

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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IN THE NEWS

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Call for SOS: Save our seas

STORY & PHOTOS BY NONIE REYES | *Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR*

BEING one with nature is definitely perfect for one's rejuvenation, especially if the chosen site is one of the country's famous coastal area.

With five-hour drive from Manila, La Union, the "surfing capital of the north," is a perfect getaway from the hustle and bustle of the city—and to promote the protection of the seas. It is the venue where Save Our Seas (SOS) Coastival was held.

The first Human Nature SOS Coastival, surfers, swimmers, environmentalists, fishers and artists gathered in highlighting and asking for help from every Filipino to do our best in preserving and conserving nature.

Wawie Meloto Gonzalez, corporate communication head of Human Nature said, "The Philippines is popular around the world as a [tourist] destination, that is giving us pride. But it's not only pride that we should have. Every

Filipino should do their share in taking care of our country by not polluting it."

Gonzales added: "A simple thing, like picking up garbage you see on the [beach] and putting it in a trash, can help a lot. Imagine if every one will do it, it will make a big difference in keeping our beaches free from trash."

The Philippines is home to 22,484 square kilometers, or 32 percent of total area of the corals, or 9 percent of the world's coral.

More than 60 percent of the country's coral reefs are at risk of being impacted by various sources of pollutants, including those present in synthetic sunscreens. Human Nature, a proenvironment cosmetic-care company, has made a coral reef-friendly sunscreen as

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Call for SOS:
Save our seas

part of helping the environment.

The country is among those in the center of marine biodiversity with its mountains, pristine beaches and most number of marine life.

In celebration of the Oceans Month this May, a giant sand art bearing SOS "Save Our Seas" was made. The sand art signifies a united call for help and a pledge to save the seas and rescue the reefs.

In the end, every one in Urbiztondo, La Union, was made aware that each one should take care of the nature since the place is also helping them make a living.

WWF joins 'sea-tizens' in SOS

THE country's oceans are closely connected and the health of Philippine seas affect 'sea-tizens' all over the world. To promote the protection of our seas, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) joined the recent Human Nature's SOS Coastival in La Union.

The daylong event highlighted the need to be mindful of the products we buy, the advocacies we champion, plus the lessons we teach our children. WWF's Environment Education (EE) unit taught kids about conserving dolphins, whale sharks and turtles, while reminding them of the need to rid our seas of trash.

"One of the joys of teaching is when kids realize that protecting the environment can be enjoyable. We hope their love for nature will translate to protecting our oceans, coasts and beaches," WWF-Philippines Environmental Education Officer Maye Padilla said.

WWF also helped renowned artist and WWF Hero of the Environment AG Saño in etching a 180-meter-long sand sculpture featuring a *pawikan* and the letters SOS—signifying a call for help and a pledge to save our oceans by leaving no trace when at sea.

"We encourage everyone to spend more time with nature—but to throw no trash and minimize their impacts at sea," Padilla said.

Human Nature President Anna Meloto-Wilk reminded people that the smallest actions could make the biggest difference. "It's as simple as choosing products, which do no harm to the environment."

"The sea is alive. It's a source of life. We're here to witness people coexisting with nature. We want to invite everyone to conserve nature by sharing solutions to Save Our Seas on social media," La Union Soul Movement's Tina Antonio added.

WWF works with many allies to protect the world's oceans.

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Call for SOS: Save our seas



PARTICIPANTS in the Human Nature Save our Seas Coastival in La Union gather inside one of the letters of the sand art that spells "SOS."

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Candidates told: Do not worsen garbage problem

THE National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) reminded politicians to take the lead in helping clean up election waste after the May 9 elections.

NSWMC Secretariat Executive Director Eli Ildefonso said politicians and their respective political parties should be responsible enough to clean up their mess after the elections, so as not to leave behind tons of election paraphernalia.

"We appeal to them to tell their supporters to dispose of their garbage properly," Ildefonso said.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has so far collected more than 20

truckloads of posters and other campaign paraphernalia that were illegally put up outside poster areas designated by the Commission on Elections. The MMDA is a member of the NSWMC.

Meanwhile, Ildefonso urged national and local candidates to include environmental protection in their platforms in the government, reminding them of the importance of having a clean and green environment.

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CANDIDATES told: Do not worsen garbage problem

"They should integrate environmental protection in their programs. Whether they win or lose, candidates should help each other to address the garbage problem," Ildefonso said.

"Win or lose, our candidates should work together to clean up their mess. The winners in the coming elections, and especially those seeking local elective posts, should help address the garbage problem," he said.

