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IN THE NEWS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



STUDY LATER, TAKE PHOTO NOW

A group takes a break from studying to pose for a group selfie at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City.

GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

PEOPLES JOURNALS

Everybody's Newspaper

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Albay now UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

LEGAZPI CITY — The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recently declared Albay as a Biosphere Reserve along with its 257,000 hectares of diverse terrestrial and marine ecology, protected by a pioneering and planned sustainable development strategy.

Albay as a Biosphere Reserve is now among the world's 669 such reserve in 120 countries. As such it is now a place for learning about sustainable development to reconcile the conservation of biodiver-

sity with the sustainable use of natural resources. It was one of the 20 new sites of protected World Network of biospheres declared by UNESCO during the conference of its international coordinating council of Man and the Biosphere (MAB) program in Lima, Peru last March 18.

Albay is the third site declared by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve in the Philippines. The other two are Palawan (1992) and Puerto Galera in Mindoro (2002). Puerto Galera, however, is reportedly at risk of deletion, for certain

reasons.

Albay Governor Joey Salceda, who worked hard to get his province's designation as a biosphere reserve, said Albay now qualifies for future resources support for its protection from international funding agencies, among them the Green Climate Fund (GCF) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Salceda, who co-chaired the GCF for Southeast Asia and the Developing Countries on 2013 to 2014, said they "helped introduce cultural heritage as fundable activity for

adaptation and biosphere for anti-greenhouse emission. The GCF now has raised US\$ 10.4 billion which can be mobilized for vulnerable sites in developing countries determined by UNESCO."

Aside from the Biosphere Reserve designation, UNESCO has likewise already included the near-perfect cone Mayon Volcano which is popular worldwide, in its tentative list of World Heritage Sites since last year. Mayon's favorite postcard partner, the 201 Cagsawa Ruins, was declared recently by the National Historical

Commission as a National Cultural Treasure.

The Albay governor who personally attended the MAB conference in Lima said Albay's appointment as a biosphere reserve is "our country's modest contribution to the intergenerational transfer of resources to the future of the Philippines and the future of everyone." He explained that the UNESCO recognition of Albay is a global "ecological marker of excellence and a challenge to our community in mobilizing efforts for biodiversity protection."

He added: "The recognition will inspire our local government and our community in our journey to the future based on shared values, shared goals and shared impacts for a transformation into a low emission, inclusive and empowering, resilient and sustainable development. We in Albay are deeply committed, nationally and internationally, to climate change mitigation and adaptation. For these reasons, we believe we can contribute greatly to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and robust implementation of the recently

adopted Lima Declaration and Action Plan."

Albay's strong points include its firm commitment to its eco-systems, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, which are backed up by scientific and institutionalized programs. The province has made sustainability as framework of its development programs, along with its firm commitment to protect its natural habitats, as evidenced by its increased forest cover to 298,298 hectares in 2010 an 88% expansion from its 44,891 hectares in 2003.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mt. Kitanglad blaze under control; US sending choppers to Mt. Apo

MIKE U. CRISMUNDO
and ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ

BUTUAN CITY — Fire fighters yesterday stepped up efforts to contain the remaining packets of forest fire in Mount Kitanglad with heat-wave induced blaze in five slopes now under control, government official reported yesterday.

The five areas which were already cleared were Barangay Capehan; Sitio Matampay, Barangay Sil-ipon, both in Libona town; Sitio Mangasa, Barangay Dalwangan and in Barangay Imbayao, both in Malaybalay City; and in Sitio Mapawa, Barangay Sungco, Lantapan town, all in Bukidnon province, government official said.

This developed as about 300 fire volunteers, armed with shovels, bolos and other fire-fighting equipment, proceeded to build fire breaks yesterday at the remaining fire zone in Mt. Kitanglad, considered the fourth highest peak in the Philippines and declared by the government as protected area.

"Aside from the Mt. Kitanglad Range Park and Kitanglad Guard Volunteers, local government units in Bukidnon, police and Army, and villagers from the

50 barangays located on the slopes of Kitanglad are now on the ground to help contain the fire," Regional Executive Director (RED) Ruth M. Tawantawan of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in a phone interview with Manila Bulletin yesterday.

She said all technical personnel of the DENR's four community environment and natural resources offices under the supervision of Bukidnon Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Ma. Theresa J. Allen have also been deployed to help put off the fire.

Meanwhile, as fire rages on in Mount Apo, Davao-based businessman Philip Dizon, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Mindanao (AMCHAM-Mindanao) confirmed on Sunday that US government support was scheduled to arrive yesterday to help stop the conflagration that has so far burned 300 hectares of grasslands and forest cover.

Dizon particularly asked for more choppers from the US government to help in bucket watering operations in the affected areas of MANP.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Mt. Apo fire not a threat to EDC geothermal plant

By DANESSA RIVERA

Lopez-led Energy Development Corp. (EDC) said its Mt. Apo geothermal power plants remain unaffected by the forest fire raging near the peak of the country's highest mountain.

EDC disclosed yesterday its facilities continue to operate normally since the fire is approximately seven kilometers from the plants' perimeter.

EDC business unit head James Villaroman said this is the third forest fire on Mt. Apo in 20 years and the plant's staff are keenly aware of the fire risks in the area when there is drought.

"Our forest protection rangers have the skills, equipment

and training for this type of event. Having planted over 2.5 million trees that we wish to nurture and protect, we proactively created layer upon layer upon layer of fire breaks in the forest just for this precise risk. Some of our fire breaks are over 20 meters wide, way over global recommended practice. Protecting our asset is something we take very seriously," he said.

The forest fire has been raging since for nearly two weeks and is still persisting on the Davao del Sur side but is moving away from EDC's facilities.

EDC said it continues to closely monitor the fire, putting in place its emergency response team and fire fighting systems which are ready to take action in cooperation with local emergency services if it becomes necessary.

"EDC forest patrols and aides together with the local government units of Kidapawan, Makilala and Magpet (also in Cotabato) and volunteers are still on alert," it said.

Moreover, the company is widening and extending the firelines near the reforestation block of the facilities as a risk

mitigating measure.

Aside from the reforestation efforts near the Mt. Apo peak, EDC also deployed members of its Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response Unit to assist the groups handling the containment of the Mt. Apo fire.

The geothermal power plants, composed of two units with a rated capacity of 54.24 megawatts (MW) each, are located in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato.

The plants were commissioned in February 1997 for Mt. Apo 1 and in June 1999 for Mt. Apo 2 under a build-operate-own contract scheme.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Geothermal plants safe from Mt. Apo fire

THE Lopez-led Energy Development Corp. (EDC) on Monday said the Mt. Apo geothermal plants remain unaffected by the forest fire ravaging the mountain and are operating at normal levels.

The fire is approximately 7 kilometers from the Mt. Apo Geothermal Business Unit's perimeter.

"This is the third forest fire on Mt. Apo in 20 years and we are keenly aware of the fire risks at Mt. Apo when there is drought. Our forest protection rangers have the skills, equipment and training for this type of event," EDC Business Unit Head James Villaroman said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"Having planted over 2.5 million trees that we wish to nurture and protect, we proactively created layer upon layer upon layer of fire breaks in the forest just for this precise risk. Some of our fire breaks are over 20 meters wide, way over the global recommended practice. Protecting our asset is something we take very seriously," Villaroman said.

As of press time, the fire on the Davao del Sur slope of Mt. Apo persists and is moving away from the EDC facilities.

EDC is closely monitoring the fire. Its emergency response team and fire fighting systems are in place and ready to take action in cooperation with local emergency services if the need arises.

"EDC forest patrols and aides together with the local government units of Kidapawan, Makilala and Magpet, and volunteers are still on alert," EDC said.

"In the meantime that the risk is diminishing, they are widening and extending the firelines near the reforestation block of EDC as a risk mitigating measure. Aside from the efforts at the EDC reforestation area near the Mt. Apo peak, EDC also deployed members of its Emergency Preparedness & Disaster Response Unit to assist the groups handling the containment of the Mt. Apo fire," the company said.

VOLTAIRE PALAÑA

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US, tutulong sa forest fire sa Mt. Apo

NORTH COTABATO - Sasaklolo na ang Estados Unidos sa pag-apula ng sunog sa Mt. Apo na pang-walong araw na ngayon.

Batay sa ulat, inihayag ni Philip Dizon, negosyante sa Davao City at American Chamber president ng Mindanao, nakatanggap siya ng mensahe mula kay American

Chambers Philippines Executive Director Ebb Hinchliffe na aprubado sa pamamagitan ni US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg ang kanyang request na tulong.

Ito'y matapos na magpasa si Dizon sa Amerika upang mas mapadali ang pag-apula ng sunog pero hindi pa batid kung anong tulong ang ipapadala sa bansa.

Samantala, sinabi ni Harry Camoro, hepe ng Davao del Sur Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, pansamantalang itinigil ang operasyon ng dalawang super huey helicopter dahil zero visibility pa rin ang area sa kapal ng ulap at usok mula sa bundok.

