Biofuels Act of 2006 requires that all gasoline must contain at least five percent of bioethanol by February 2009 or three years after the Biofuels Act of 2006 was signed into law.

For biodiesel, the government mandated two percent use of biodiesel blend starting February 2009 from one percent since the law was passed in 2006.

Under the Biofuels Roadmap by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), biofuels include the use of sugar from sugarcane and sweet sorghum, starch from cassava and sweet potato, cellulosic from rice

hull or rice straw, corn cobs or stalks and wood wastes for bioethanol production.

As for biodiesel, the roadmap includes the use of coconut, jathropa, microalgae and used cooking oil as well as the non-filtered oil.

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Make Angry Birds happy, UN chief tells world

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE SIGHT of anything green is enough to enrage him, but in an ironic twist, Red, the leader of the Angry Birds computer game characters, has been named Honorary Ambassador for Green by the United Nations, the top bird given the mission of "inspir(ing) climate action toward a sustainable and happier future for all."

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"We are proud to give Red a reason to go Green," UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement.

"There is no better way to mark the International Day of Happiness than to have our animated ambassador raise awareness about the importance of addressing climate change to create a safer, more sustainable and happier future for all," Ban added.

Highly strung, easily provoked

The character's creators describe Red as highly strung and easily provoked—even by the sound of the wind which it sees as a declaration of war. In the Angry Birds universe, the feathered protagonists are pitched against a group of pigs.

"The whole flock tries to keep Red calm and relaxed by telling him to follow a strict program of herbal tea, soothing bath salts and deep-breathing exercises," says the website Angrybirds.com. "But this only takes the edge off his anger ... Even the sight of something green can enrage him."

Make Angry Birds happy

But with Red being named Ambassador of Green, the warring flock is now part of making the world a better place, with the public being asked to "make the Angry Birds happy" by professing their commitment to address climate change, through photos posted on social media platforms using the hashtag #Angry-BirdsHappyPlanet.

"By recycling, taking public transportation and conserving water, for example, individuals can share tips on how they can live sustainably and happily in their everyday lives," Ban said.

Also behind this year's campaign are Sony Pictures Entertainment (whose facilities produced and distributed the Angry Birds movie), as well as the UN Development Program and UN Foundation.

Fundamental human goal

In July 2011, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution declaring that "the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal."

Two years later, on March 20, 2013, the first International Day of Happiness was celebrated in the wake of the 2012 UN Conference on Happiness. The conference was convened by the government of Bhutan which, in the 1970s, introduced the concept of gross national happiness, or measuring a nation's prosperity by emphasizing people's well-being over economic productivity.

Happiness Day

In a separate statement, the UN chief said this year's Happiness Day was an opportunity to assert the primacy of peace, well-being and joy, amid the pervasive suffering caused by grave injustice, devastating wars, mass displacement, grinding poverty and other man-made crises.

"The best way to celebrate this International Day of Happiness is by taking action to alleviate suffering," Ban said.

"More than individual contentment, it's an affirmation that we have a collective responsibility to humanity," he added.

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2. Make every child happy.

Spread happiness, secure peace

The UN chief said governments can help spread happiness and secure peace by working to fulfill the interlinked Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the UN General Assembly had adopted in September 2015.

Included in these goals are: an end to poverty and hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible production and consumption; climate action, as well as peace, justice and strong institutions.

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Earth Hour: Pedal power lights up Phl map

Hundreds of bikers lit a LED map of the Philippines by pedaling on stationary bamboo bikes for last night's observance of Earth Hour, an annual global movement encouraging a one-hour switch-off to raise awareness on the over-use of non-renewable resources.

Organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), this year's observance of Earth Hour was held at the Quezon City

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Memorial Circle where a LED map of the Philippines was lit by volunteers pedaling on 10 stationary bamboo bikes attached to generators, which converted "pedal power" to electricity.

Over 500 bikers converged at the venue for the annual switch-off, which was observed from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., according to Earth Hour Philippines director

Gia Ibay.

"All participants got a chance to pedal for the planet and show the world that human power can light up the Philippines and the world," she said.

"Our aim is to showcase low-carbon alternatives which all Filipinos can embrace. These range from alternative modes of transport to energy-efficient technologies

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Over 1,500 solar tulips, made from recycled soda plastic bottles with solar-powered LED lights, form the number 60 at SM Marilao in Bulacan last night for Earth Hour. Households and businesses turned off their lights for 60 minutes in the global effort to raise awareness about climate change.