Solid-waste management, he added, is not the sole responsibility of the government. "Everybody should help," he said.

The NSWMC noted that solid-waste management is not on the priority agenda of most local government units.

"They should make sure to help put up materials-recovery facility

in every barangay or cluster of barangays, and come up with a solid waste-management plan," he said.

The official noted the poor implementation of Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, which calls for proper waste segregation, recycling and composting to reduce waste.

Many local governments have yet to submit their 10-year solid waste-management plans, as well as cause the closure of open dumps.

There are at least 400 open dumps in various parts of the country that need to be closed down.

Early this year the NSWMC, together with the Ombudsman, caused the filing of cases against officials of 50 local governments for their alleged failure to implement the garbage law. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Illegal adobe quarry in QC village stopped

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE MINES and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) has discovered and stopped an unauthorized adobe quarrying operation inside a Quezon City subdivision after receiving complaints.

In a statement, the MGB said it had issued a cease and desist order (CDO) against the illegal activity in Centerville Subdivision, Barangay Pasong Tamo.

The agency said it acted on complaints coming from residents in neighboring subdivisions regarding the diggings. An inspection confirmed the quarrying operation for lithic lapilli tuff, commonly known as adobe.

"The operation was not covered by a quarrying permit and therefore violated the provisions of Republic Act No. 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995," the MGB said.

But the bureau's statement, posted on its website on Friday, did not identify who was behind

the quarrying or the recipient of the CDO dated April 20.

Earlier this year, the MGB, an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, formally laid down procedures on how its officials can act against illegal mining operations.