Ipinangako naman ni Camoro na ipagpapatuloy nila ang operasyon kahit kulang ang dalawang helicopter sa pag-apula ng sunog sa pinakamataas na bundok sa bansa. **Rhoderick Beñez**

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Save Mt. Apo! Sundalo, Air Force namundok

Dahil sa patuloy na pagkalat pa rin ng apoy sa tuktok ng Mt. Apo, umakyat at tumulong na rin ang mga tauhan ng Philippine Army (PA) sa mga volunteers at mga bumbero na apulahin ang apoy na mahigit isang linggo nang lumalagablab.

Sapul pa noong Marso 26 nang masimula ang sunog kung saan umabot na ito sa mahigit 300 ektarya.

Ayon kay Maj. Ezra

Balagtey, tagapagsalita ng Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom), isang company ang ipinadala nila doon na binubuo ng 112 sundalo mula sa 10th Infantry Division noong Sabado.

Bukod sa PA, tumutulong na rin ang Air Force gamit ang helicopter na sumasalok ng tubig mula sa isang lawa o kaya ay nagdadala ng saku-sakong

crushed ice na ibinubuhos sa mga bahagi ng bundok na nasusunog at isa pang helicopter na ginagamit para naman mag-biyahe ng mga volunteers at mga supplies.

Kaugnay nito, umapela na rin ang Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (RDRRMC) ng mga donasyong pagkain at tubig para sa mga volunteers. (Betchai Julian)

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Fire razes grassland on Quezon mountain

LUCENA CITY—An 18-hour fire razed more than 50 hectares of cogon land on Mount Masalukot in Candelaria town in Quezon province on Sunday and Monday, a week after a forest fire crept through grasslands and forests on Mount Apo in Mindanao and on Mount Kanlaon in the Visayas following the volcano's eruption.

No one was reported hurt in the Masalukot grass fire, which was reported around 1 p.m. on Sunday and was put out about 7 a.m. of Monday.

FO3 Marx Pranada, chief of the forest fire protection division of the Bureau of Fire Protection in Quezon, said firemen from Candelaria and the neighboring towns of Sariaya and Dolores were monitoring the situation and were ready to respond should another fire break out.

The blaze started in Barangay Pinagdanlayan and part of Barangay Cabatang in Dolores town and spread to other parts of Masalukot, Pranada said.

The area is used as pasture land and investigators suspected that activities of farmers or residents there started the fire.

Salud Pangan, Department of Environment and Natural Resources park superintendent for Mounts Banahaw and San Cristobal, said the fire was far from these mountains.

"But we are not taking any chances. We're doubling our efforts to protect Banahaw from another fire [that hit the area two years ago]," Pangan said.

Masalukot lies within the buffer zone of Banahaw and San Cristobal, both declared protected landscapes. **Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon**



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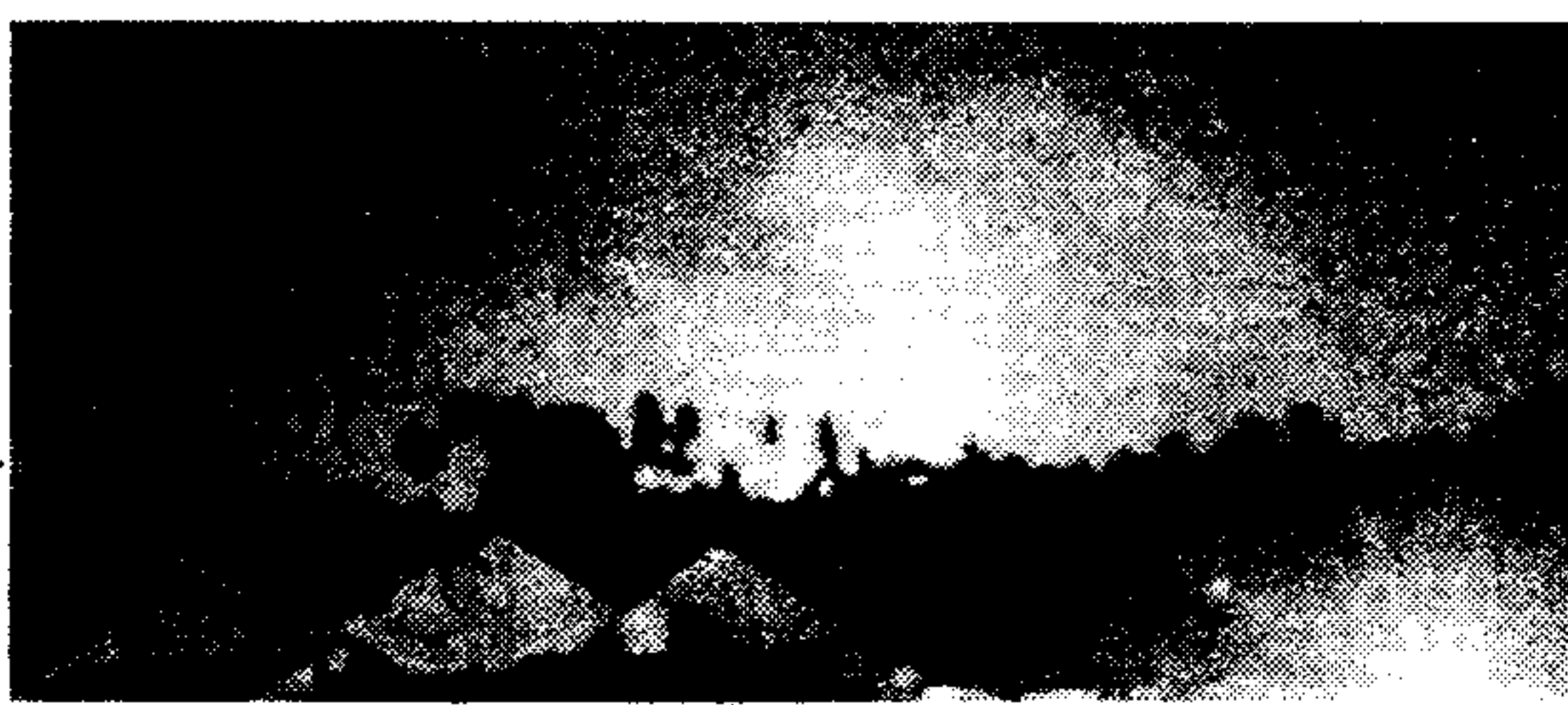
Fire hits Mt. Mayabobo again in Quezon

By GEMI
FORMARAN

CANDELARIA, Quezon -- After almost two years, a fire incident once again occurred in a portion of Mt. Mayabobo, hitting a wide grass land in Bgy. Masalukot 3, here, on Sunday night.

Mt. Mayabobo is a smaller mountain situated behind Mt. San Cristobal, between San Pablo City in Laguna and this town. Mt. San Cristobal is adjacent to Mt. Banahaw.

Forester Sally Pangan, the Protected Area superintendent for Mt. Ba-



The portion of Mt. Cristobal at the height of fire.

nahaw and Mt. San Cristobal, said they are still in the process of determining the length of the area that has been damaged by fire.

In a phone interview, Pangan said that similar to what happened in the mountain last year, the incident was deliberately done by pasture land owners in the area.

It was learned that almost the entire Mt. Mayabobo is being used by cow owners as their pasture land.

"The grass land was allegedly set on fire in order to eliminate the old and dried grass. It's the newly-grown grass that is used by the pasture owners to feed their cows," said Pan-

gan.

She said burning dry grass is a regular activity of the cow owners in the village.

Quoting reports from the residents, Pangan said the fire broke out Sunday night but was contained naturally after three hours.

A similar incident happened in the same area on April 11, 2014.

Police identified one of the cow owners responsible for the burning as Froilan Bundalian.

Similar fire incidents also happened on Mt. San Cristobal on March 18 and 19 and Mt. Banahaw on March 19 and 20 of same year.

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Mt. Banahaw, nasusunog

QUEZON - Halos isang linggo nang nasusunog ang kogonan sa Mistikong Bundok Banahaw sa bayan ng Dolores, Quezon at umabot na sa bahagi ng bayan ng San Cristobal sa Laguna.

Ayon kay Manny Calayag, acting Quezon PENRO, ang grass fire ay patay- buhay at patuloy na mino-monitor ng mga tauhan ng BFP dahil umabot sa hanggang

kahapon na tinatawag na "kalbaryo ni Herodes".

Umabot na rin sa 80 ektarya ng cogon grass ang natupok na sa kasalukuyan at inaalam pa ang pinagmulan ng apoy.

Hinati ng BFP sa anim na grupo ang mga kawani upang hadlangan ang pagsiklab ng apoy na nakasugat sa isa nilang kawani. (Tony Sandoval)

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Letter-writer belaboring the point on eagle releases

APPARENTLY TAKING pleasure in bashing others and playing the naysayer, Estanislao Albano Jr. wrote two more letters to the INQUIRER ("Data show 'unfavorable score' for PEF 'releases,'" Opinion, 2/17/16; "PEF run by people with heads in clouds," Opinion, 3/22/16) purportedly in reaction to our reply ("In captivity, eagle's potential killed," Opinion, 2/10/16) to his first letter ("Is PEF helping save PH eagles?" Opinion, 2/1/16). It would seem that his subsequent letters are meant not only to further discredit our eagle releases but also to malign the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF).