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like portable and household solar kits. The event was also partially powered by renewable energy, particularly solar, wind and biogas," she added.

Electric vehicles such as e-jeeps and e-trikes were also showcased at the event.

In Taguig City, students of the Chinese International School Manila and volunteers from the private sector assembled 100 solar-powered lamps from repurposed kerosene lamps.

Tessa Sevilla, director of Liter of Light Philippines, said these lamps would benefit 100 families in the Aeta resettlement area in Porac, Pampanga.

"In lieu of simply turning or switching off lights and gadgets for an hour, MyShelter Foundation finds it more worthwhile to translate its efforts into action, through its Liter of Light Project, which taps into clean renewable energy from the sun to power and light up homes in remote, off-grid, poor communities in the Philippines and in 20 other countries around the world," she explained.

"By demonstrating the potential of solar power and the simplicity and cost-efficiency of these lighting prototypes

that can be built by hand even by schoolchildren, the foundation seeks to further its advocacy for clean renewable energy sources," she added.

There are about 20 million Filipinos who experience energy poverty, with no means to access electricity or afford to power their homes. Through Liter of Light, the foundation is able to address the simplest need to have lights in their homes and on

the streets to address the bigger issues of security, social protection and education.

"With our liters of light, mothers and children are able to go home safely, children are able to study at home while mothers are able to extend hours to do their chores at home. Soon, these lights will also enable us to help the fathers who go to the fields, to mountain plantations and even at sea," Sevilla said.

The foundation is set to distribute

the solar lamps today to its target beneficiaries.

MyShelter Foundation was founded in 2004 by Iliac Diaz to push social enterprise on clean renewable energy sources and alternative architecture for classrooms and shelters. It is known for the PET Bottle Schools, its dome house and the bamboo classroom.

The Liter of Light Project started in 2011 as a humanitarian response to typhoon-related disasters that have hit the country, like Ondoy and Yolanda.

Earth Hour is observed yearly across 24 timezones in 178 countries and territories.

First observed in 2007, the movement uses the simple action of switching off lights for 60 minutes to deliver a powerful message on the need for decisive climate change solutions.

The movement has grown from a symbolic switch-off event in Sydney, Australia to the world's largest open-sourced environmental campaign mobilizing billions of people in over 7,000 hubs globally.

It is the ninth time for the Philippines to participate in Earth Hour. The Philippines has been championing Earth Hour since 2008 and has topped participation records from 2009 to

2013, earning it the title of Earth Hour Hero Country.

"Many more Earth Hour events are being staged across the Philippines. We are elated at the massive outpouring of support. Government agencies, media allies, corporations, schools, civil society groups and individuals have all pledged to shine a light on climate action through Earth Hour," said WWF-Philippines CEO Joel Palma.

WWF encouraged participants to upload their Earth Hour videos and photos on social media using the hashtag #EARTHHOURPHILIPPINES.

"The most meaningful and unique celebrations shall be featured on our social media platforms," Palma said.

Ibay reminded the people that "even more important than observing the switch-off is each group's commitment to go beyond the hour when the lights are switched back on."

"Earth Hour is symbolic. We're not going to stop climate change just by switching off our lights for 60 minutes. But if we collectively reduce our energy use by shifting to renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, we will definitely change climate change and secure the low-carbon future we need," she added.

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

CREATE ECOLOGY WARRIORS, SAYS SOLON

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE Philippine government should take its cue from former US Vice President Al Gore who tagged the Philippines as one of the world's most vulnerable countries due to climate change by creating an army of so-called eco-warriors while generating tens of thousands of employment, a House leader said on Saturday.

House deputy majority leader and Davao City Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles, at the same time, pushed for the signing into law of the proposed Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016 which has been approved by both chambers of Congress and pending for President Benigno Aquino III's signature.

Nograles is the principal author of the proposed law at the House of Representatives. The measure seeks to promote work that produce goods and services that benefit and preserve the environment. These particularly involve business enterprises that use fewer natural resources in their production processes.

Nograles said that Gore's observation on the impact of climate change should be taken very seriously by the government and that the Filipino people, including the leaders and policy makers, we must learn from the hard lessons of past weather-related calamities that destroyed communities and caused the death of many people.

Nograles noted Gore's claim that at least 13 million Filipinos will have to be relocated due to the rapidly rising sea level as a result of global warming because of the continuing skepticism among policy makers.

