

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 01 MAY 2016

DAY : Sunday

DENR

IN THE NEWS



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR welcomes faster litigation of environment cases

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has welcomed a Supreme Court (SC) circular officials believe would speed up the litigation of environment cases.

The circular, issued on April 4 through the Office of the Court Administrator, directed all judges to strictly observe laws prohibiting the issuance

of injunctions against violators of environmental laws.

It cited Section 10 of the Rules of Procedure for Environmental Cases, which provides that only the SC can issue a temporary restraining order or writ of preliminary injunction against unlawful actions of government agencies that enforce environmental laws.

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

"We want to thank the SC for issuing Circular 87-2016. This will definitely hasten the prosecution of hundreds of cases filed against violators of environmental laws, particularly illegal loggers," DENR Secretary Ramon Paje said.

Since the imposition of the total log ban in 2011, the DENR

has filed a total of 1,833 cases against suspected violators of forestry laws and regulations. So far, the agency was able to secure the conviction of 214 respondents.

Meanwhile, lawyer Mike Matias of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) said the circular is con-

sistent with the 1991 SC decision in the case of the Pollution Adjudication Board against the Court of Appeals and Solar Textile Finishing Corp.

In that ruling, the high tribunal said: "Stopping the continuous discharge of pollutive and untreated effluents into the rivers and other inland waters of the Philippines

cannot be made to wait until protracted litigation over the ultimate correctness or propriety of such orders has run its full course, including multiple and sequential appeal... which may take several years."

Through the EMB, the DENR enforces environmental laws including the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act.

HATAW!

D'YARYO NG BAYAN

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Dapat suportahan ang Paris Agreement sa climate change

Ni TRACY CABRERA

MAHALAGANG ang suportang susunod na administrasyon sa mga napagkasunduang adhikain sa Paris Agreement upang matugunan ang usapin ng climate change, pinunto ni environment and natural resources undersecretary Jonas Leones sa Kapihan sa Manila Bay media forum sa Café Adriatico sa Malate, Maynila.

Ayon kay Leones, nakapagtala ng mga pagsulong ang pagpupulong ng United Nations sa Paris tungo sa pagtugon sa climate change subalit sinasabi pa rin ng mga ekonomista at siyentista na lubhang napakabagal ng mga pamahalaan sa pagbalangkas ng long-term na kinabukasang malaya sa uling, langis, at gaas—sa

kabila ng pinsalang dulot ng pagtaas ng temperature ayt pagkatunaw ng yelo o polar ice.

Mahigit 170 pamahalaan ang nagsagawa ng hakbang sa paglagda ng kasunduan. Habang simboliko lamang ito, ito'y nagmantine ng mahalagang momentum simula ng Paris climate meeting noong nakaraang Disyembre.

Sinabihan ang UN ng Tsina, na sumasakop sa 20 porsyento ng global emissions, na tatapusin ang kanilang domestic procedures para lumahok sa kasunduan bago ang G20 meeting sa Setyembre. Nagbigay din ng kahintuila na alok ang ilang mga industrialised na bansa para maisumite ang kasunduan at maaprubahan ng parliyamanto.

Layunin ng kasunduan sa Paris na iwasan ang problema ng climate change sa pamamagitan ng paglimita sa pag-init mula sa 1.5C sa 2C.

Subali una rito'y kailangan maging operational ang kasunduan—na maaabot lamang sa pormal na pag-apruba ng 55 bansa na sumasakop sa 55 porsyento ng global emissions.

IPinaliwanag ni Leones na habang ang Pilipinas ay bumubunaga lang ng mababa sa isang porsyento ng carbon at green house gases, mahalaga pa ring maging aktibo ito dahil ito ang magtutulak sa mga developed countries na bawasan ang kanilang carbon emissions.

"Dito papasok ang carbon trading, na kung saan ang palitan ng kredito sa pagitan ng mga bansa ay dinisenyo para mabawasan ang mga emission ng carbon dioxide.

Hinahayaan ng carbon trade ang mga bansa na may mas mataas na carbon emissions para bumili ng karapatang makapagbuga ng labis pang carbon dioxide mula sa mga bansang mas mababa ang carbon emissions," aniya.





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Phl deploys drones to combat climate change

The Philippines has begun to deploy drones to determine which farmlands are most at risk from natural disasters and quickly assess damages after they strike, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization said.

The Philippines ranks as the third most disaster prone country in the world because of its high exposure to natural calamities such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tropical cyclones and floods.

The drones are equipped with navigation and pho-

togrammetric equipment that can generate detailed and data rich maps from aerial photographs including Normalized Difference Vegetation Index or NDVI, a formula used for assessing vegetation and plant health.

Under the initial phase of the pilot project funded by the Philippines and the FAO, two unmanned drones have already been sent to provinces affected by El Niño.

Some 25 FAO and government technical experts are ready to be deployed across

the archipelago to support drone missions. They were trained over three weeks on how to fly the drones and learned a range of remote aerial assessment methods.

The drones are capable of covering up to 600 hectares of land a day and are seen to speed up the process of risk analysis.

Data gathered can be used to see where agricultural systems are at particular risk from natural disasters – and identify ways through which such risks can be countered, for ex-

ample, through ground contouring, building retaining walls, or planting protective vegetation.

“It is efficient, it saves time and we will be using a reliable source of data so that we can plan and provide appropriate interventions and responses for our farmers in times of disasters and calamities,” said Christopher Morales, director of field operations at the DA.

Imagery generated from drone flights can also reveal where agricultural infra-

structure projects and irrigation or storage facilities can be best sited to serve local farmers.

The technology can also potentially support in the assessment of coastal and forest areas,” said Jose Luiz Fernandez, FAO Representative in the Philippines.

Such disasters impact heavily on farms and food systems, leaving people without food in their immediate aftermath and undermining food production capacity for years afterwards.

Approximately 20 strong typhoons affect the Philippine Area of Responsibility each year. In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan alone devastated 600,000 hectares of farmland and caused over \$700 million in damage to the agriculture sector.

The vulnerability of the agriculture sector to natural hazards is evident elsewhere across the globe. Nearly a quarter of all damages inflicted by natural hazards in the developing world are absorbed by the agriculture sector, FAO studies have shown.