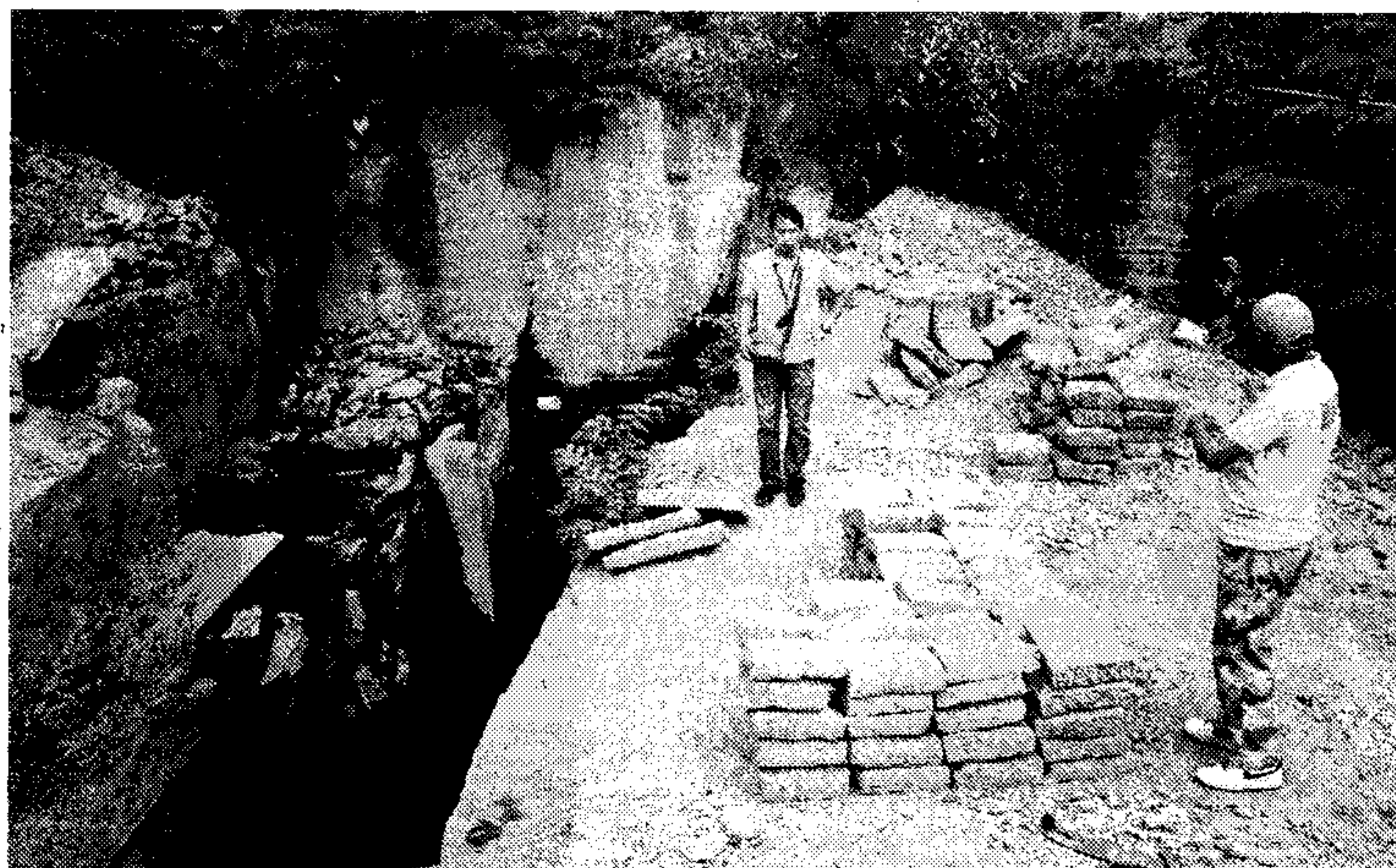
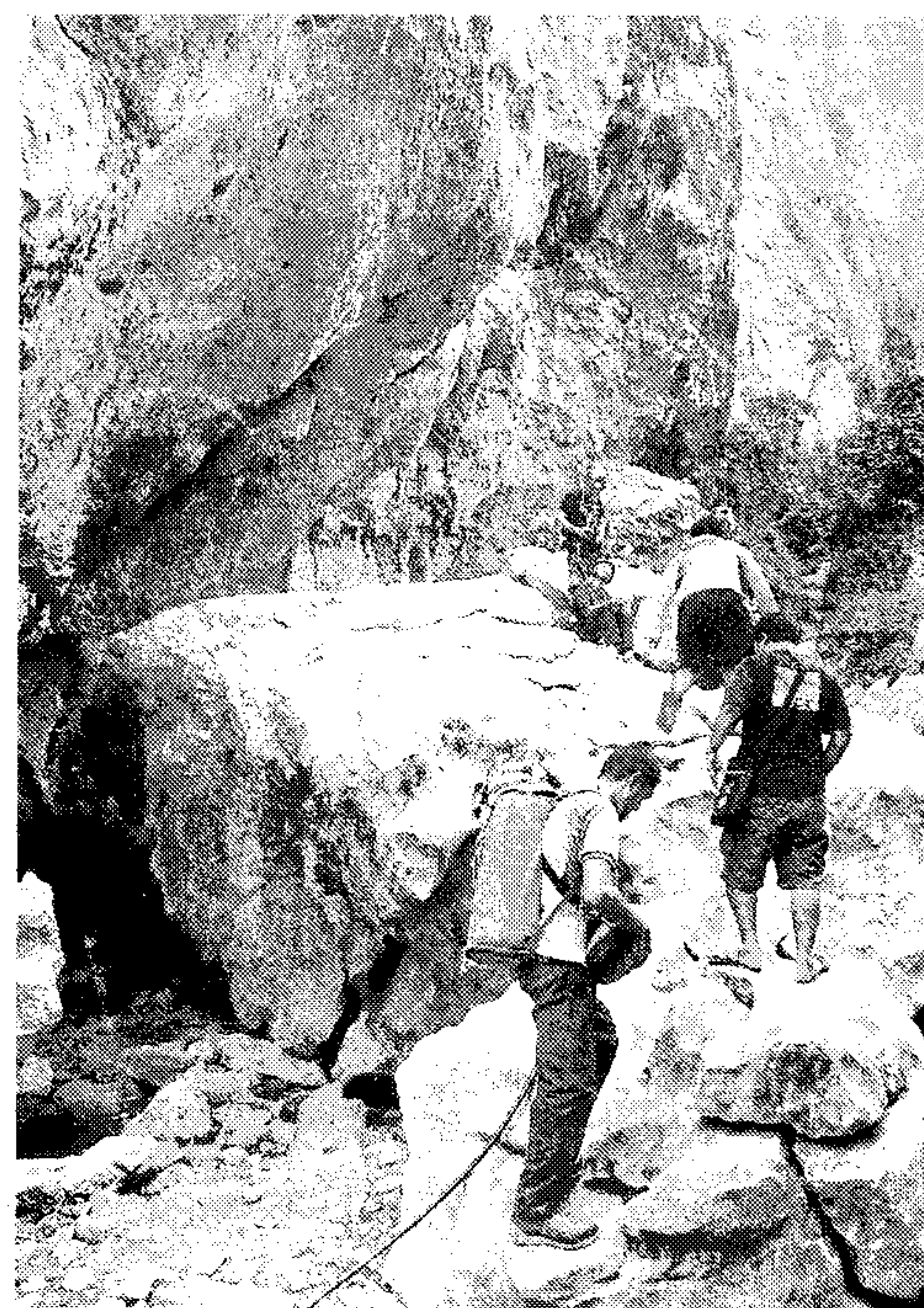
Memorandum Circular No. 2016-03, dated Jan. 28, spells out the steps that the bureau's regional offices should take to stop such operations that cause damage to the environment.