"Even here in the Philippines, there's a lot of skepticism when it comes to the extent of long term effects of climate change. While there is an increasing interest in the use of renewable energy and a growing awareness on the issue of climate change, the Philippines still has a long way to go before our policy makers and our people in general can truly embrace the concept of environmental protection and conservation," Nograles said.

Nograles stressed the government must step up efforts to ensure that the people becomes more adaptive to the rapidly changing weather conditions and harness people's support and participation in the global movement to heal Mother Earth.

He said that the Philippine Green Jobs Act can jumpstart the country's contribution in generating environment warriors who would be in the frontline of the global campaign against climate change.

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'GREEN VOTE' AND THE ECONOMY

THE 'Green Vote' campaign by non-government organizations should go beyond politics and involve a comprehensive discussion about the environment and economy, private think tank ADRI Institute on Strategic and International Studies said.

ADRI president Dindo Manhit said 'green vote' manifests 'the loud call for the next government to approach the issues of environment and economics as one comprehensive agenda.

Renowned geologist and ADRI trustee CP David agreed, saying that environmental issues facing the country are complex and will need to be seriously addressed by the candidates.

"Aside from mining, politicians vying for national positions should debate on marine protection, forestry, solid waste management and, of course climate change in relation to disaster risk management," he said.

Environment advocacy group Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship also said the 'green vote' for the upcoming 2016 elections should be about policy reform and not politics.

"A 'green vote' can be the vehicle to force solutions to the environment issues into the election debate and adopted in their platforms," said PBEST secretary general Ysan Castillo.

More than discrediting candidates because of their associations with mining, the 'green vote' should distinguish between the legitimate and highly regulated mining operations and illegal mining.

"Mining by itself is not bad, but illegal practices and poor regulation resulting in damage to the environment gives a negative image to the industry that has the potential to be an economic game changer not just on a national but on far flung local areas with rich mineral deposits," Castillo said.

PBEST cited three of the country's biggest mines that voluntarily submitted their operations to third-party scrutiny last year to assess compliance with relevant environmental regulations.

The Padcal mine of Philex in Benguet; the mine of Taganito Mining Corp., a Nickel Asia Corp. subsidiary in Surigao del Norte; and the mine of Carmen Copper Corp., subsidiary of Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. in Cebu all scored top marks in the PBEST Environmental Performance Tracking Program (EPTP).

"The environment had never figured prominently in any administration's agenda," Manhit said.

"So, the real task for the next president is determining how to strike a balance between environmental stewardship and development," he said.

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YOUTH VOICE HIGHLIGHTS 'EARTH HOUR' FORUM

By Ronald O. Reyes

TACLOBAN CITY—A student alliance of Philippine Science High School-Eastern Visayas campus on Saturday led the "Earth Hour" activity here through a forum and video-making contest on climate change.

"We would like to encourage you, to commit to a contribution against climate change through your everyday actions, from pledges like promising to never leave the water open while brushing your teeth to bringing a shopping bag with you instead of using plastic in the grocery store," said Raiza Arielle Espina, a student leader of the school during the official launching of their social media advocacy campaign "Mission ASCEND [Actions to Save the Changing Environment through Network Development]".

"We believe that by creating a network of young dedicated individuals through

our generation's superpower: social media we can be catalysts towards a global movement that aims towards the protection of our environment through individual contributions," she added.

Espina, in her speech, said that by using social media "we can reach the farthest corners of the Earth to connect as one voice."

"We are faced now with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. We call the youth of Eastern Visayas to use their voice. To use our voice to send a clear message to our global, national and local leaders that we should start transitioning to renewable energy and that we should start to create and live by a global policy on adaption and that we should make climate change a top government agenda," said Andrea Alma Culibar, youth director of Tingog Kabataan, the youth volunteer group

of regional party-list group Tingog Sinirangan.

"Climate change threatens the entire world. Yet it also provides an opportunity to come together and forge a collective response to a global problem," she added.

Meanwhile, Rey Garnace, campus director of Philippine Science High School in Palo, Leyte, urged the participants and the public to support the movement.

"We only have one home to live—Earth. Let us take care of our home," he said, recalling how climate change created an impact to schools and students after Super Typhoon 'Yolanda' hit the region in November 2013.

According to Garnace, there is a need for local government units to establish permanent evacuation centers and not to use schools for the same purpose, saying it would disrupt classes and also incurred further damages.