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ICRC assists 29,000 drought-hit North Cotabato villagers

By **ALI G. MACABALANG**
and **ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ**

COTABATO CITY – After serving thousands of families displaced by the armed conflicts in Maguindanao, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has shifted its food-ration mission to the drought-stricken people of two North Cotabato towns, some of whom were among the protesters in the deadly Kidapawan City protest rally last April 1.

In a statement Friday, the ICRC said it has already distributed of 25 kilograms of rice, 24 cans of sardines, two liters of cooking oil, two liters of soy sauce, two kilos of sugar and one kilo of salt, as well as basic hygiene items to each of more than 29,000 drought-affected villagers in Magpet and President Roxas towns, North Cotabato.

Dominic Earnshaw, head of the ICRC office in this city, said they estimated the food rations to be enough for the recipients' needs for a month.

Local workers of the Philippine National Red Cross assisted the ICRC's five-day relief goods dispersal that started on April 26 in 15 farm-flung villages in Magpet and President Roxas

towns, Earnshaw said.

He noted that many resident-farmers experienced "very poor" production in their last harvest in Magpet and President Roxas, while others had "total crop failure" due to the long dry spell.

He said the sad plight of the recipient-farmer's was compounded

by sporadic attacks by New People's Army rebels in North Cotabato.

"By providing food to the affected families, we aim to help them save their seeds for the next planting season," said Earnshaw.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Environmental champions awarded and green movement launched

THE NATIONAL green movement was launched at the conclusion of the PMAP summit on clean air act and climate change which ended on April 13, 2016.

In the same Summit, distinguished national leadership awards, the Punong Bayani Kalikasan awards, were given to Hon. Ramon Paje, Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for extraordinary leadership, Ms. Gina Lopez, for her leadership in the private sector as Social Entrepreneur, Senator Heherson Alvarez, the Author of the Clean Air Act and for his passion as an environmental advocate, and Senator Loren Legarda for her international leadership and many local initiatives to save the environment. Twelve (12) other awardees for the individual, corporate, NGO and the LGU were honored with the Tanging Bayani ng Kalikasan award for outstanding achievement to clean the air and minimize the effect of climate change.

In a resolution of hundreds of delegates attending the Summit, the Green Movement will strongly support the initiatives of individuals, companies and communities which have undertaken projects and programs that will clean the air and help minimize the effects of climate change. The government, through the DENR, will support the initiative. Pledges of support have been received from TESDA, the International Labor Organization, ALLTESDAPHIL (the associations of drivers and transport operators), the provincial government of Cavite and Rizal, City of San Fernando, Pampanga and Quezon City, and from delegates from several national government offices.

According to Summit Chair Mr. Orlando P. Pena, DPM, who is also Chairman Emeritus of the People Management Association of the Philippines and Chairman of the PMAP HRM Foundation, the Movement will be organized in every province, agency of government, corporate organization, NGO starting with the delegates who have signed up as charter members.

The headquarters of the Movement will be the PMAP HRM Foundation Office with address at 670 Lee Street, Addition Hills, Mandaluyong City. Contact details: Tel. 7261532 loc. 134 or 319, Fax No. 7261530 and email edfounda-

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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BORACAY BEACH CLEANUP With thousands of kilos of trash left behind by Friday night's "LaBoracay" events and parties, the local government of Boracay, Aklan, and Megaworld's Global-Estate Resorts Inc. spearheaded a coast-wide cleanup movement to gather trash and to promote the proper way of disposing of garbage during the Labor Day weekend. Dubbed "Clean As You Party," the movement is also highlighted by the distribution of 120 eco-friendly trash bins to the establishments along the white-beach coastline of the island.

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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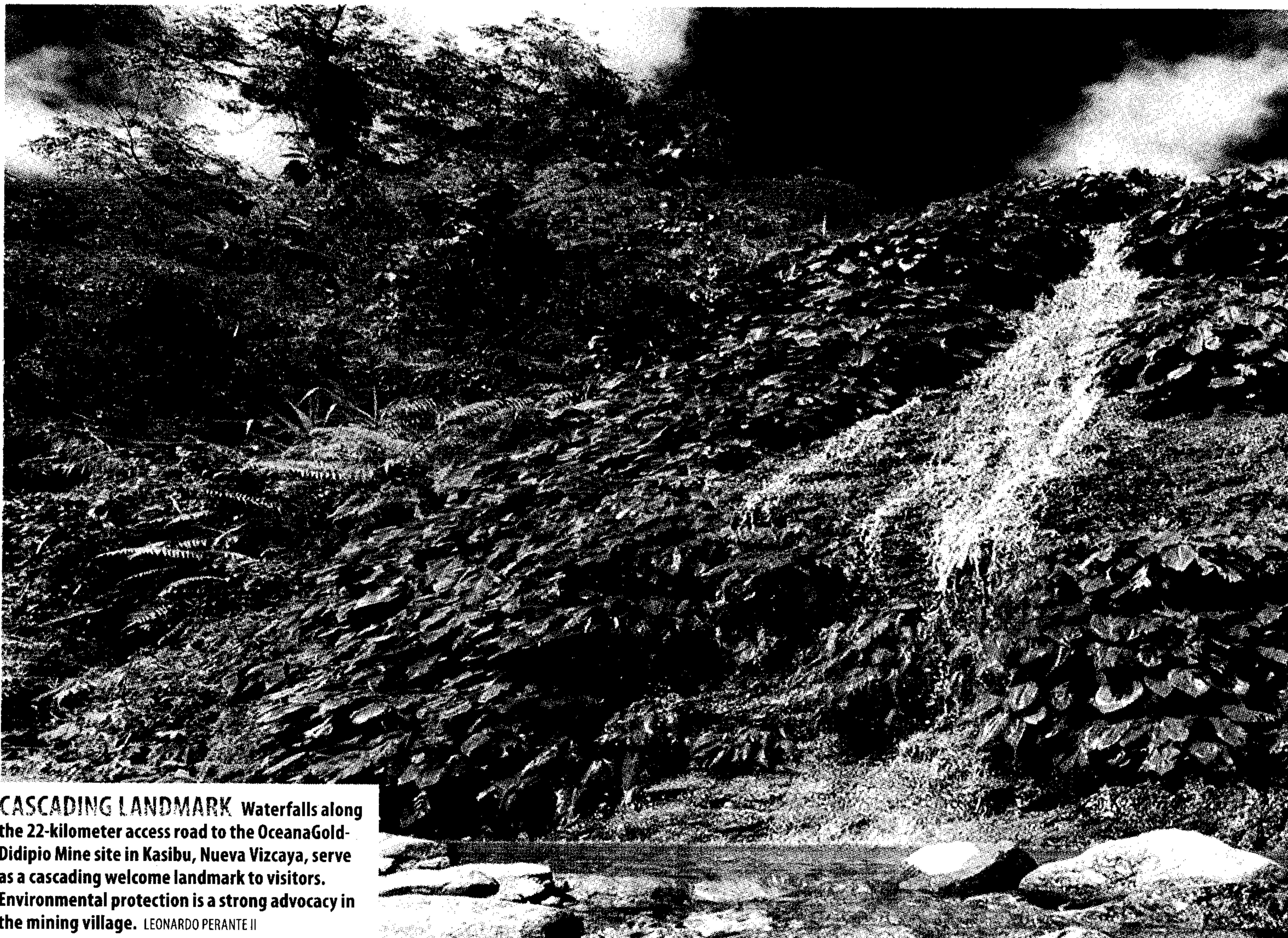
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CASCADING LANDMARK Waterfalls along the 22-kilometer access road to the OceanaGold-Didipio Mine site in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, serve as a cascading welcome landmark to visitors. Environmental protection is a strong advocacy in the mining village. LEONARDO PERANTE II