The steps call for an ocular investigation of the site and the issuance of a CDO if the operation is found to be illegal. The memo also authorized the MGB to tap the police and other law enforcement units for assistance in stopping the activity and confiscating the tools, equipment and vehicles used.

Facilities found to be have been used for illegal mining are to be dismantled and formal complaints shall be filed against the perpetrators, the memo added.

ILLEGAL DIG
Environment officials learned about the unauthorized quarry operation thanks to residents who complained about the diggings in Barangay Pasong Tamo, Quezon City.

MGB PHOTOS





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Hope for farmers: Climate-smart rice revives idle lands in Zamboanga

ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR – Rice that grow well in salty areas give idle lands near the sea an unlikely facelift. These areas can become productive croplands for salt-tolerant rice.

Salt seeps into lands because of over extraction of groundwater and rise in sea level.

Today, climate impacts are heavily felt in Zamboanga as farm lands are devastated by drought or become flooded with saltwater. These put food security and livelihood at risk.

Felipe Pablo who farms shrimp, milkfish, and crab at Sitio Sulabot experienced these challenges for himself. Business was good until disease outbreaks killed off his shrimp.

Since then, a big portion of his 100 hectare fish farm has been empty and more than a million pesos had been lost. Next to his pond, a 2,000 square meter farm land lies unproductive because saltwater had soaked in the soil.

"The shrimp were dying off from the first month after seeding," Dablo said.

Kumalarang has seen the increase of idle fish ponds due to chronic diseases. At the same time, rice farms have been abandoned due to the impact of climate change like drought and saltwater intrusion.

According to Kumalarang

municipal agriculturist Corazon Gomomit, at least 800 hectares of lands have become unproductive because of these.

In November 2015, Gomomit and Dablo received a kilogram of Salinas 16, a type of rice that survives in salty soil.

An ADB and GEF-funded project, Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle - Southeast Asia (CTI-SEA) brought the samples from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) for testing. In three months, Dablo harvested four sacks or 280 kilograms of Salinas rice from salt-laden soil where traditional rice varieties will not grow.

"I saw for myself how the rice grew from unusable soil," said Dablo.

To help deal with the enormous loss caused by drought, Katihan, a high-yield variety that thrives well in dry areas is also being pilot-tested. Gomomit and Dablo are optimistic about the results of the field trials.

"I think that it will help many Filipino farmers in Mindanao," said Dablo.

Many farmers hope for rain to come to revive farm lands affected by drought.

A month after cloud seeding operations tailed and losing P1.3 M in the process,

Zamboanga was declared under a state of calamity last April.

Rice varieties that survive in flooded, drought-stricken, or in salt-affected farmlands may be one of the solutions for communities most affected by climate change, especially when it comes to producing food.

"Projecting future climate is not perfect. But we cannot wait for science to be completely certain of things to come before we take actions," said climate change expert Rosa Perez.

Perez said it might take a while before people realize that coastal flooding due to sea level rise is happening.

On the other hand, saltwater intrusion can occur more quickly than we thought.

These changes may have come faster than earlier climate projections. Thus, countries are looking into practical and sustainable ways to cope with their harmful impacts in the short term and to adapt and avoid them in the long term.

"Coastal agriculture, particularly rice production could be severely affected. Before we totally abandon the fields, we can shift to appropriate rice varieties. This would be a good immediate action to take to secure food and livelihood," Perez said.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Hope for farmers: Climate-smart rice runs
wells in Nambanga



According to the Climate Change and Development report of UNDP, sea level rise may cause rice production to drop by nine percent.

FAO estimates that sea level rise has begun to bring in salt to around 6.5 percent or 831 million hectares of the world's total land.

Perez said forward looking assessments must be made to

determine the extent and duration the fields that can be used for rice production, in terms of cost and benefits.

Taytay's climate change adaptation plan has a set of integrated pilot activities which include testing of climate smart rice, mangrove reforestation, seaweed farming, early warning and disaster response and preparedness trainings,

and health management and sanitation monitoring workshops.

CTI-SEA is a regional project funded by the Asian Development Bank and the Global Environment Facility.