We feel sorry he has to belabor the point. But suspending eagle releases does not save the eagles from extinction. On the contrary, enhancing the survival of both adult and young eagles in the wild by eradicating eagle shooting, hunting and trapping, and preventing deforestation (wildlife crimes that can be minimized by strengthening law enforcement, a point we explained in our previous letter) does.

Another lasting response is

investing in creating the physical and socioeconomic environments to prevent these crimes (i.e., situational crime prevention). Both are elaborated in a white paper that the PEF submitted and presented during a Senate inquiry in November 2015.

Our support to indigenous and local forest guards who do species monitoring and foot patrols in 14 eagle habitats across the country, as part of our community-based conservation program that also empowers rural communities and helps secure their wellbeing, is important and is geared toward that end. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other NGOs are also doing their share in conserving as many wild populations as possible.

Species extinction, as a "wicked problem," has multiple causes and, thus, requires multiple solutions. We maintain that the practice of releasing eagles remains an important conservation tool, together with efforts like educating the public, enforcing wildlife laws, preserving nesting sites and habitats,

protecting eagle pairs and their young, and building local values for eagles and biodiversity.

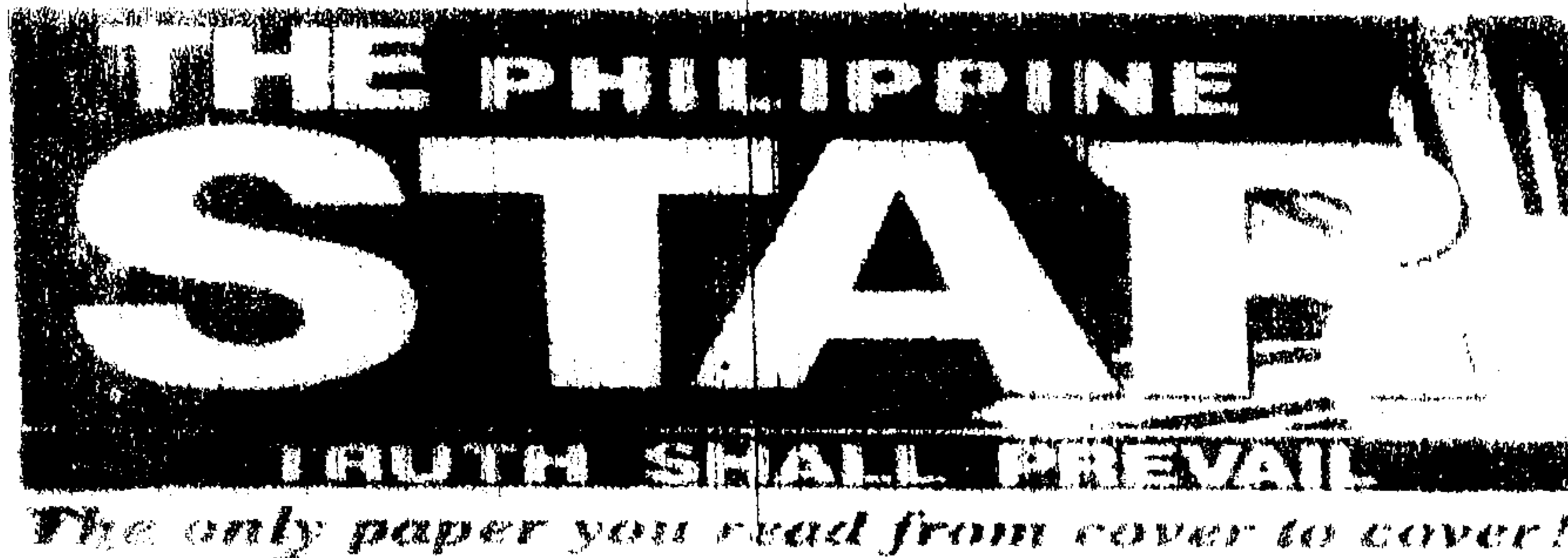
Research and monitoring, using satellite telemetry technology to keep track of rehabilitated eagles released back to the forests (eight birds) and eagles free-living in the wild (eight birds), have delivered the sad news: Even inside protected areas where we thought birds are safe, or in forests close to villages that generally support eagle conservation, and in situations where our forest guards are not looking, there is a 50-percent chance that our Philippine eagles would be hunted down.

Instead of shooting the messenger, we should focus our energies on understanding the root causes of wildlife persecution and, more importantly, do our part in addressing the problem.

Again, we invite Estanislao Albano Jr. to do the same.

—JAYSON C. IBAÑEZ,
director for research
and conservation,
Philippine Eagle Foundation,
falcon2car@yahoo.com

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METROLINE

PCG searches Manila Bay for *butanding*

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) is looking for a whale shark sighted in Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard on Saturday.

The whale shark, locally known as *butanding*, was found approximately five meters away from the Baywalk along Roxas Boulevard, but it has been missing since Sunday.

"This is the first time that we have this kind of news finding a *butanding* close to the Baywalk of Roxas Boulevard," PCG commander Armand Balilo said yesterday.

He also said the PCG has coordinated with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and asked for an expert to guide the PCG on how to rescue the whale shark.

In the Philippines, *butanding* are commonly spotted in Donsol, Sorsogon and Batangas.

- Evelyn Macairan

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Join 'Draw-A-Bird' on April 8

BY ALBERT BALBUTIN
HARIBON FOUNDATION

GRAB a pen, pencil, or any medium of art on April 8 and celebrate the love of both drawing and nature with "Draw-A-Bird Day"—a day when people from around the world draw birds and share them on social media.

The day has its humble origins in England and war-stricken Europe. In 1943, a 7-year-old Dorie Cooper had asked her uncle to draw a bird while visiting him in the hospital after having been wounded in the war. Soon after, other injured soldiers would draw birds for Dorie during her subsequent visits.

According to *Dabday.com*, a site that features bird drawings and tells the story of Dorie, tragedy struck when she was 10 years old after she died in a car accident, just three years after inspiring the soldiers to draw birds.

The soldiers, along with doctors and nurses from her uncle's hospital, shared their bird images at Dorie's funeral. The tradition of drawing birds carried on soon thereafter, year after year, on her birthday, April 8.

The *Dabday.com* website shares images of bird drawings from around the world dating back to 2008. But the Draw-a-Bird Day movement and its associated hashtag #DrawABirdDay, despite its heartfelt beginnings, has yet to gain the sort of traction #AIDub has gained in social media.

For this reason, The Haribon Foundation, the Philippines' pioneer in nature conservation, wants to call upon everyone to make April 8 a day of celebration to acknowledge and recognize the value of birds — not only for their beauty but also for their various ecological purposes.

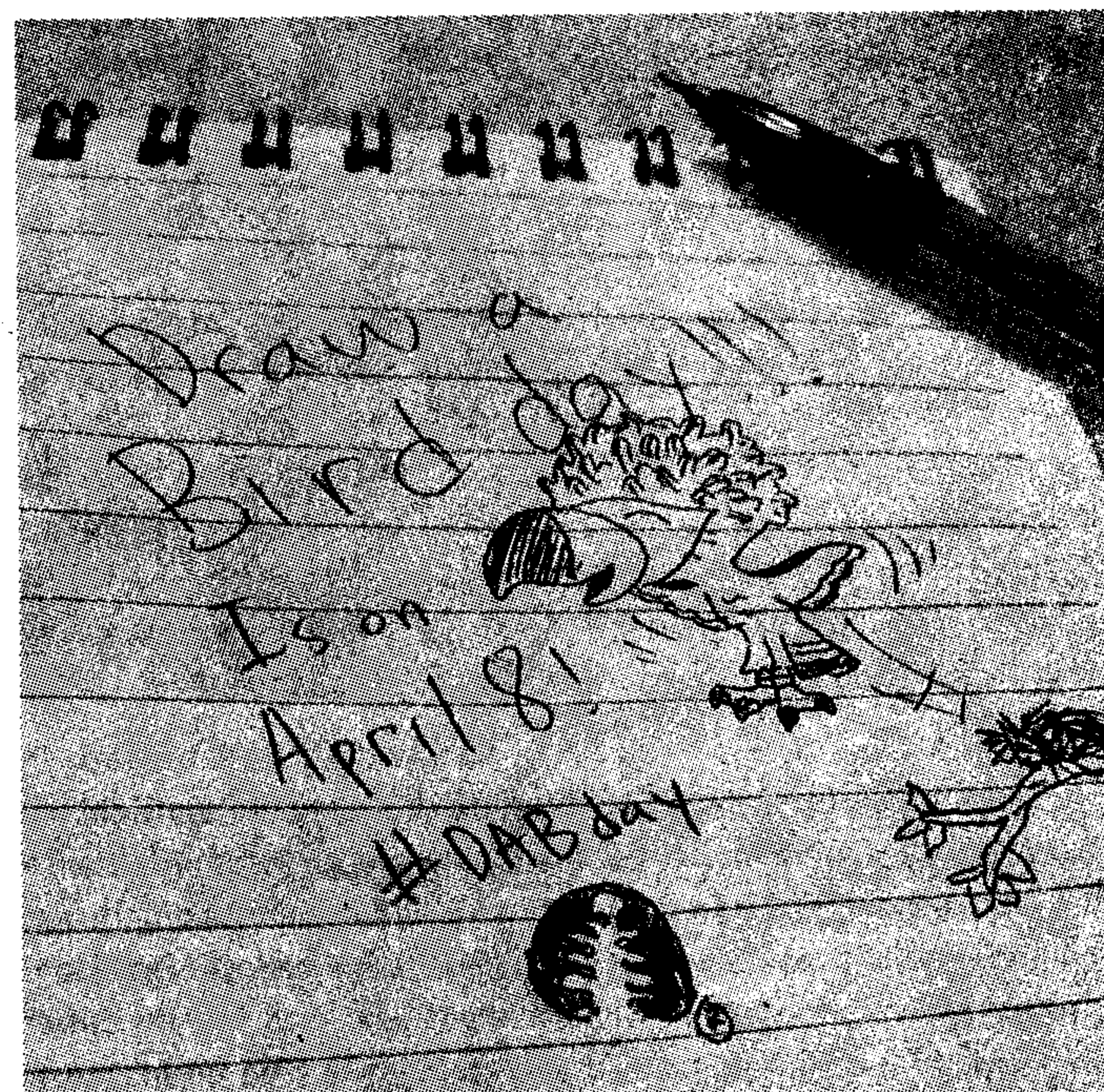
Birds are some of nature's most easy-to-find species, for they can be seen and heard almost everywhere at any time. Artists, young or old, novice or professional, are called to draw birds they see in their neighborhoods. And to help with conservation awareness, artists are invited to draw birds that are not only endemic to the Philippines or only found in the country, but also those that belong to the the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species like the critically endangered Haring Ibon or the Philippine Eagle.