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**PROTEKSIYON
NG BIODIVERSITY**

KINIKILALA ng opisyal ng Embahada ng United States sa usaping kultura ang mahalagang tungkulin ng mga mamamahayag sa pag-uulat ng biodiversity – ang proteksiyon at pangangalaga rito, kaya naman tuluy-tuloy itong nagpupursige sa pagsusulong ng mga usaping pangkalikasan.

Sinabi ni Ryan Bradeen, assistant cultural affairs officer sa US Embassy, na makatutulong ang media sa paghimok sa mamamayan, partikular sa sektor ng kabataan, na pangunahan ang pagbibigay ng proteksiyon at pangangalaga sa biodiversity.

Tinukoy niya ang kabataan bilang pangunahing sektor na naninindigan sa mga usapin sa biodiversity dahil lumalaki ang populasyon ng kabataan.

Nasa Davao City si Bradeen para sa Davao-leg ng Biodiversity Reporting sa Philippine Eagle Foundation, na inorganisa ng Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI). Nakisali na ang YSEALI sa biodiversity reporting forum na ang mga mamamahayag ay maaaring maglathala ng mga positibong ulat tungkol sa biodiversity at sa iba pang matatagumpay na inisyatibo na karapat-dapat na iulat sa publiko.

Matatandaang masigasig ang USAID, katuwang ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), sa pagpapabuti sa sistema ng pagbibigay ng proteksiyon sa kagubatan at biodiversity ng Pilipinas sa pamamagitan ng USAID-DENR Biodiversity and Watershed Improved for Stronger Economy and Ecosystem Resilience (B-WISER) Program.

Ayon kay Karen Lapitan, isang YSEALI grantee at siyang focal person ng proyekto, nais nilang hingin ang tulong ng mga mamamahayag sa paghahatid ng mensahe sa publiko upang maging mulat ang mga ito sa usapin at hikayatin na rin ang pagsisikap para sa nagkakaisang pagpoprotekta sa biodiversity at sa iba pang programang kaugnay nito.

Isa sa mga inisyatibo tungkol sa pagbibigay ng proteksiyon sa biodiversity ang The LAWIN Forest and Biodiversity Protection System.

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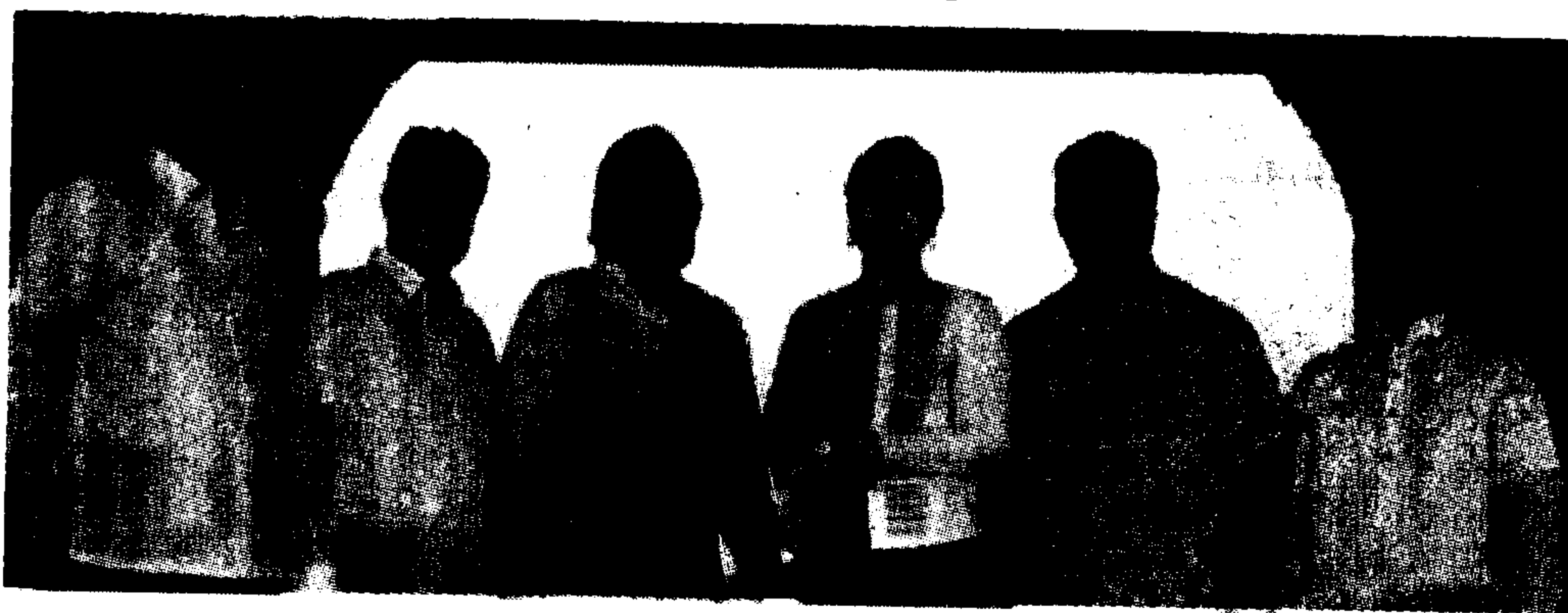
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LANDBANK bags two 'Kampeon ng Katubigan' trophies in 2nd World Water Day Awards

SERVICE



LANDBANK First Vice President/Corporate Affairs Department Head Catherine Rowena Villanueva (fourth from left), together with LANDBANK Countryside Development Foundation, Inc. (LCDFI) Executive Director Butch Garcia (fifth from left), received the 'Kampeon ng Katubigan' awards from Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito Fernandez (leftmost) and National Water Resources Board Executive Director Seville David, Jr.