It aims for climate resilience and sustainable resource management in the coastal communities of Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Building a healthy, resilient, sustainable nation

CONCLUSION

MORGAN Stanley has started treading on the sustainable investments path. From being a traditional investment banking group, it created its Global Sustainable Finance Group about seven years ago, in response to emerging markets and covering areas that supported sustainable living generally but as diverse as clean energy, green bonds, or even affordable housing.

Investing with Impact Product Platform was launched as a major product under the group, aiming at guiding businesses to gain financial returns while supporting positive environmental and social impact.

In Nigeria, for instance, Morgan Stanley supported a can manufacturing



Speech of Senator Loren Legarda delivered before members of the Rotary Club of Makati Luncheon in a meeting held at Manila Peninsula Hotel on May 3, 2016—Ed.

business that used to import empty cans from Canada and filled the contents of the cans in their Nigeria factory. Now that the company is able to manufacture its own cans, they produce less carbon emissions and create more

quality jobs.

Here in the Philippines, investments in sophisticated sustainable energy technologies augur well in reducing harmful emissions, protecting health and the environment, and sustaining economic growth.

Businesses must also have proper business continuity planning to save themselves from disaster effects. Through this, they not only improve resilience and reduce their reliance on government for recovery, but more importantly, they also become available to assist the public sector in recovering from disasters.

Climate resilience and sustainability are intertwined with the growth of the world's economy. If the world becomes an inhospitable place for living things, the concept of economy will disintegrate and we will be left in a pit where it will be a struggle to survive.

Ultimately, it makes good business sense, good economic sense, good environment sense to mitigate and build resilience.

As I conclude my speech, I wish to impart this message: We all live in one Earth. Climate change is now in our midst and it imparts to us the lesson that we do not own the planet. We are mere dwellers and stewards of its resources.

Each of us has opportunities to make a difference for our future. We must take hold of the opportunity to responsibly manage our environment and build a sustainable, resilient and healthy nation.

Thank you.

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Mother's Day and democracy

AS we celebrate Mother's Day today, I wish to greet all mothers a healthy day. Mothers are always appreciated by their families whether they show it or not.

She is the one who keeps the household organized and running smoothly to meet the needs of her family.

She is the one who makes sure that bills are paid, house is kept clean, clutter is removed, and many other little stuff that makes daily life bearable. Inside the home, mothers are the dictators, benevolent at all times, to keep things in check.

Mothers and a democratic way of life inside the home should be an ideal scenario as the compassionate and loving component is an integral factor on how things are being run.

With the realities of today, I would also like to give tribute to the fathers who have become house husbands if their wives are out there earning a living whether inside or outside the country.

Tomorrow is election day and the mothers will be the first to advice their grown-up children to vote for candidates who will ensure that the country is democratically run well and with plenty of compassion to the less fortunate.

Show me a mother who gets worried everytime her children go out of the house and find difficulty of going from one place to another due to lack of an efficient and clean mass transit system.

Show me a mother who gets frustrated at the lack of quality public service when she seeks government's help. Mothers are the ones who will indeed vote wisely for leaders who truly cares for the people's welfare.

Almost all candidates say they have the public good as their platform but what is the reality?

Due to social media, of which mothers at home are one of the most active sectors, mothers are updated on what is going on outside the confines of her home.

As they run their households, mothers wish that the

WOMEN TALK



leaders who win this election will do the same thing as she does when it comes to governing the country.

We have a robust democracy and due to an overactive social media, I firmly believe our democracy is here to stay.

We Filipinos are a patient and intelligent Filipino who are resilient and know what is good for the country, in spite of our media's warnings of a doomsday scenario if this or that candidate wins.

We are a people who values friendship and trust and once you break the latter, no amount of campaigning and promises will bring that trust again.

Show me how you made me feel as a leader and you will get my vote. Show me how you treat the lowly, the downtrodden, and what you have done to improve their lives, and you have my vote.

Show me how you treat your employees and giving them the right benefits, and you will have me spreading your good deeds.

Tomorrow is one of the most important day in the lives of almost 100 million Filipinos.

We will be choosing the leaders who will lead us through these times of severe climate change, frustrations, including an active watchdogs of a citizenry, scrutinizing every item in the national government. We want a robust economy for the future.

We want a strong and growing middle class so that we can have a peaceful and orderly society if everyone is just assured of a decent livelihood, food on the table and shelter.

Are these too much to ask from leaders who will be elected? Enough is enough people in social media are saying. It's already too much. We can still make our country an almost paradise on earth in spite of our dwindling resources. Go to the polling precincts early and watch your votes. Choose well. Remember how your mothers gave you a well-run household.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

NPC, MWSS forge agreement on Angat Dam flood forecasting system

By MYRNA M. VELASCO

Improved flood forecasting strategy will be inured for the Angat Dam operations following the signing of a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between National Power Corporation (NPC) and the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System (MWSS) on fund allotment for the project.