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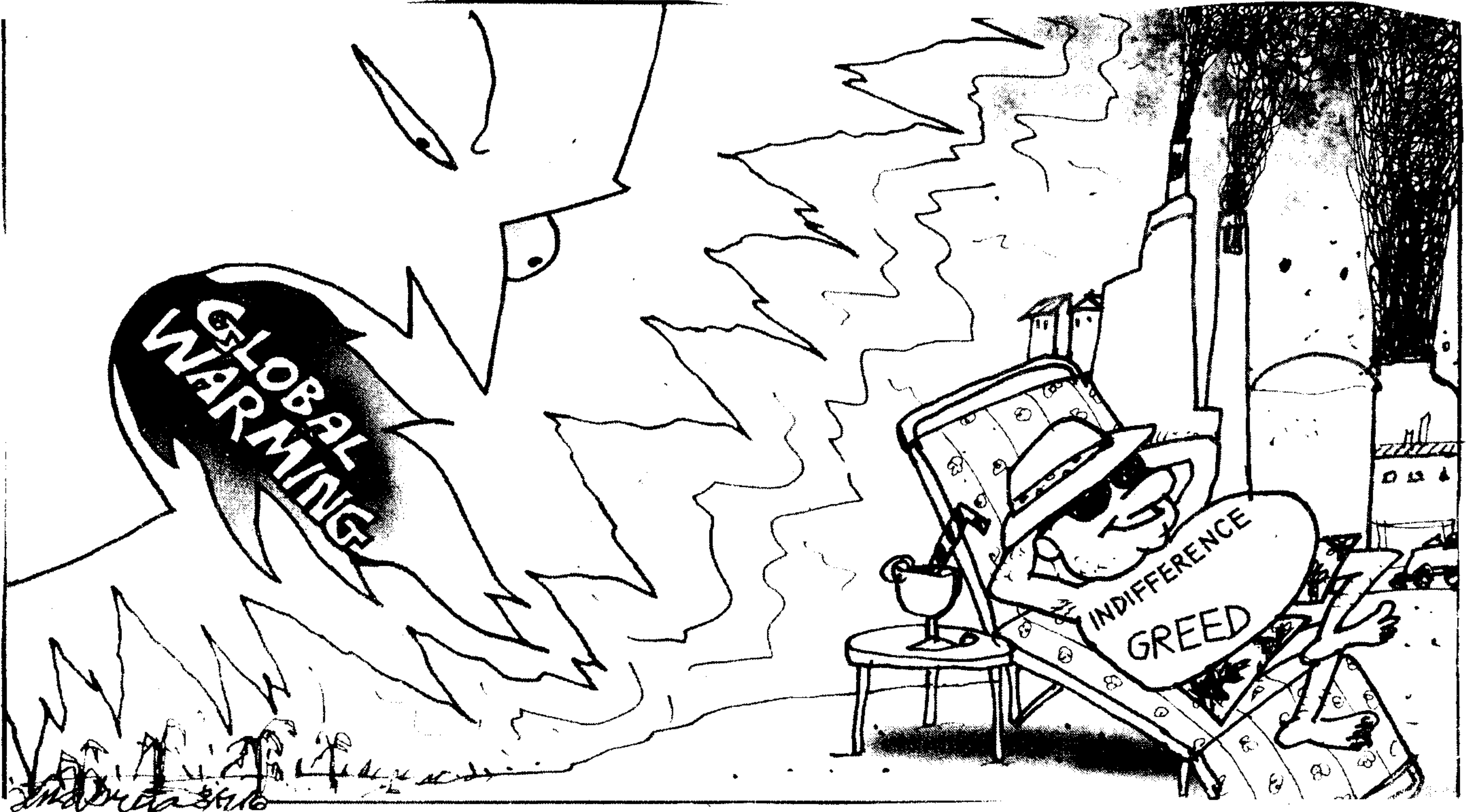
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Restoring PHL's coral reefs through 'Filipinnoovation'

THE World Resources Institute predicts that by 2030, over 90 percent of the country's coral reef will be threatened.

Destructive fishing, coastal development, agriculture, aquaculture and lack of treatment for industrial waters are the culprits of the massive degradation of these resources for several decades.

To restore these damaged systems of the marine ecosystems, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) of the DOST funded the Filipinnoovation on Coral Reef Restoration Program.

Started in 2012, the program seeks to roll out coral-transplantation technology using asexually reproduced corals to improve productivity of coral resources for sustainable fisheries.