LANDBANK recently received two "Kampeon ng Katubigan" awards for championing programs for water access and environmental sustainability. Maynilad Water Services (Maynilad) and National Water Resources Board (NWRB) conferred the awards for LANDBANK's environmental programs—Manila Bay SUNSET Program Partnership and Adopt-A-Watershed Phase II—at the second World Water Day Awards.

Manila Bay SUNSET Program Partnership is LANDBANK's flagship environmental program, created to implement a sustainable approach to protect and conserve the Manila Bay, considered one of the best natural harbors in Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, Adopt-a-Watershed is LANDBANK's program, in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), for the rehabilitation of denuded watersheds in different areas nationwide to contribute to the government's National Greening Program.

Now on its second year, World Water Day Awards recognizes individuals and institutions from the academe, government and non-government agencies, and the private sector that made "a difference in the area of water access and environmental sustainability."

The annual award-giving event served as the culminating activity of the World Water Day celebration in March.

"People who work in water-related sectors are often not recognized for their efforts, and it is our intent to change that through the World Water Day Awards. Though only on its second year, the mission of this awards program is to give recognition to remarkable water professionals, whose work has created quite an impact not only in the industry, but also in our society," Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito Fernandez said.

LANDBANK was nominated by DENR for the awards for the Bank's CSR environmental efforts.

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El Niño damage now at ₱140 M in Region 13

BUTUAN CITY – More than ₱140 million in damaged crops have so far been recorded as directly being caused by the dry spell brought about by the El Niño phenomenon, affecting 4,782 farmers in the Caraga region, according to the regional office of the Department of Agriculture (DA) Thursday.

“We are still awaiting the reports from other LGUs in Agusan del Sur,” said DA Caraga spokesperson Emmylou T. Presilda as she added that the records she provided the Manila Bulletin were only those for the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Norte.

She said the number of farmers affected and damage of crops could still increase when other LGUs will submit their

disaster report to the DA regional office.

She said 25 municipalities and 148 barangays from various parts of the region were already severely hit by the long dry spell and, as such, the city legislative body of Butuan has already declared the city under a state of calamity where 2,719.40 hectares of rice lands were damaged and 1,363 farmers were badly affected.

Aside from drought that started in the middle of last year, agricultural crops, especially rice and corn were also hit by pest and disease infestation like downy mildew disease, brown planthopper, rat infestation and phytoplasma, Presilda said.

To avert more damage to agricultural crops, DA 13 Regional Director Edna M.

Mabeza deployed Surveillance Monitoring Teams (SMTs) composed of entomologists, plant pathologists and engineers to help the farmers.

“Director Mabeza is closely monitoring the development in the field as she also personally visited affected areas in the region” the region’s DA spokesperson said.

The agency along with the officials and staff and technical men will also conduct massive information drive at various affected provinces and cities to avoid pests/disease infestation next month, she said. (Mike U. Crismundo)



RELIEF ASSISTANCE – Sacks of rice are stacked on top of each other at the relief center in Mati, Davao Oriental where the provincial government distributed food aid after it declared a state of calamity in the province due to the long-drawn drought spawned by the El Niño phenomenon. (Photo courtesy of Davao Oriental Information Office)

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

El Niño dries up water systems in Ilocos Norte

LAOAG CITY, Ilocos Norte: Farmers and local officials in the province have expressed alarm on the lingering effect of El Niño that has caused water and irrigation systems to dry up.

The Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO) has confirmed that the long dry spell has affected farmlands in the towns of Vintar and Bacarra while the Ilocos Norte Water District (INWD) is bracing for a possible water shortage.

With the looming water scarcity from the unpredictable weather conditions caused by climate change, Ilocanos have been told to save water as an immediate solution.

Gov. Imee Marcos made the call during the recently held Water Summit jointly sponsored by the provincial government and the INWD.

Marcos said the challenge for the next 15 years will no doubt be decreasing water supply because of climate change.

"Thus, we realized this summit as another effort to open our minds and our hearts to new and better ways of farming," Marcos said.

It was attended by more than 500 representatives from the agriculture sector, academe and local government units including planning and disaster risk and reduction officers aiming to conceptualize practical strategies to lessen the effect of climate change in the province.

"While we are thinking and planning, the only thing we can now do is to be prepared, to

adapt our traditional methods of agriculture and finally, to be resilient," Marcos added.

In 2014, Marcos launched the "Green Wall of Ilocos Norte" project that covers around 21,000 hectares across the province wherein over 12 million seedlings have been planted with a high average survival rate at 85 percent.

"This project which is aimed at protecting the Ilocos Norte's watersheds is an effort to conserve water and mitigate environmental degradation. We have done this because the problem of climate change requires a response from every resident of the province," she said.

Meanwhile, Laoag city agriculture officials have adopted alternatives to cushion the impact of the long dry spell on fish nurseries here.

Aleli Martin, city agriculture officer, said fingerlings have been most affected by drying fishponds.

"We have adopted a solution to this by refilling the fish pond using a water pump or put the caged fingerlings in the river," Martin said.

Agriculture officials also said the fingerlings will be distributed to fishermen using the bottom-up budgeting (BuB) program of the city government.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said the country will feel the full impact of El Niño toward the end of the year.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO

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The Manila Times

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Cloud seeding in Cebu slated

CEBU CITY: A team from the Bureau of Soil and Water Management of the Department of Agriculture from Manila arrived in Cebu Thursday to conduct cloud seeding in the provinces of Cebu and Bohol which are experiencing a prolonged dry spell.

Baltazar Tribunalo, Cebu Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRMO) chief, said that 22 out of 51 local government units are affected by the dry spell, resulting to an estimated damage of P186 million.

Tribunalo said the team is planning to conduct the operation as soon as possible, but the cloud seeding depends on the availability of seedable clouds and aircraft from the Philippine Air Force (PAF).

The team will use powdered specialized salt for the operation.