In essence, this will institutionalize flood forecasting and warning systems on Angat dam's operations, hence, abating impact to host communities, especially in cases of water overflows.

The pact that was formally inked by NPC president Gladys Cruz-Sta Rita and MWSS administrator Gerardo Esquivel set the transfer of ₱237.16-million funds from MWSS to the state-run power firm so it can be utilized "for the upgrading of the facility's instrumentation."

It must be recalled that some parts

of Bulacan province had been on uproar last year after flooding incidents submerged them due to spilling done at the Angat dam.

From then on, NPC thought out of improving its systems so the incident could be tapered off if it cannot be totally avoided in the future.

According to the state-owned power firm, this flood instrumentation will be part of the four components of the Angat Dam and Dyke Strengthening Project. The key implementing agency will be the provincial government of Bulacan.

The other core component of the project will be flood control protection works. Along with the instrumentation, these project-packages to be bankrolled by the national government will require financing of up to ₱553.30 million.

NPC qualified that the funds "will be used to enhance the flood forecasting and warning system operations" of the dam.

It will also cover the "upgrade of operation of the spillway gates and for the purchase of modern equipment like X-Band Doppler radar and weather satellite ground receiver."

NPC added that "equipment to measure all water outflows from the dam will also be installed." The other components of the dam strengthening project will be undertaken by power plant buyer Angat Hydropower Corporation of the San Miguel Corporation-Korea Water Resources Corporation joint venture.

Esquivel similarly asserted that "this project is part of a bigger picture which is water security for Metro Manila and Bulacan."

He stressed "it is imperative that we strengthen the only water source which is Angat dam and it is also our duty to protect the downstream of the dam through state-of-the-art flood forecasting system and flood control and mitigation projects."

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EcoWaste urges candidates to lead their supporters in removing campaign materials after the elections

By CHITO A. CHAVEZ

An environmental group said that it would be a great service to the country and the public if poll candidates in the May 9 national and election polls would go out on the streets the following day to lead the public in removing campaign materials and salvaging whatever can be reused, repurposed or recycled even if they are at the losing end of the canvassing.

"Candidates must show their sense of environmental responsibility and sportsmanship by taking the initiative of clearing the streets of campaign materials regardless of the poll results," said Aileen Lucero, Coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition.

Lucero appealed to all candidates and

their supporters to dedicate May 10 for the much-needed post-campaign clean-up.

"Cleaning up after the ruthless and wasteful electoral campaign is a good way to put the political bitterness behind us and usher in peace and reconciliation, especially among divided families and communities," she added.

While pushing for immediate post-campaign clean-up, the Quezon City-based watchdog cautioned the candidates and their throng of volunteers, as well as government cleaners, against the polluting practice of dumping or burning the discarded materials.

Open dumping and open burning, which are unlawful under R.A. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, will only turn a largely solid waste

problem into a chemical problem, the group warned.

Both open dumping and open burning can lead to the discharge of nasty chemical pollutants into the air, water and soil, which can harm human health and the environment, the group said.

Burning chlorinated materials such as plastic campaign posters will cause the formation and release of health-damaging dioxins and furans, which are among the most toxic man-made chemical poisons, the group warned.

Instead of dumping or burning the removed campaign materials, the EcoWaste Coalition urged post-campaign clean-up participants to properly sort discarded materials and to reuse, repurpose or sell them to junk shops.

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Northern Palawan towns under state of calamity due to El Niño

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Palawan (PNA) — The northern Palawan municipality of Roxas is next in declaring a “state of calamity” due to the

effects of the El Niño phenomenon, one of which is dried up water sources. Earlier, Dumarang and Taytay, both northern towns of this province, also

declared a state of calamity.

Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer Jerry Alili confirmed Wednesday the declaration

of Roxas under a state of calamity following the approval on May 2 of an ordinance pertaining to it by the Sangguniang Bayan.

Alili said Roxas has now become thirsty for water, and about 819 hectares of farm and agricultural lands have also been affected by the long dry spell.

The municipal government, he explained, is serious in its plan to put water pumps in barangays in Roxas, where there are sources of water to be able to deliver to other areas.

At present, he said they are rationing water with the help of the fire trucks of the Municipal Fire Station (MFS), and are contemplating on packing relief goods for distribution to families just in case they need food support since they cannot till their farmlands.

The Manila Times

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

SPEECH

Build-up of armed might in the South China Sea: Portents of war on our land?