Corals asexual-reproduction technology for reef restoration involves the collection of dislodged coral fragments or "corals of opportunity (COPs)." The COPs are attached to coral nursery units (CNU) for quick recovery and regeneration to increase survival rates upon transplantation

in degraded coral-reef sites. Each CNU is designed to hold 500 COPs per batch and can be used several times a year.

The CNU design and the coral-transplantation technique uses marine epoxy clay, nails and cable tie. Restored sites were in Bohol, Pangasinan, Sarangani, Bataan, Zambales, Palawan, Camiguin, Zamboanga del Norte and Ilocos Norte. These areas were identified based on their suitability for restoration; availability of sufficient amount of coral fragments for transplanting; and their location within the marine protected area.

The program has established a total of 538 CNU and transplanted 487,158 coral fragments. These activities contribute directly to the protection of coastal communities by providing natural barriers; improving our marine ecosystem services; developing fishery resources; and enhancing underwater tourism industry.

When the Filipinnoovation Program was completed in 2013, the National Coral Reef Rehabilitation Roll-Out Program continued the work using the same asexual-reproduction technology in nine sites across the country: Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte; Alaminos, Pangasinan;



DIRECT transplantation of corals of opportunity in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation-Coral Garden by the Philippine Coast Guard. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND PROMOTION DIVISION DOST-PCAARRD.

Bagac, Bataan; Subic Bay, Zambales; Puerto Princesa, Palawan; Anda, Bohol; Camiguin, Zamboanga City; and Kiamba, Sarangani. Overall, the two programs are now in 20 locations across 11 regions (Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao).

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7. Highlighting PHL's local reefs...

the Philippines-Marine Science Institute, the direct coral-transplantation technique was implemented with the local communities to restore an area in Bolinao, Pangasinan. The technique has been pilot-tested in major tourism and diving sites, including Batangas, Bohol and Boracay.

Boracay coral rehabilitation in the Apec-PPSTI-5

AT the culmination of the fifth Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

(Apec) Policy Partnership on Science, Technology and Innovation (PPSTI-5) in Boracay, the event was highlighted with the tying of COPs to the CNUs.

The municipal government of Boracay in Malay, Aklan, was declared part of its municipal waters as the Apec-PPSTI coral garden. After a month, the team from the DOST, Sangkalikasan and Philippine Coast Guard, through their photo and video documentation of the Apec-PPSTI coral garden, observed that the fragments were fully settled and erected. This indicates a strong chance of survival despite the presence of algae and a few sediments in the tags and coral substrates.

Over time, the rehabilitated reefs will be reinhabited by fish aquatic life. Once this happens, productivity and sustainability of municipal fisheries will improve and the beauty and value of the area will be enhanced, a plus factor in the underwater tourism industry.

Other restoration activities

BESIDES the Apec-PPSTI coral-reef restoration in Boracay, DOST-PCAARRD also funded a restoration project of the Filipinovation Program of the Bakud Reef in Kiamba, Sarangani. The restoration became

necessary when *MV Double Prosperity*, a Panamanian-registered vessel, ran aground Bakud Reef, destroying massively some 2,844 square meters of precious coral reefs, among other major damages. With the Mindanao State University-General Santos City, in collaboration with the Sarangani provincial government, the project is expected to transplant 30,000 coral fragments to restore damage reef area; set up and deploy 10 CNU's; identify, document and establish a stream of dive sites; and develop a pool of human resources for coral restoration and ecotourism. Also part of the Filipinovation Program is the coral reef-restoration project at the Hundred Islands in Alaminos, Pangasinan.

Quezon Island was identified as the donor/collection site; Clave Island for setting up of the CNU's; and Romulo Island as the transplantation site. Meanwhile, Bagac, Bataan, and Subic, Zambales, were also named as beneficiaries of the coral-transplantation technology. Bataan Peninsula State University and Sangkalikasan Producer Cooperative served as implementing and collaborating agency, respectively. **Melvin B. Carlos, Christie A. Surara and Rose Anne K. Mananghaya/S&T Media Service**

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Camiguin sets eyes on solar, wind energy

MAMBAJAO, Camiguin—Gov. Jurdin Jesus M. Romualdo said the island province of Camiguin will have its 5-megawatt (MW) solar and 3-MW wind-power plants to sustain its development within the next three years.

Romualdo made this announcement during the launch of the Mounts Timpoong-Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument (MTHNM) as the 37th Asean Heritage Park (AHP) here recently.