Tribunalo said he is grateful for their quick response on the request for cloud seeding.

He said the team was supposed to conduct cloud seeding in Bohol this week but there are no clouds in Bohol yet.

"I'm very happy they quickly responded to our request. We made the request last week, and they're here now," Tribunalo said.

The team is also coordinating with the PAF and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Engineers from the Department of Agriculture were also sent with the team.

Tribunalo said the challenges in conducting the operation are the location and shape of Cebu, the required 1,000 hectares of growing agricultural products, presence of dams and water-impounding facilities and the availability of seedable clouds and aircraft. **PNA**

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Reclamation at Scarborough Shoal?

By **EDGARDO J. ANGARA**
FORMER SENATOR

SINCE 2012, a steady rotation of two Chinese Coast Guard vessels has effectively blockaded the traditional fishing grounds of Filipino fishermen at the Scarborough Shoal west of Pangasinan. The patrol has intensified as five more vessels were spotted there a few weeks ago, according to the Department of National Defense.

The South China Morning Post (SCMP)—a Hong Kong-based broadsheet just bought by Alibaba—recently quoted an anonymous source close to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy that Beijing plans to start reclamation work this year at the atoll. The move is reportedly a reaction to the increasing closeness of the US and Philippine military and would most likely be accelerated once the Permanent Court of Arbitration makes a ruling on the ongoing disputes this June.

Reclaiming Scarborough Shoal—known as Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc to Filipinos and Huangyan Island to the Chinese—is allegedly considered by Beijing a decisive step in China's endgame of gaining de facto control over the vital naval routes and immense natural resources of

the West Philippine Sea.

Beijing says the shoal falls within its nine-dash claim, asserting that Yuan Dynasty mariners were the first who discovered it in the 13th century and had exercised jurisdiction ever since.

That assertion has no basis at all. Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio and Dr. Jay Batongbacal of the UP Institute for Maritime Affairs & Law of the Sea, have pointed out that Chinese maps from the period do not even indicate the shoal and that the Chinese only started affixing a name to the geographic feature in 1983.

In truth, Bajo de Masinloc, later named Scarborough Shoal, has been historically associated with the Philippines, and has appeared in 17th century European maps of Southeast Asia. Its precise location was determined during the 1792 Malaspinas Expedition sponsored by the Spanish government. And by the 19th century, Spain already exercised jurisdiction over it and occupied it, conducting the first formal survey of the shoal in 1800.

That ownership was passed on to the Americans through the Treaty of Paris of 1898 and affirmed by the Treaty of Washington of 1900. Throughout the Commonwealth period, the US Coast Pilot Guides (US

Coast and Geodetic Survey) reflected Scarborough Shoal in its navigation maps clearly within the Philippine sovereign domain and continued throughout since the Philippines regained independence in 1946. In 1963, the Philippine Navy even bombarded and dismantled a smuggler's base discovered on the shoal. Dr. Batongbacal argued strongly that no other government action could express sovereignty so completely and convincingly than said state action.

But in addition to the Philippines' historical title and actual possession, Scarborough Shoal clearly falls within our territory, its being merely 124 nautical miles or 260 kilometers away from our shorelines. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)—of which China is a signatory—gives the riparian country the exclusive economic jurisdiction over 200 nautical miles from its baselines.

In the face of such incontrovertible facts, Beijing should exercise utmost restraint. Any reclamation would be a sharp stab at the hearts and stomachs of many Filipino fishermen and such brazen move could unleash widespread grassroots outrage.

E-mail: angara.ed@gmail.com

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Cynthia Villar's dream: One livelihood project in every town



Experience the best teacher: Senator Villar proudly poses with the foundation's recycled plastic chairs made from waste plastic which are distributed to public schools nationwide, reminding students how hard work and resourcefulness can help forge a successful future.

Photos by JOEY VIDUYA



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STRATEGIC

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE

"I'm not a teacher, but once I learn something, I can teach it," the farmer-senator shares as we walk through the muddy paths of her Villar SIPAG Educational Farm. Judging from the crops raised organically on the family-owned farm, it seems like an ideal setting for the hard-working senator to relax and unwind. But, no: half of the farm really is due to the lawmaker's duties as chairman of Agriculture in the upper chamber.

"I'm not an agriculturist, I'm a finance person. But I realized that if you have the financial ability, you can apply it in everything you do to make it profitable," she explains, before shedding light on how depressed rural farmlands can actually be turned to yield a profit.

"According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO), our chance for food security in 2050 is to maintain the family farms, not the big corporate farms. This is true all over the world," she notes. "It's why I am earnest in teaching them because if they don't earn much from it, they will leave it. It's a race against time. We have to teach them to earn more (from farms), and they will choose to keep and continue them."

So, in the foundation's model farm — which aims to be completely powered by alternative energy in the next few years — Villar and her team of farming experts raise crops in the most sustainable, cost-effective way.

Through the process of agri-ecology, farms can now be empowered to row multiple crops, with a more profitable yield, while cutting costs on synthetic fertilizers and outdated farming methods. Call it a new farming revolution, but, as the practical senator puts it, it's only "the call of the times." "Teaching farmers to do more breaks the cycle of poverty. They only need to learn. Teach them to grow multiple crops, to raise livestock so they will have multiple sources of income, given the same plot of land," she explains.

But, as a legislator, Senator Villar understands that the practice must be complemented by priority measures, to ensure that its effects are institutionalized. "That's why, in the Senate, I'm focused on hearing about agricultural smuggling. These smugglers will kill our backyard farms. So, recently, we passed a bill in the Senate declaring agricultural smuggling as economic sabotage, which is an unbailable offense. We need to protect and support the industry that feeds us," she explains.

With a staggering 38.3 percent poverty incidence among our farmers, and in light of recent headlines about our own food producers growing hungry in the countryside, while our ASEAN neighbors surpass agricultural target goals year after year, Senator Villar understands that real development, particularly in the farmlands, must go way beyond politics. Sen. Villar advocates rebuilding what was lost to our backyard businesses because of idleness, patronage, misinformation or, simply, hopelessness. It can take a lifetime of dedication and hard work, but she knows it can be done.