In time, it is hoped that movements like these will not only draw out more appreciation for our feathered friends, but also bring about more

support for environmentally-sound policies and actions that will help conserve birds and its natural habitats.

* * *

Want to learn more about Philippine endemic and endangered birds and their importance? An integral part of Haribon since its formation in 1972, Haribon membership transforms regular citizens into biodiversity champions. They protect, conserve, and save biodiversity while forming lasting friendships with other environmental advocates. Be a Haribon member today. Register at bit.ly/joinHF, e-mail membership@haribon.org.ph, or call 421-1209.



■ Draw a bird you see in your neighborhood, or a special one like the Philippine Eagle, and share them online with the hashtags #DrawABirdDay and #DABday

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

A great extinction on the horizon

BY JOHN LEO C. ALGO
HARIBON FOUNDATION

DURING the Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training in Manila in March, former US Vice President Al Gore discussed with 700 delegates the impacts of climate change on anthropogenic and natural ecosystems including biodiversity conservation.

Gore warned that our planet is entering an event known as the "Sixth Great Extinction," which is mostly triggered by climate change as a result of human activities.

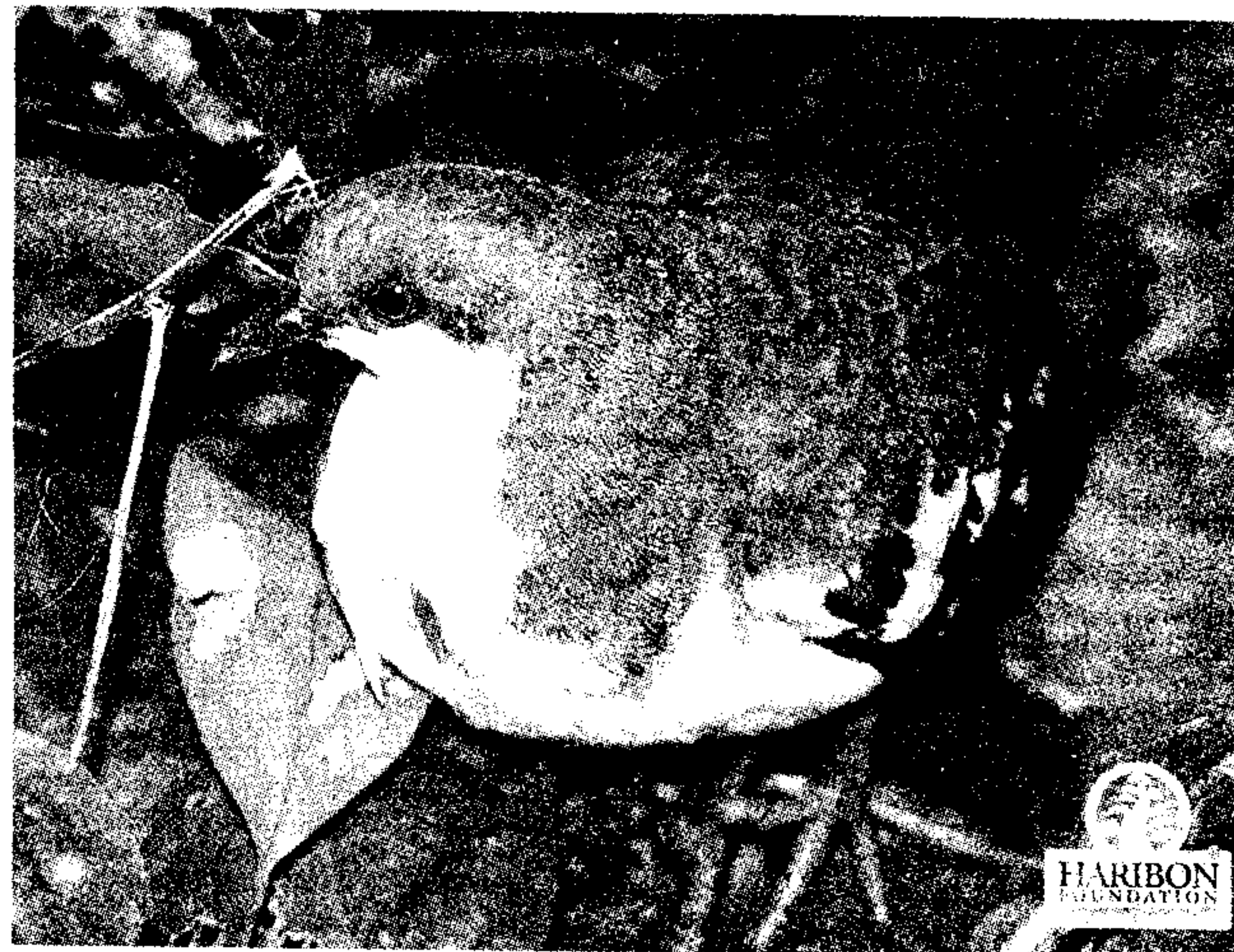
A mass extinction is the widespread and rapid death of life on Earth, spanning for millions of years. There have been five mass extinction events in history, the latest of which occurred nearly 66 million years ago. Scientists discovered that the Fifth Great Extinction was caused by an asteroid striking the Earth, which caused a long winter affecting plant life and depriving other life forms of nutrition. People are actually familiar with this historic event as it is most associated with the extinction of many dinosaur species.

Climate change has always been a factor in previous mass extinctions. Yet the Sixth Great Extinction is different because it is caused by us, humans. Anthropogenic activities have turned humanity into a "global super-predator," disrupting the natural rhythm of nature and destroying other species at an unprecedented speed.

Current researches reveal unsettling signs of the ongoing extinction rate. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) reported that 875 plant and animal species have gone extinct in the past 500 years.

The IUCN attributes this to human induced destruction of habitats, forays of invasive species, and global climate change among others, although a biological study in 1995 published in the Science journal suggests the rate of extinction may be hundreds or thousands of times higher.

Gore also revealed that terrestrial plant and animal species are moving away from tropical areas at a rate



■ Only 400 Mindoro Bleeding-heart (*Gallicolumba plateneae*) are estimated to be left on the island of Mindoro; designated as critically endangered by the IUCN
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

of 15 feet per day due to intolerable high temperatures, rising sea levels, and other impacts of climate change.

In the Philippine setting

As one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change, the Philippines, whose economic well-being heavily depends on its rich biodiversity, will also be one of the hardest-hit nations by the Sixth Great Extinction. The impacts of climate change on the ongoing extinction period are manifested on all environments, threatening the numerous endemic species that the country hosts.

For instance, the rapid decrease in forest cover due to agriculture and infrastructure development in the country has not only deprived countless endemic species of birds such as the Philippine Eagle and the Walden's hornbill of their natural habitat; it also removes an important absorber of carbon dioxide from our atmosphere. This leads to higher temperatures which, along with changing rainfall trends, cause a change in migration patterns, thereby affecting the ability of species to produce offspring. It also forces birds and other wildlife to find new homes in higher-elevated, cooler habitats. However, their prey may not move as quickly, further pushing them to the brink of extinction.