By ATTY. ESTELITO P. MENDOZA

(Conclusion)

I REVERT then to the question I raised earlier:

What sovereign rights do we have in the South China Sea, more particularly in the West Philippine Sea which had been imminently threatened and in fact violated, which impelled the filing of the "Notification and Statement of Claim" before the Law of the Sea Tribunal?

These are summarized in the media statement of the Department of Foreign Affairs of January 22, 2013, issued when it filed its "Notification and Statement of Claim" in the West Philippine Sea, as follows:

Allow me, however, to highlight some salient points in the Notification and Statement of Claim:

1. The Philippines asserts that China's so-called nine-dash line claim that encompasses virtually the entire South China Sea/West Philippine Sea is contrary to UNCLOS and thus unlawful.*

2. Within the maritime area encompassed by the 9-dash line, China has also laid claim to, occupied and built structures on certain submerged banks, reefs, and low tide elevations that do not qualify as islands under UNCLOS, but are parts of the Philippine continental shelf, or the international seabed. In addition, China has occupied certain small, uninhabitable coral projections that are barely above water at high tide, and which are "rocks" under Article 21 (3) of UNCLOS.

3. China has interfered with the lawful exercise by the Philippines of its rights within its legitimate maritime zones, as well as to the aforementioned features and their surrounding waters.

4. The Philippines is conscious of China's Declaration of August 25, 2006 under the Article 298 of UNCLOS (regarding optional exceptions

to the compulsory proceedings), and has avoided raising subjects or making claims that China has, by virtue of that Declaration, excluded from arbitral jurisdiction.

In this context, the Philippines is requesting the Arbitral Tribunal to issue an Award that, among others:

- Declares that China's rights in regard to maritime areas in the South China Sea, like the rights of the Philippines, are those that are established by UNCLOS, and consist of its rights to a Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone under Part II of UNCLOS, to an EEZ under Part V, and to a Continental Shelf under Part VI;

- Declares that China's maritime claims in the SCS based on its so-called nine-dash line are contrary to UNCLOS and invalid;*

- Requires China to bring its domestic legislation into conformity with its obligations under UNCLOS;*

- Requires that China desist from activities that violate the rights of the Philippines in its maritime domain in the West Philippine Sea.

The above however hardly give an ordinary layman, indeed including myself, as to what particular injury or damage of such gravity the Philippines had suffered or incurred to warrant the filing of the claim against China and then pursued vigorously by the President himself.

Because of my failure, indeed frustration in obtaining clarification on this matter, through letters dated December 8, 2015, and March 8, 2016, I had suggested to Senate President Franklin M. Drilon that the Senate conduct an inquiry, as follows:

What were the proximate and specific reasons which brought about the institution by the Philippines of a claim before the Arbitral Tribunal established under UNCLOS? Otherwise stated, what were the particular harms and injuries which the Philip-

pinas had suffered at that time which not only caused the filing of the claim but its relentless pursuit beyond the proceedings at the Hague?

and at the inquiry invite those who are seeking the presidency and the vice presidency of our country in the coming elections.

It is perhaps easily appreciated that considering the present circumstances, my letters have not been acknowledged by the Senate president, much less any positive action taken to conduct the inquiry.

With all the build-up of the armed might of the United States and China in the South China Sea, not just "posturing" but putting in place where the latest weapons of armed conflict may be launched, such as the islands produced by China's Island Factory, warships of both countries, and five locations in the Philippines under EDCA from which the armed might of the United States might be unleashed. It would be sheer naivete to ignore that such facilities may be the targets of responding fire, thereby exposing both human lives and property in those facilities and even the area beyond. The perils of "war" on our land have become a stark possibility.

It has been reported that joint naval patrols would be conducted in West Philippine Sea. What would they be watching for? More reclamation from China's Island Factories in atolls and reefs? Exclusion or harassing of Filipino fishermen from certain areas? Dislodgement of Philippine marines watching over the "Sierra Madre"? An American aircraft carrier and Chinese fighter jets taking off and landing in newly constructed runways in atolls? An attack on public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific (which has been interpreted to include the South China Sea), it must be noted, would fall within the terms of the Mutual Defense Treaty and consequently may trigger any defensive measure necessary. All these however are utterly disproportionate to the specifically identified infringe-

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RWM observes Earth Month with 'LOVE-tanim'



EMPLOYEES of Resorts World Manila observed Earth Month in April with eco-friendly initiatives, including a nursery-planting activity at the La Mesa Nature Reserve in Quezon City.