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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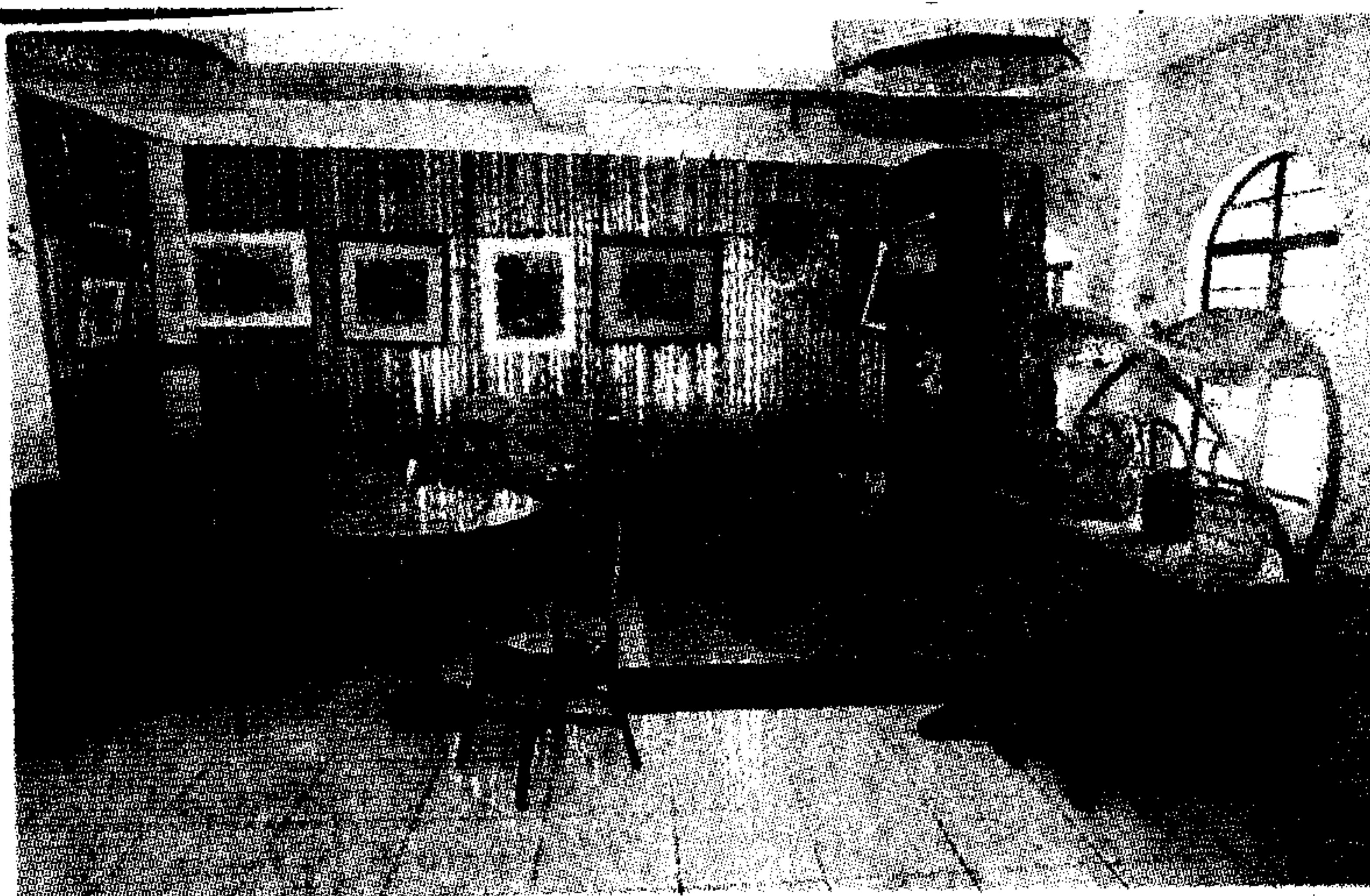
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Weaving communities: Villar SIPAG Foundation's first livelihood initiative, water lily processing, now benefits over 100 families while creating world-class quality products, and ridding Las Piñas City of its river-clogging outgrowths.

recalls. While those PET bottles are easily fished out from garbage for recycling, the processing plant focuses on salvaging something even more prevalent: plastic sachets, up to 200 kilos daily, that can be turned into 10 school armchairs that are light, sturdy and durable, using solar-powered machines. The plant currently employs 20 heads of family, able to earn a minimum of P2,000 weekly. "The plastic chairs we produce we are able to give to schools throughout the country, about 50 chairs each," Villar notes.

And to finance the operations of the purely philanthropic plastic armchair facility, Villar SIPAG turns to a more lucrative operation: the coconut husk processing plant in Barangay Elias Adana turns 8,000 discarded coconut husks a day into 600 meters of "coconet," a revolutionary product made of woven twine from coconut fibers that can curb soil erosion. "This technique was invented by Dr. Arboleda of Bicol University. We are able to sell our coconets to land developers, and half of the proceeds go to the salaries and the other half finances our plastic chair factory," Villar explains. The facility, in turn, provides jobs to 42 families, giving them the stable means to earn as much as P5,000 a week.

"Next is kitchen and garden waste for composting," Villar continues. "We have 70 composting facilities that produce 60 tons of organic fertilizer every month." To get a better perspective on how the dirty business of waste can turn into clean nutrients for plants, we visit the kitchen waste compost facility in Brgy. Pamplona Dos. Here, *barangay*-employed waste collectors, or Biomen, go around for each half day, collecting up to 80 percent of biodegradable wastes. "Our composter was developed in UP Los Baños. We can't afford imported technology. We can only afford local technology. But these are local technologies that work," Villar shares. The compost processed from Villar SIPAG's *barangay* kitchen waste facilities are then packed and distributed to organic farmers around the country.

"When it's *barangay*-based, the mothers can look after their children. They can walk home any time. Sometimes, their kids can even help. So it's a win-win situation, and at the same time, our city was able to save on garbage expense. Now, we are able to process 70 percent of our waste," Villar notes.