This domino effect of extinction is even more evident in oceans which occupy three-quarters of the world. Gore remarked that of all the carbon dioxide emitted into our atmosphere, 93 percent of it goes into the oceans, causing an increase in sea surface temperatures. It also leads to ocean acidification, which prevents the formation of calcium carbonate that is needed by the shells of coral reefs.



■ Large declines of Humphead wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*) are observed by fishermen coming from five marine key biodiversity areas in the Philippines

These lead to coral bleaching that eventually leave them more vulnerable to degradation. The destruction of corals which serve as breeding grounds for many aquatic species cause

a shift in the migration and reproduction of many fish species which will also affect the large aquatic mammals and fishes that rely on them as food. The decline of the entire marine food chain will lead to a rapid decline of fisheries in the Philippines, threatening the livelihoods of fishers and our food supply.

It is human nature for us to immediately respond to forces directly threatening our way of life. However, it is time to recognize that climate change is a much bigger problem than what we realize at face value. If we do not act quickly enough to preserve our world, we ourselves might become a part of the Sixth Great Extinction.

The only way to prevent this is by acting individually in our daily lives and acting collectively by supporting movements, organizations, and policies that help mitigate climate change impacts.

The Haribon Foundation provides a number of learning sessions

and educational materials to the public through its Membership program. Members learn everything from how to plant trees to proper waste-management practices. Hundreds of members and volunteers also aid in tree plantings year after year from June to November, leaving behind forests that can take in more and more carbon from our planet's atmosphere, and bringing back more of the Philippines' precious biodiversity which act as barometers to the health of our natural resources.

As Al Gore said to end the Climate Reality Training event, "Do not lose your grip. Hold on". The best way to do this is to take hold of already existing solutions that we must act upon every day.

Want to help advocate and represent for our environment? Become a Haribon member and share your skills and passion for the greater good. Haribon membership transforms regular citizens into biodiversity champions. They protect, conserve, and save biodiversity while forming lasting friendships with other environmental advocates. Register at bit.ly/joinHF, e-mail: membership@haribon.org.ph, or call 421-1209.

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CALOOCAN 'DIRTY CITY'

HATAW News Team

NASAAN ang P1.4B pondo sa basura?

Malamang sumabit si Caloocan Mayor Oscar Malapitan sa mga botante ng lungsod kun hindi niya maaayos ang hindi maipaliwanag na paggamit ng kanyang mga tauhan ng pondo sa basura sa ngayon ay tinaguriang 'dirty city'.

Napag-alaman na halos P1.4 bilyon na ang nai-

laan na pondo sa garbage hauling services mula nang maupong alkalde ng lungsod si Malapitan noong 2013 at dito na nag-simulang tumindi ang problema ng basura sa buong lungsod.

Ayon sa isang konsehal binawasan nila ngayon 2016 ng P26 milyon at nag-allocate na lang ng

P478,288,849 mula P478,288,875 noong 2015 "dahil nga sa baho ng mga transaksyon dito."

"Kasi nga naman sobrang laki ng pondo sa basura 'di naman maipaliwanag kung saan ito napupunta," aniya.

"Pumunta ka na lang sa Malaria, Bagong Barrio, Sta. Quiteria, Bagong Silang, Maypajo at Dagat-dagatan puro basura ang makikita at maaamoy, ang baho ng lugar dahil sa

dami ng mga basura."

Napag-alaman na bagama't tuloy-tuloy ang 'serbisyo' ng basura pero ang nakikinabang lang umano ay kompanyang "I Swim" na malapit sa city hall.

Dahil sa takot umano sa mayor, 'di naman makapagreklamo ang mga kawani baka sila ang balingan ng galit ng mga 'vigilante' na itinalaga umano ng alkalde sa mga barangay para magmanman sa kanyang mga kalaban.

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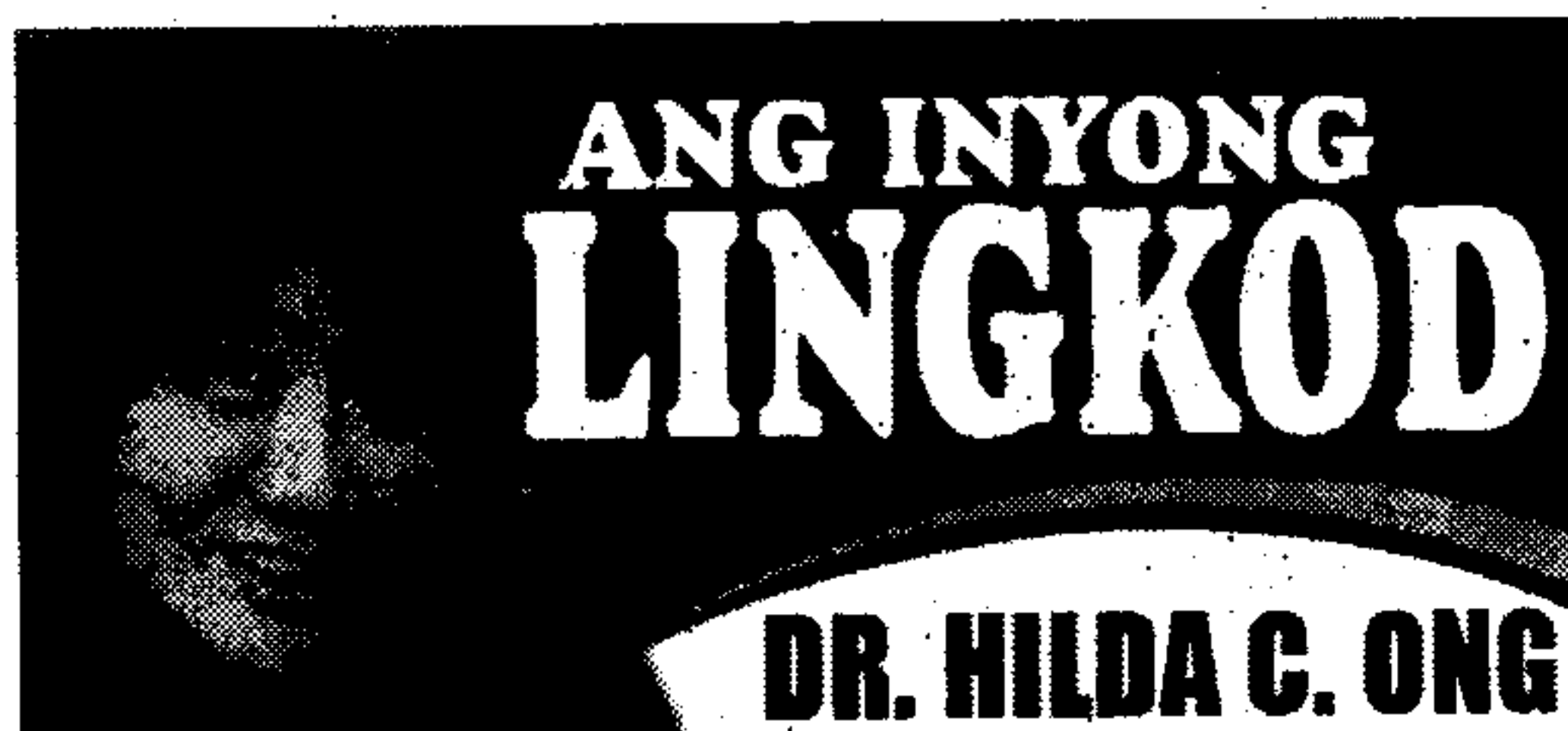
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MALAKING tulong ang funding agencies na gaya ng Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) at International Monetary Fund (World Bank) sa pagsasakatuparan ng mga programa at proyekto ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

Naibalita na sa inyo ng inyong lingkod ang tungkol sa Integrated 3D Geographical Information System-based Water Resource System sa mga lalawigan ng Pampanga at Bulacan o ang "Water Philippines GIS Project" na tinustusan ng KOICA ng halagang US\$3.5 million sakop ang GIS for river basin, dam automation, website for water resources information, at ang monitoring and evaluation system ng Ipo, Bustos at Angat dams.



ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

NWRB IN REVIEW: FOREIGN-ASSISTED AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Tumulong din ang World Bank sa NWRB sa pagpapatupad ng "Accreditation Program for Technical Service Providers" (ATSP) kung saan ang mga maliliit na water utilities ay nagkaroon ng tulong para sa technical, financial and management aspects kabilang din ang strategic and investment planning.

Sa kasalukuyan, mayroon nang 78 accredited TSPs na binubuo ng mga eksperto sa teknikalidad (46),

pananalapi (28) at institutional development (27). May 77 water utilities ang pumasok sa programa kung saan 37 na ay nakatapos at karamihan ay nagpapatuloy pa rin. Natapos na rin ang "Listahang Tubig" (Water Register) kung saan sa kaunahang pagkakataon ay nagsagawa ng pambansang pagtatala ng water utilities upang magkaroon ng tamang datus na mahalaga sa pagsasagawa ng mga polisiya at programa.

Sa Final Report, may naitalang 22,844 water service providers sa 1,445 na mga lungsod at bayan sa buong bansa.