Interviewed by the BUSINESS-MIRROR, Romualdo said the province will pursue renewable energy, but declared that the is-

land province will be "off-limits" to investors who want to explore geothermal energy.

The province has 14 volcanoes, which he said would not be allowed to be explored under his watch, or during his reign as the clan's patriarch, to protect the island province's environment and natural resources.

"I have been talking to potential investors and the government of Spain to develop solar power and wind energy," Romualdo said.

The development of clean, renewable energy will be pursued, except for geothermal energy.

"In exploring geothermal energy,

I was told by the DOE [Department of Energy] that they will cut trees in exploring geothermal energy. I said no. I will not allow it," he said.

The governor, whose three consecutive terms expire in June, will run for mayor of Mambajao.

Members of the family, including his son Rep. Xavier Jesus D. Romualdo, who is running for reelection, and Mayor Ma. Luisa D. Romualdo, a candidate for governor, are all running unopposed this coming May 2016.

Romualdo said protection and conservation of the island province's environment and natural

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for Camiguin etc. after ruler, with energy

resources is important in developing ecotourism. "The people want Camiguin to remain the way it is. Ever since, it has been my environmental policy," he said.

However, Romualdo added that he will keep the province's diesel-power plant running for "back up" power source, even if some residents have opposed its use to generate some 5 MW of electricity.

Romualdo said that compared to coal-fired power plant, the diesel-power plant is "cleaner" and will ensure a steady supply of electricity in the island. Currently, the province is connected to the power grid in the main island of Northern Luzon, via underwater cable.

Romualdo said several investors have expressed their intent to put up malls and hotels in the island.

He said within the next six years, he sees the construction of at least three hotels and two malls—Gaisano and Starmall.

However, he maintained that the hotels and malls to be built will be limited to five stories each. It has been the policy of the province's top official that structures to be built in the island would only reach up to three stories.

"We will now allow buildings up to five stories," he said.

He said putting up hotels and malls will further boost the island province's ecotourism potential, noting that the declara-

tion of the MTHNM as an AHP will help attract more foreign and local tourists.

The province, he said, only has a total of 150 rooms available for visitors who frequent the island to visit its beaches.

The official boldly predicted a double-digit growth of the tourism sector in the next six years because of the aggressive promotion of Camiguin as an ecotourism destination in Northern Mindanao.

"What other provinces in Mindanao have, we also have in our island. *Kung ano meron ang iba, meron din kami. Malinis na hangin, bundok at tubig*," he said, bragging that the province also have white sand beaches and pristine waters comparable to that of Boracay, "only better."

Romualdo maintains that the province will continue to promote home stays to accommodate the expected influx of tourists, particularly during the summer season.

Primarily an agricultural province, Camiguin is fast becoming an ecotourism destination in Northern Mindanao. Ecotourism, he said, contributes about 6 percent to the annual income of the province. Romualdo expects this to go up from 12 percent to 15 percent.

"By that time, everyone in the island will strongly feel the benefit of ecotourism," he added.

Candice Naomi B. Dael, the provincial ecotourism officer of Camiguin said that last year a total of 660,000 tourists visited the province. Every tourist, she said, spends about P2,500 per day. This year, she expects it to go up.

Dael said the province currently has 20 tourist guides.

"We are continuously training tour guides," she added.

Jimmy Bariantos, a tour guide accredited by the Department of Tourism, is helping train local tour guides.

"Camiguin has a lot potential. We have very friendly people, we have some of the best tourist destinations and our people are willing to learn," he said.

The tourism expert, who is also from Mambajao, said there is a need to improve the people's communication skills, noting that close to half of the tourists visiting Camiguin are foreigners.

"We also need to familiarize the people about places and enhance their product knowledge. We need to promote our products more," Bariantos said.

With the declaration of the MTHNM as an AHP, Roberto V. Oliva, Executive Director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity, which acts as secretariat of the Asean Heritage Parks Program said funding for biodiversity conservation is expected to increase. **Jonathan L. Mayuga**

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In Compostela, 'green' mining beckons

By Frinston Lim

Nabunturan, Compostela Valley

SMALL-SCALE miners in Compostela Valley province have welcomed the introduction of a clean and efficient way of processing gold as an alternative to decades-old crude and toxic methods of extracting precious metals that have been blamed for pollution and other environment problems.

The "green mining technology" being developed by government scientists and experts is being tested in Compostela Valley, the fourth beneficiary across the country after Benguet, Camarines Sur and Agusan del Norte. The four pilot projects in the gold-rich provinces cost about P160 million.