Villar's efforts have supplied jobs to 500 Las Piñas families, but now that her public service is growing on a nationwide scale, the senator and her foundation still have a long way to go. "My dream is to build one livelihood project in every town in the Philippines. That's 1,600 towns. I've only built 800. I'm only halfway done. I want to build 200 a year for the next 12 years," she says.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

01 MAY 2016

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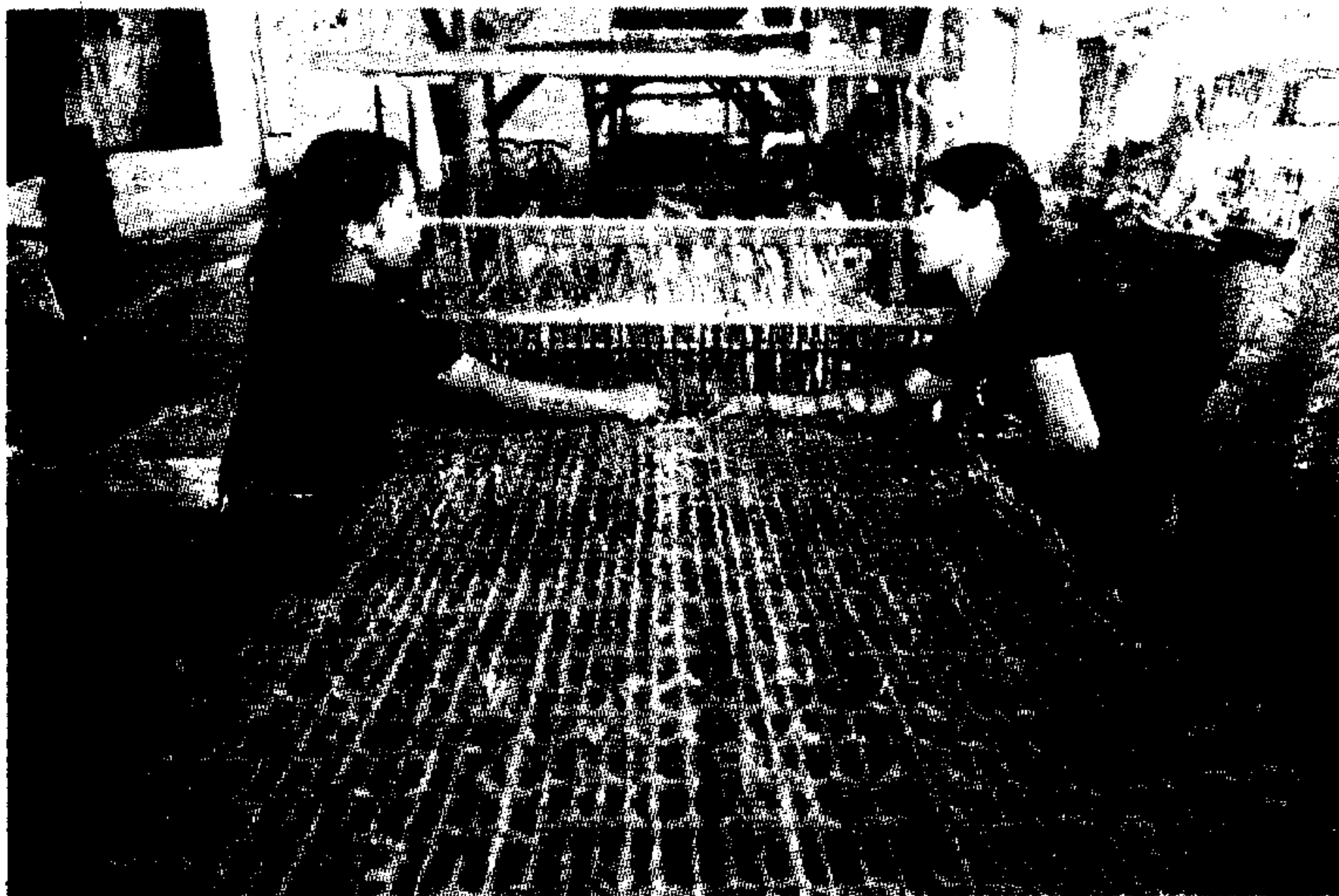
ES SERVICE



River of possibility: Once a flood-prone, garbage-riddled waterway, the Las Piñas River inspired the Villar SIPAG Foundation to see income potential in the perennial problem of waste.



Golden harvest: Senator Cynthia Villar's main duty, as lawmaker, business owner, educator and foundation founder, is to make every Filipino family self-reliant through sustainable and income-generating livelihoods that they can grow in their own backyards. This, she believes, is the only way to break the cycle of poverty.



Safety net: The Villar SIPAG Foundation's most successful income-generating livelihood model has been coconut processing, which processes a total of 40,000 coconut husks daily in five barangay facilities all over the city. Their coconut products are then sold to land developers as a means to control soil erosion, generating income for close to 50 families per barangay.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Kenya torches world's biggest ivory bonfire

NAIROBI: Eleven giant pyres of tusks will be set on fire Saturday as Kenya torches its vast ivory stockpile in a grand gesture aimed at shocking the world into stopping the slaughter of elephants.

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, who will be the first to light the semi-circle of tusks expected to burn for days in Nairobi's national park, on Friday demanded a total ban on trade in ivory to end trafficking and prevent the extinction of elephants in the wild.

"To lose our elephants would be to lose a key part of the heritage that we hold in trust. Quite simply, we will not allow it," Kenyatta said at a meeting of African heads of state and conservationists. "We will not be the Africans who stood by as we lost our elephants."