World Bank - Water Sanitation Program ang nagbigay ng kaukulang pondo para maisagawa ito.

Ayon kay Dr. Seville D. David Jr., Executive Director ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), makikinabang sa Listahang Tubig ang mga sumusunod:

- Tagaplano - Ang datos dito ang magbibigay sa kanila ng kaalaman ukol sa kinakailangang puhunan para mapabuti at palawakin ang serbisyo ng patubig sa pamayanan.

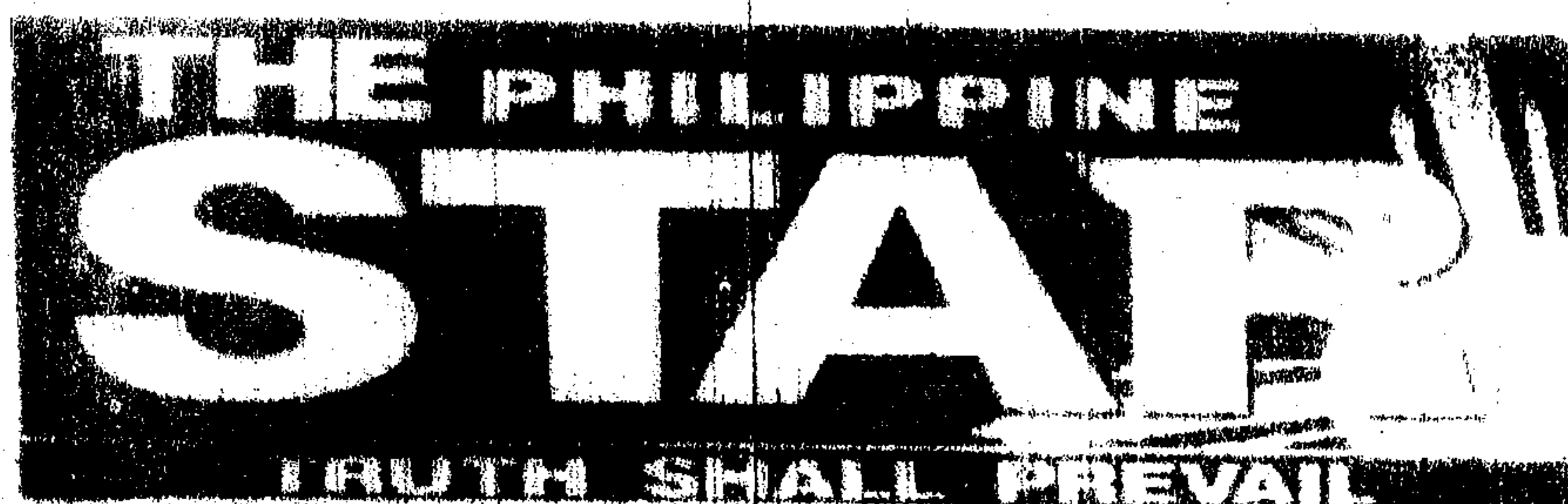
- Mga Water service provider - Kaya nilang ikumpara ang kanilang kakayahan sa iba pang WSP, dagdag kaalaman mula sa ibang kasapi sa WSP, malaman kung ano ang kailangan nilang pagbutihin, at pagsumikap na mapabilang sa mga natatanging WSP.

- Konsyumer - Ang mga datos ng Listahang Tubig ay magiging available sa publiko. Maaring makita ng mga konsyumer, maikumpara ang gawain ng kanilang WSP sa iba, at hilingin ang mas magandang serbisyo.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Incoming gov't must do more amidst climate change

Aside from the government's inadequate action to nurture our agriculture sector, Filipino farmers and fishermen have to face more odds from the adverse impact of climate change which the whole world is experiencing, but which is affecting the Philippines more.

Situated on a typhoon belt and being an island country has put us on the world's most vulnerable nations list, with chances of being hit by floods, strong storms, droughts increasing dramatically in the next few years.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has reported that the Philippines, from recent years of observation, has been hammered by stronger typhoons with wind speeds reaching 200 kilometers per hour and with 60 percent more rain, and more of these can be expected.

On the other hand, the intense heat that bears down on the land for the most part of summer has caused the land to dry up at faster rates, resulting in droughts never or rarely experienced before. This affects not just farmers, but also fishermen.

What does this mean for us? In simple economic terms, the lifeline of more than half the country's population belonging to the poorest sectors of society is put on the line. On the macro level, it means inclusive growth that is essential for our economic leap may not be achieved.

Thus, more than ever, the government should exert more effort in drawing up a plan of action that will help those most affected by climate change to get back on their feet at the soonest time possible.

Inadequate 'survival' funds

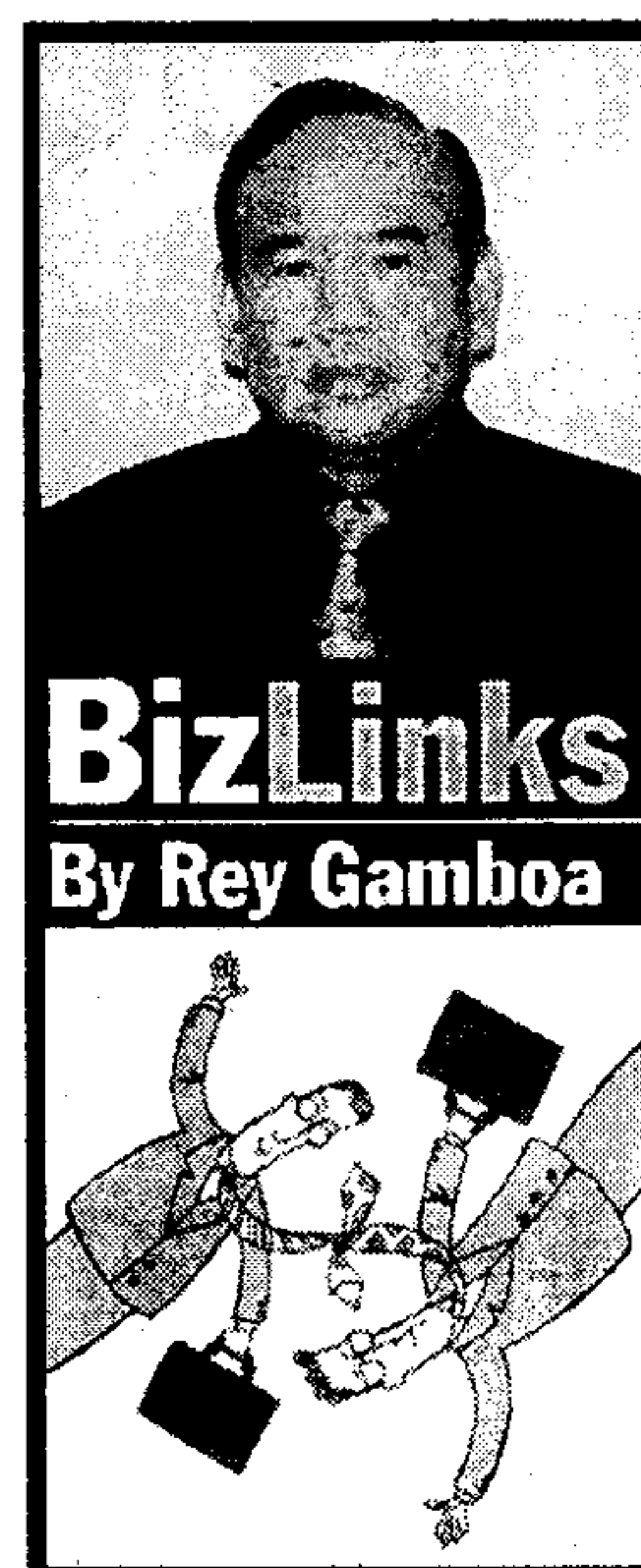
Without doubt, the CCC – as the government's main watchdog on climate change – needs to do more in terms of ensuring the whole country is climate change-proofed in the best way possible.

In October last year, three years after the P1-billion People's Survival Fund (PSF) was created, the CCC announced it was accepting proposals from local government units and community organizations that needed funding for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction projects.

While the PSF is just one of the initiatives of the CCC towards bringing about climate change-readiness in highly vulnerable communities all throughout the country, it had taken an inappropriately long time for the fund mechanics to be finalized.

Most importantly, considering this will be open to localities that have high poverty incidences, with pronounced vulnerability to typhoons, drought, and sea water flooding, and with key biodiversity elements like forests or coral reefs with endangered animals, the allocated P1 billion seems to be inadequate.

With so much area to cover, the money set aside by the PSF would sadly not be enough to reach even a 10th of the population at risk. Still, it's money that would serve some good use if allocated to deserving and credible projects.



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Increasing govt must
do more amidst
climate change

Securing more funds

Since the CCC's founding in 2009, a number of international and developed countries have contributed to providing funds for various projects that have helped the government to draw up a strategic plan of action, as well as pilot-test noteworthy project concepts.

The amounts are not insignificant, but they have really barely made a dent in the planned revolution to climate change-proof the most vulnerable communities of the country.