Jose Anayo Jr., manager of Nabunturan Integrated Mining Development Cooperative (NIMDC), said his group was pinning high hopes on the project's viability.

Funded by the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the project aims to "validate the viability and commercial application of enhanced procedural mineral extraction without the use of harmful chemicals such as mercury and cyanide."

Natural ways

The processing plant will function by flotation and gravitation—natural ways of extracting gold without the use of hazardous chemicals, said Dr. Rowena Cristina Guevara, DOST undersecretary for scientific and technological services.

"When you use mercury or cyanide, you only extract 40- to 60-percent gold. With this technology, the extracted gold is at least 90 percent, so miners can earn twice as much," Guevara said.

Dr. Herman Mendoza, program leader from the University of the Philippines, said the plant would use an old technology still being used by responsible miners in many parts of the world. He explained that the integrated gold-processing plant was environment-friendly as long as miners would operate it properly.

Flotation works by applying a small amount of an organic chemical called a "flotation reagent" on processed gold ore to coat small gold particles into bubble-like compounds so the precious metal can float above a mixture and be extracted.

The facility is efficient that "even mine tailings and other mine wastes will be managed properly," Mendoza said.

Local gov't help

According to Guevara, the project will be implemented with help from local government units (LGUs) in Nabunturan and the provincial capitol, and a local mining cooperative.

The Philippines has a huge potential in the mining industry, ranking third in the world with known gold reserves estimated at 5.02 billion tons in 2011.

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for P32.9 billion of the nation's gross domestic product.

The introduction and subsequent use by most small-scale miners of the UP-DOST integrated gold-copper mineral processing plant can stimulate robust economic growth and make the local mining industry more competitive with the in-roads in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) economic integration, Guevara said.

Best type of cooperator

Mendoza said the concept worked wherein the government, particularly the DOST, bankrolled the building of a pilot plant and spread the technology, encouraging miners in other areas to build their own as well.

"We want to know the best type of cooperator so we decided to have a mining cooperative as partner in Compostela Valley," he said. The

Benguet project is being run by a mining federation, while the Agusan del Norte project is under the LGU, and in Camarines Norte, a private mining firm.

Anayo acknowledged that small-scale mining in Compostela Valley had never been that clean.

"Destruction of the environment and pollution have been the effects of small-scale mining. From polluting rivers and streams to destroying mountains and using chemicals to extract gold, but we miners have no choice," he said.

"With this new technology, we hope it can make small-scale mining environment-friendly and help boost our mineral production and increase economic benefit," Anayo said.

The P40-million gold-copper mineral processing pilot plant is set to rise in Katipunan village in Nabunturan. It started in September last year.

Once the processing plant has been set up, field testing can begin and may last up to three months.

Pilot area

Compostela Valley was chosen as pilot area owing to its huge small-scale mining industry, with nine out of its 11 municipalities hosting gold-rich sites.

Undersecretary Guevara said Jonathan Sales, the DOST regional chief, has also recommended

the inclusion of Compostela Valley in an effort to help the small-scale mining sector recover following the devastation wrought by Typhoon "Pablo" in 2012.

NIMDC, a collective of 66 small-scale mining operators in the gold-rich villages of Nabunturan such as Tagnocan and Bukal, would provide the 5 to 15 metric tons of ore a day needed in the field testing.

With the technology, Mendoza said, they hope to bring down the processing costs and maximize miners' profit. He said the technology could mean minimal cost and lower minimal quantity of 5 tons, allowing miners to wring cash out of their day gold ore.

The government is also looking at expanding the number of pilot areas to 10 throughout the country. "Our vision is to see to it that everything in the plant is locally fabricated. We will teach the miners themselves how to run the facility and do it 100 percent," Mendoza said.

Nabunturan miners pay at least P60,000 to process some 20 tons of ore (about 400 bags of 50-kilogram ore) in carbon-in-pulp plants, which use cyanide and mercury. The UP-DOST technology can help lower or eliminate that cost, Anayo said.

"That's already a huge amount of money going straight to the miners," he said.