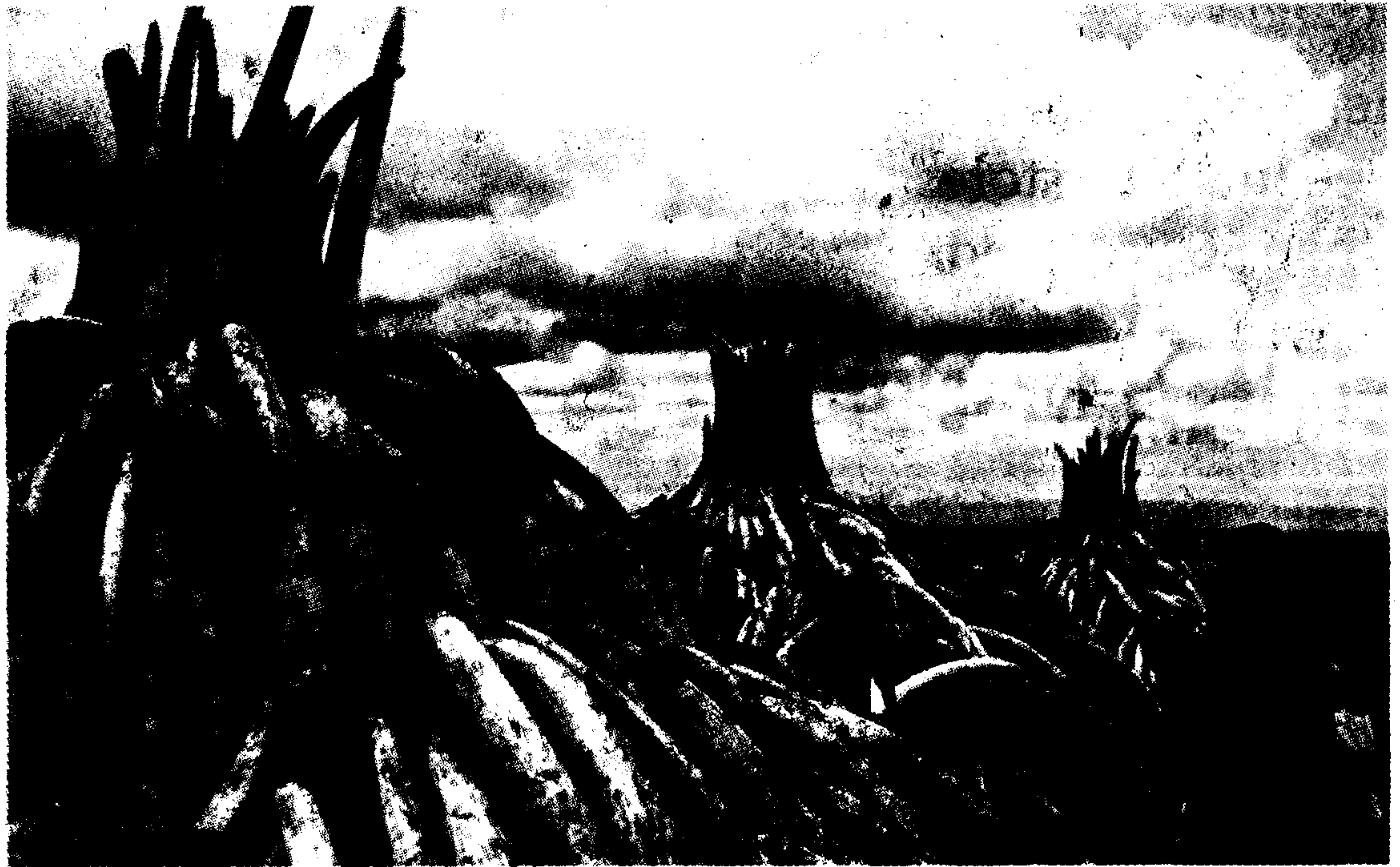
The historic bonfires will be the largest-ever torching of ivory, involving 105 tons from thousands of dead elephants, dwarfing by seven times any stockpile burned before.

Another 1.35 tons of rhino horn will also be burned, representing the killing of some 340 of the endangered animals.

Africa is home to between 450,000 to 500,000 elephants, but more than 30,000 are killed every year on the continent to satisfy demand for ivory in Asia, where raw tusks sell for around \$1,000 (800 euros) a kilo (2.2 pounds).

The pyres prepared in Nairobi contain some 16,000 tusks and pieces of ivory.

Kenya has a long history of ivory



HOT TUSKS Tourists pose for pictures next to some of the illegal stockpiles of elephant tusks stacked up onto pyres at Nairobi's national park, waiting to be burned along with more than a ton of rhino-horn at what is said to be the biggest stockpile destruction in history. AFP PHOTO

burnings, spearheading a wider movement of public demonstrations across the world, but nothing on this scale before.

On the black market, such a quantity of ivory could sell for over \$100 million, and the rhino horn could raise as much as \$80 million.

Rhino horn can fetch as much as \$60,000 per kilo—more than gold or cocaine.

But despite the staggering size of the piles to be burned, totaling some five percent of global stocks, the ivory represents just a fraction of the animals killed every year.

'Extreme temperatures'

The ivory here seized from poachers and smugglers over several years—plus a small fraction from animals who died naturally—is equivalent to just a quarter of the number of elephants massacred every year to feed demand in growing economies in Asia, eager for an elephant's tooth as a status symbol.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) banned the ivory trade in 1989.

Activists say destroying the stocks

will put anti-trafficking efforts at the top of the agenda at the next CITES conference.

China, which has tightened its laws on ivory imports, allows the resale of ivory bought before the 1989 ban, but activists say the trade in legal ivory acts as a cover for illegal imports and call for a complete ban on sales.

Ivory itself does not burn, and so the fire will be fuelled by a mix of thousands of liters diesel and kerosene injected through steel pipes buried in the ground leading into the heart of the pyramids. **AFP**

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Austrian research association assists DOT in curbing carbon footprints

AUSTRIA-BASED Gruppe zur Förderung der Angewandten Technologie (GrAT Center for Appropriate Technology) recently signed an agreement with the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (Tieza) to curb carbon footprints in the tourism sector.

GrAT, a nonprofit scientific research association based in Vienna University of Technology, will provide the technical expertise in conducting various information drives, including focus-group sessions, green-technology training, test runs and public consultations, as part of the formulation of the criteria and audit requirements of a Philippine Green Tourism Certification scheme.

GrAT, together with the DOT and the Tieza, expects the project to transform tourism establishments and facilities in the country into what it termed as Green Tourism-certified businesses.

With trainings to be conducted until July, the project will initially assist small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector from Cebu-Bohol, Davao, Batangas-Puerto Galera, Boracay and Manila-Tagaytay become zero-carbon resorts (ZCRs) learning centers.

A series of capability workshops on energy, water and resource management in the tourism sector; 3R (Reduce, Replace, Redesign) training courses; and best practices were already conducted for industry stakeholders under Phase I of the project.

Undersecretary for Tourism Regulation,



GRAT Managing Director and ZCR project leader Dr. Robert Wimmer

Coordination and Resource Generation Maria Victoria Jasmin said Phase 2 of the project, which will be the development of a Philippine Green Tourism Certification scheme based on the ZCR principles, has been started.

Representatives from the DOT and Tieza have also been undergoing capability building program and training for the Green Evaluation, in accordance with the established guidelines of the Green Tourism Certification scheme.

The DOT is also now working closely

with Thailand in terms of knowledge transfer and best practices.

"But, more important, this second phase of the project seeks to tap greater support from the national government on policy development for sustainable consumption and production in tourism, and potential funding for green investments, development and technical solutions," Jasmin said.

She said greening the industry can mitigate the impact of the tourism business, which she described as resource-intensive.