This is why there is a need to invoke the agreements reaped during the COP last December, also known as the 2015 Paris Climate Conference – most specifically to the gentleman's pledge to contribute \$100 billion annually for endangered countries like the Philippines.

Truly, there is so much that needs to be done to ensure our countrymen survive the immediate risks of reduction in land and fishing productivity, as well as the potential disruption in their livelihoods when disasters brought about by climate change strike.

The Paris COP has allowed the world to move forward to address the impact of global warming, not just in reducing greenhouse emissions, but also to compensate the victims of years of environment degradation brought about by the industrial age.

Survival skills

Global warming and climate change are real, and the sooner we are able to inculcate into our everyday lives all manner of survival skills to confront the onslaught of future disasters, the better for the world. We have to do this until there will be concrete evidences of a slow down, and hopefully, a reversal.

For the Philippines, being the world's third country most at risk to climate change, having no land barrier to protect against climate change disasters is an innate disadvantage.

We have 16 provinces in Asia and 10 cities in the world that are most vulnerable to weather-related risks, including sea level rise and intensified storm surges. The urban poor and coastal communities are particularly vulnerable.

Tasks for urgent action

The CCC has come up with a working manual on climate change adaptation, and with it, a list of measures that we as concerned citizens should heed. It is divided into six areas of concern: water, crop production, fish production, health, ecosystem, and coasts.

Under water are conservation, harvesting and storage, and better management of the water supply systems. Under crop production are forecasts and early warning, diversification of herds, crops and livelihood, more resistant crop varieties, irrigation solutions, soil conservation, changes in timing of farming activities (land use and farm location), use of early maturing rice varieties, rice rationing, rainwater conservation, and rapid harvesting and post-harvesting measures.

In fish production, suggestions include changing fish stocking and harvesting and improving fish cage management. Under health, improving access to health care and disease monitoring and emergency responses are listed.

For the ecosystem, suggested are the rehabilitation of habitats, creation of protected areas and migration corridors, tree planting along highways, and forest reserves, water areas and mountains.

And for those in coastal areas, recommendations include integrated coastal resource management, integration of adaptation in planning, construction of sea walls, elevating houses, conserving the ecosystem, elevating major thoroughfares, modifying existing drainage system, "flood-proofing" buildings, flood hazard mapping and floor warnings, temporary shelter for affected communities, relocation of affected communities should sea water levels rise, and empowering community institutions.

This list just illustrates the task at hand, but it clearly demonstrates the need to act quickly, without hesitation.

Traders push 'climate change' measures

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE Federation of Philippine Industries has urged Congress to craft a measure that will mitigate the effects of climate change, vowing to help lawmakers to continuously advocate for rationale government policy and industry action on the issue.

In a letter to the House committee on energy, chaired by Oriental Mindoro Rep. Reynaldo Umali, FPI called on the alignment of climate change options to national priorities, circumstances and capabilities being a signatory to the 2015 Manila Declaration on Climate Change.

Dr. Jesus Lim Arranza, FPI chairman, lamented the recent call of Former USA Vice President Al Gore during his visit to the Philippines for "people power" action versus Philippine coal power plant

projects. FPI is composed of 34 industry associations and 120 manufacturer-members.

"This is not only misplaced but reflects a complete lack of understanding of local conditions," Arranza said, adding that "the country's response to Greenhouse Gas reductions should rationally be based on co-benefit measures such as forestation."

"On the other hand more developed countries such as the United States have capabilities for reductions in coal power plant capacities which the Philippines does not have in the foreseeable future," Arranza said.

FPI has been urging climate change mitigation in the context of co-benefits such as robust reforestation, traffic decongestion noting that vehicles snarled in traffic results in large Greenhouse

Gas (GHG) (carbon dioxide) emissions and a rationale evaluation of the Philippine policy on Renewable Energies, Arranza said.

FPI said the Philippines is already a minimal contributor to carbon emissions—both on a total and per capita basis—relative to the rest of the world accompanied with high penetration of renewable energy capacity.

Despite the fact that the Philippines accounts for 1.37 percent of the world's population, it only contributes 0.24 percent of the global CO2 emissions and significantly lower than one percent of the other GHGs. On a CO2 emissions per capita per annum basis, this translates to 0.9 metric tons CO2 per capita much lower relative to more developed countries such as the United States (17), Germany (8.9), China (6.7), and even neighboring Thailand (4.5).

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Questions, questions, questions

In fairness to serious and diligent voters who look at elections much more than popularity contests or are but mere entertainments, there are certain key questions that the political candidates especially for elective national public offices should answer in sincerity and truth, with credibility and candor, with the competence and potentials of converting mere words into ground realities.

Needless to say, it is certainly not enough for them to proffer their answers thereto in terms of but rhetorical declarations, nice maxims, mere palliatives and like other dreamy responses in Cloud 9. Much less would it be sufficient for them to give heavenly answers to such questions as the following:

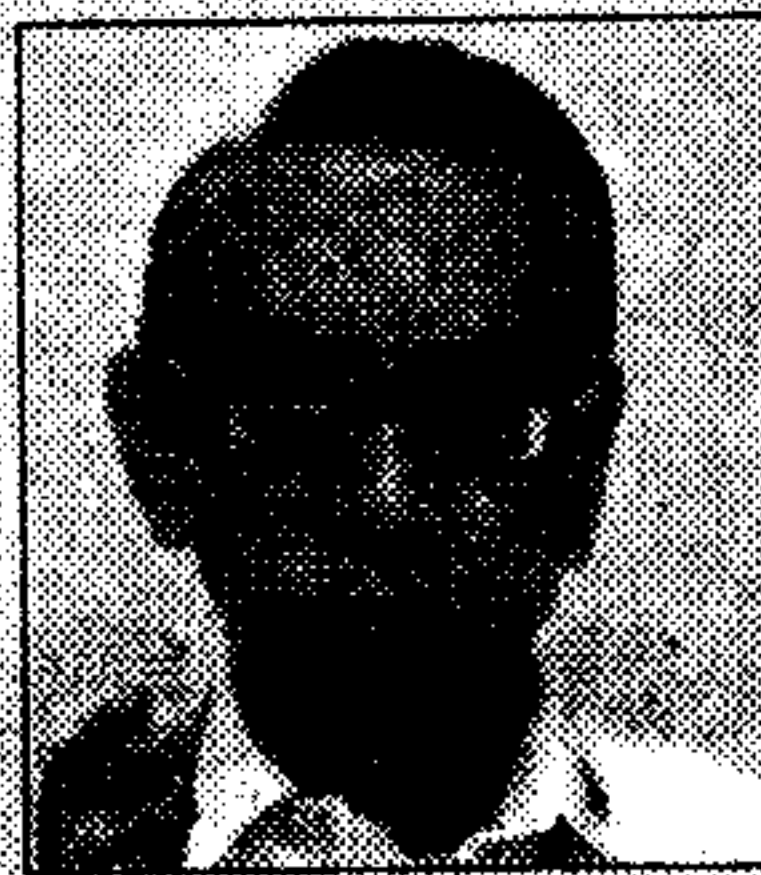
Question: What will they do not only to bring about a fast and credible justice system in the country such that it does not bow to the wealthy and influential but neither to the power and import of partisan politics?

Question: What will they do in order to bring about real and lasting socio-economic development in the country many of its citizenry have been long since suffering not simply from poverty but also from downright misery?

Question: What will they do in order to produce not simply enough but also clean and cheap energy which is a key imperative for genuine and lasting socio-economic development?

Question: What will they do in order to incite and sustain industry not merely in terms of

VIEWPOINTS



**Archbishop
Oscar V.
Cruz**

manufacturing in general but particularly so in food production, considering that the Philippines has great agrarian potentials?

Question: What will they do to even but lessen if not altogether do away with climate change the ultimate destructive impact of which are not merely in terms of human resources but also

nothing less than the loss of human lives?

Question: What will they do to bring genuine and lasting peace in Mindanao not only to bring about genuine and persevering human harmony therein but also to harness its big potentials in terms of energy and industry?

Question: What will they do to make the Philippines hold on and keep its own land and sea coverage – Sabbah included – strongly coveted by foreign regimes basically because of its power reserves?

Question: What will they do in order to affirm and ascertain that the three pillars of government – the Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial Branches – remain really co-equal in truth and in fact?

Question: What will they do to once and for all realistically and resolutely define the political anti-dynasty constitutional provision which is but a mandate of reason and a dictate of ethics?

Such are the main honest to goodness questions that candidates for the 2016 Elections should be able to answer with credibility.

(Reprinted with permission of Archbishop Emeritus Oscar V. Cruz, from www.ovc.blogspot.com)

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DA awaits release of additional P2.11-B budget from DBM for El Niño mitigation

BY BUTCH FERNANDEZ & MARY GRACE PADIN

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) on Monday said it has yet to receive the P2.11-billion supplemental budget it requested from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for the implementation of its El Niño mitigation plan.

But even without the additional budget, Agriculture Undersecretary Emerson Palad said the DA is ready to put in place additional measures to help farmers cope with the ill effects of El Niño.