Small-scale mining, which employs more than 300,000 people in 30 provinces, accounts for 80 percent of the total mining workforce. In 2014 alone, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau estimated that the small-scale mining industry accounted



MINERS in Monkayo, Compostela Valley province, extract gold using mercury in this photo taken on Oct. 25, 2013. They will be among the beneficiaries of a new, less toxic method of extracting gold. FRINSTON LIM

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Green Jobs - an Ecological Challenge and Opportunity

WE ARE living today in an era of great ecological challenges and opportunities. "Greening" is perhaps the best solution, but the transition to a green job economy is not a simple matter of economics or entrepreneurship. There has to be massive realignment of government policies and practices. A green-collar economic revolution will need workable partnerships among government, businessmen, consumers, workers, social justice activists, environmentalists, students, the church and faith organizations, and everybody who hates to see a soon extinct planet Earth.

Inconvenient truth

Nobel Laureate Al Gore, famous for his documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth", is perhaps the most serious advocate on global warming. He was quoted as saying that in 100 years, 50 percent of all species will be lost, including the Philippine eagle, already among the endangered species. In Tacloban city last March 12, 2016, Gore said that 13.5 million Filipinos must be relocated over time due to

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Ernie O. Cecilia

rising sea levels in the Philippines that are three to four times greater than in other areas of the world.

What is extremely inconvenient is the truth that there's a lot more rhetoric and polemics than real solutions being put in place to address global warming. On one hand, world leaders would converge and sign a pact to arrest global warming and climate change. As they return to their countries, their governments continue to propagate the use of fossil fuel, natural gas and coal that account for 30 billion tons of carbon emission annually.

Broad coalition

Obviously, government cannot be expected to have the political will to change the status quo. The corruptive power of the market is too great for politicians to handle. The

church and faith organizations are sometimes more credible to the masses, but never really took a stand on global warming and climate change. All we hear is that with prayers, great abundance and wealth will come their way from heaven. The ordinary poor people are too engrossed in eking out a living, if you can call it that. The environmentalists sound like a voice in the wilderness. For real change to happen, all these social partners must work together. But first, they must realize that the lives they're trying to save are their own.

Organized labor, though dwindling in ratio to total workforce, remains the best defender of the rights of working people. They should look beyond wage issues and participate in creating green jobs. Social justice activists should embrace environmental issues and realize that arresting climate change will ensure a better workplace, where LGBT, diversity and human rights are respected. Students are the most energetic and enthusiastic group to wave the green flag and task all sectors of society to address global warming. Students will inherit the world

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Green Jobs - an Ecological Challenge and Opportunity

in due time. Church and faith organizations that advance reverence for all creation must take a stand and join the fight against climate change, lest God's creation becomes extinct. Environmentalists need to realize that they cannot change the world alone. They must collaborate with all sectors of society and make their cause a shared responsibility. Believe me, governance for a greener planet is too serious an issue to be left with government.

PMAP Summit

On April 12-13, 2016, the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) led by President Jesse Rebutillo and the PMAP Foundation led by Chairman Orly Peña and President Pilar Nenuca Almira are holding the first PMAP Foundation Summit on Clean Air and Climate Change. With its theme "Clean Air: Our Life, Our Future", the Summit will be graced by the Keynote Speaker, DENR Secretary Ramon Paje, at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila.

The Summit shall feature:

- PMAP member-companies'

contribution to clean air and climate change, issues, best practices, and future programs

- New trends, innovation, technology and BEST Practices for members to consider or adopt, showcasing an exhibition of users, suppliers, and innovations

- Non-traditional sources of financing for entrepreneurs and small businesses engaged in promoting clean air and climate change

- International agencies engaged in clean air and climate change

- ISO standards to guide companies, NGOs and communities engaged in clean air and climate change projects

- AWARDS to recognize leaders and achievers in clean air and climate change

For the first time in the Philippines, PMAP shall grant the PunongBayaningKalikasan (National Leadership) Award and the BayaningKalikasan Awards for individual, corporate, NGO, and community categories.

For inquiry or registration, please contact pmapfoundation2@pmap.org.ph or call 726-1532.

This is PMAP's answer to the global call for action on climate change, where the Philippines is a signatory to the recent Paris agreement on global warming and climate change. Also, this is pursuant to Republic Act 8749, the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999, which needs more implementation.

Let's wave the green flag - for our children and their children's children.

(Ernie is the 2013 Executive Director and 1999 President of the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP); Chair of the AMCHAM Human Capital Committee; and Co-Chair of ECOP's TWG on Labor and Social Policy Issues. He also chairs the Accreditation Council for the PMAP Society of Fellows in People Management. He is President and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center. Contact him at ernie_cecilia@yahoo.com)