Palad also said that, prior to the protest and dispersal of farmers in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato,

last week, the DA has provided assistance to them. The farmers had asked the government to give them 15,000 sacks of rice and free planting materials after the drought devastated their crops.

"Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala, together with the local government unit [LGU], has

visited North Cotabato twice. He directly distributed farm interventions to the local farmers prior to the incident," he said in a news briefing on Monday.

Earlier, the DA said Alcala has turned over more than P2.4 billion worth of projects to farmers' groups and LGUs during his visit in Alabel, Sarangani and Kidapawan City, North Cotabato, in February. Aside from production support, Palad said the DA also provides irrigation support, such as cloud seeding and rehabilitation of small water-impounding projects, and distributes information material regarding El Niño.

He said a total of P3.64 billion worth of farm interventions have already been given by the DA to help farmers. Palad added that this budget came from the regular DA fund. In the meantime, Palad said the DA will tap its quick-response fund (QRF) for areas under state

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of calamity because of El Niño.

Of the P57 million QRF allocated for El Niño mitigation, Palad said P9.6 million was given to Region 9; P16.15 million for Region 12 (which covers North Cotabato); and P31.7 million for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Despite saying that the DA has already provided production support to the farmers of North Cotabato, Palad refused to comment on the probable reasons the farmers of Kidapawan City staged a protest rally. He also said the DA can only give production support to the farmers, and not food assistance.

"The DA's mandate is to help farmers produce rice, but we cannot provide food assistance. I think even the National Food Authority can't give rice," Palad said.

For their part, senators said they will ask Budget Secretary Florencio Abad to explain the reported nonrelease in March of

P900-million assistance to farmers that is part of the total P19-billion allotted by the government for El Niño-affected farm sectors. Sen. Serge Osmeña indicated Abad will "very likely" be asked about it when the DBM chief is summoned at the upcoming hearings of a separate Senate inquiry into the killing of rallying farmers who blocked a major highway in Mindanao to protest government inaction to cushion the economic impact of El Niño.

"The Senate will definitely look

into that massacre," Osmeña told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel III confirmed in a separate text message that he, too, is demanding an explanation from authorities concerned. Among others, senators are keen to know from Aquino administration officials if the timely release of the already approved P900-million assistance to farmers could have averted the bloody confrontation between protesting farmers and police authorities in the El-Niño-affected region.

“The DA’s mandate is to help farmers produce rice, but we cannot provide food assistance. I think even the National Food Authority can’t give rice.” —PALAD

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DROUGHT-RESISTANT A farmer brings his cow to the cornfields in Santa Lucia, Ilocos Sur. Corn and tobacco are the preferred crops in this town because they are drought-resistant. MAU VICTA

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El Niño programs funded through June — DA

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (DA) said its El Niño interventions with regular budget funding are planned through June but also urged the release of more funds to finance its full El Niño mitigation road map.

“I’m sure we could have done more if given the budget immedi-

ately. But then again even if we are not given the additional funds, we will make use of our regular budget with a focus on the areas affected,” said Undersecretary for Operations (Crops) and Agribusiness and Marketing Emerson U. Palad.

For this year, the agency has funding of P40.33 billion. From its

regular budget, it has so far allotted a total of P3.646 billion worth of interventions since the start of El Niño in early 2015 to prop up production capacity of the stricken regions.

According to the latest update on the El Niño-related damage to agriculture sent to *BusinessWorld*, the department estimates the loss at

383,743 metric tons (MT) of crops valued at P5.53 billion between February 2015 to March 2016.

As of March 14, the country has so far this year incurred losses of 159,256 MT of crops valued at P2.1 billion due to the dry spell.

Mr. Palad said rice crop losses are lower than the earlier project-

ed one million metric tons, partly due to interventions by the DA.

These include the High Yield Technology Adoption project, cloud seeding operations, provisions of pumps and engine sets and open source pumps, and information campaigns, among others.

Mr. Palad said the full plan for further interventions remains with the Agriculture Secretary for approval.

The plan will include the breakdown of each region to be given with interventions with corresponding cost, among others. — **Janina C. Lim**

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Pangasinan townsfolk oppose fish hatchery plan



NO TO FISH HATCHERY
Residents of Bolinao, Pangasinan province, stage a picket in front of the municipal hall to oppose the construction of a fish hatchery at the town's ecotourism zone.

RAY ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

By Gabriel Cardinoza
and Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BOLINAO, Pangasinan—Long stretches of white sand beaches are found in Bolinao on the western tip of Pangasinan province—reasons compelling enough for residents to fight a proposal to put up a fish hatchery in the town.

Last week, they marched in protest against the project that would rise in Barangay Patara, fearing that it would harm the local tourism industry and their source of livelihood.

The hatchery is being developed by Feedmix Specialist Inc., a fish feed manufacturer, at a 1.3-hectare coastal area. It will be called the Cape Bolinao Sus-

tainable Marine Finfish Hatchery and Eco-Learning Center.

Feedmix said its project would have “an extensive water treatment system, which would be designed with multiple layers of sedimentation and natural bio-filters such as seaweeds and oysters—before the hatchery’s water is released back into the sea.”

“This makes both environmental and business sense, since the hatchery would rely on the same source of seawater to rear its marine life,” Alex Soriano, Feedmix vice president for business development, said in a statement.

Led by “running priest” Robert Reyes, the protesters stopped in front of the municipal hall, chanting, “No to Feedmix! Save Bolinao!” Reyes and

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PANGASINAN TOWNFOLK OPPOSE FISH
HATCHERY PLAN. . .

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some leaders of Concerned Citizens of Bolinao (CCB) proceeded to the office of Mayor Arnold Celeste to convince him to reconsider his decision to allow the project.

At one point, the meeting turned into a shouting match between Celeste and several CCB leaders.

The mayor told reporters later that the municipal council and the Patar village council had approved the project after it went through public consultations.

Dr. Consuelo de Perio, CCB chair, said the opposition to the project would not die down. "They held three public hearings and they saw that the people did not like the project," she said.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources'

Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) issued an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the project in October 2015. According to the document, the fish hatchery would consist of 45 water tanks of different sizes for brood stock, raceway hatching, spawning and egg hatching.

Feedmix said the municipal council endorsed the project in July 2015, "along with strong support from the DENR and the EMB as it would have minimal environmental impacts, if any, and will strongly benefit the economy and the nation's food security."

Soriano said Feedmix was willing to share its water treatment technology to resorts in the area.

"Resorts lacking sewage treatment plants, solid waste processing and adequate water systems will pass out untreated human waste into the ocean sewage," he said in the statement.

"It is common to see fish or shrimp hatcheries side-by-side with luxury hotels and resorts in famous tourist destinations such as in Phuket, Thailand, and Gondol, Indonesia," Feedmix said.

Celeste said the local government was given assurance that wastewater would not flow to the sea. "So the resorts will not be affected," he said, pointing out that the project site is about 300 meters from the coastline."

The mayor said the company would also build an oceanarium as a tourist attraction.

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As Indonesian forests burn, new agency feels heat



INDONESIAN soldiers spray water on peatland fire in Pulang Pisau regency east of Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia.

REUTERS

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INDONESIAN FORESTS BURN

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JAKARTA—As forest fires raged like never before across Indonesia last year, President Joko Widodo announced he would set up a special agency to tackle the annual scourge that would shroud parts of Southeast Asia in choking haze.

But, with this season's fires already blazing, the Peatlands Restoration Agency has barely gotten off the ground.

Nazir Foead, who was appointed to lead the body, told Reuters the agency would need at least \$1 billion over the next five years, but that the government was unlikely to allocate a budget for another two months.

Foead, an environmental expert and former conservation director of the World Wildlife Fund in Indonesia, has only a handful of workers. He conceded that the agency didn't have the clout to force plantation companies to toe the line in helping restore peatland.

The fires are often started by palm oil plantation and paper firms or by small farmers who use the slash-and-burn practice to clear land. Peaty soil, found in many parts of Indonesia, is particularly flammable when dry, often causing fires to spread beyond their intended areas.

Much of Southeast Asia was blanketed in acrid haze for several months last year and, as pollution levels spiked, thousands of people were afflicted by respiratory illnesses, while tourism, schools and flights were disrupted.

The agency's goal is to prevent fires by "rewetting" 2 million hectares of drained and damaged peatland—roughly the size of Israel. The process involves raising water levels using dams and irrigation channels.

But the agency's budget has not been decided yet, and it has been operating since it started in January using money from around \$80 million pledged by donors.

As the agency looks to find its feet, fires are already flaring in some areas. Riau province on Sumatra island last month declared a state of emergency, with over 1,000 people deployed to manage the crisis.

Chief Security Minister Luhut Pandjaitan said the government would declare emergencies in affected areas earlier this year to ensure firefighting resources were deployed quickly.

"Last year we didn't declare emergency until September, when the fires were already widely spread, that was our mistake," he said last month.

President Widodo, who last year cut short a visit to the United States because of the disaster, threatened to sack officials if they failed to contain blazes.

Reuters