RESORTS World Manila (RWM) delivered big wins for Mother Earth with activities that aim to promote and protect environmental sustainability in the recent celebration of Earth Day.

RWM employees volunteered their free time to take part in the company's first corporate social responsibility (CSR) day event this year, dubbed "LOVE-tanim ay 'di biro." Participants went to the La Mesa Nature Reserve in Quezon City and participated in eco-awareness activities, in cooperation with ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Inc.'s Bantay Kalikasan Program. Through this, RWM supports the national government's campaign for tree

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RWM observes Earth Month
with 'LOVE-tanim'

planting to address the country's dwindling urban forest.

"The La Mesa Watershed is very important in our lives, particularly those living in Manila. That is why having Resorts World Manila employees here is a big help to us," Bantay Kalikasan Program Project Manager Dave Azurin said.

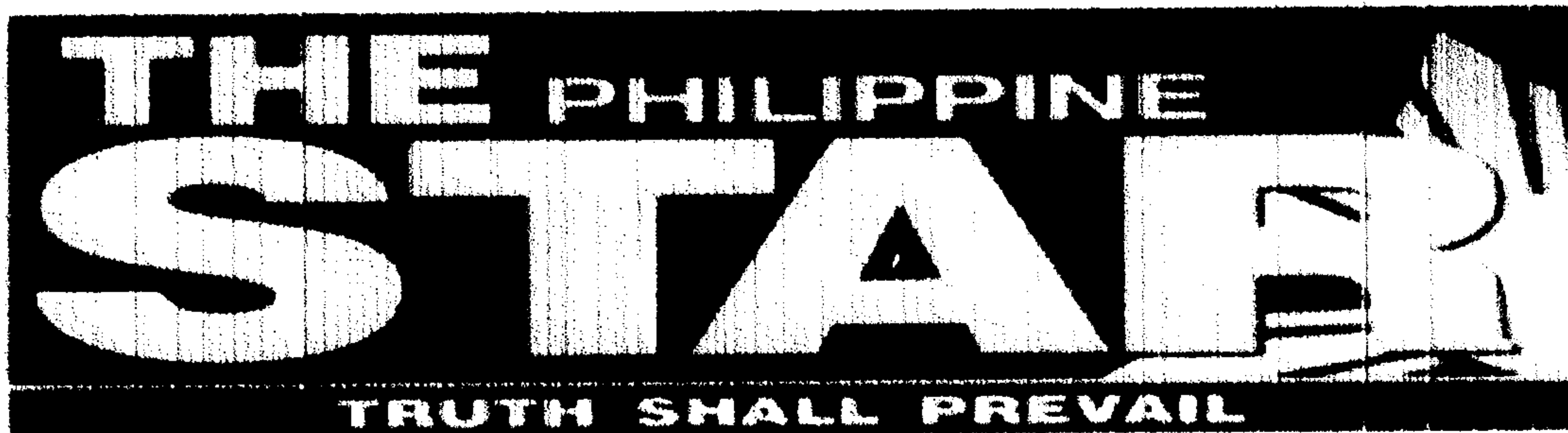
Volunteer employees joined in the 6-kilometer trek through the watershed, a lecture on local environmental efforts, and hands-on soil potting and germinant planting. The efforts produced 200 germinant plants of endemic tree species, which will be transferred later within the year during a tree-planting activity on a hectare of land the company will adopt and help grow.

"The germinants planted will be grown and transferred to an area within the watershed once the rainy season comes. Even if only half of those plants survive, that's already a significant contribution," Azurin added. The initiative is part of RWM's League of Volunteer Employees (LOVE) Program designed to create a culture of volunteerism aligned with the company's CSR thrusts of promoting Philippine tourism and the arts, social development and environmental sustainability.

"It's our second time doing this activity here at the La Mesa Nature Reserve and we're thrilled to be part of such a significant initiative," said Owen Cammayo, director for Corporate Communications

of RWM. "Saving the environment is a big challenge, but it only takes small steps to make a difference. That's why we encourage our employees by providing them with avenues to do their part and help preserve the environment through eco-friendly practices."

RWM continues its green initiatives with its monthly "Live and Love Green" recycling-day activity, in partnership with Tzu Chi Foundation Philippines. The company has been able to collect 18 tons of recyclable materials in 2015 and has so far collected over 6 tons of recyclables this year alone. The recovered materials will be made into clothing, thermal blankets and other useful items for disaster-relief operations around the country.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Villar calls on firms to help clean up Manila Bay

Firms that manufacture consumer products should join efforts by government agencies and private organizations to clean up Manila Bay, Sen. Cynthia Villar said yesterday.

She made the call after a cleanup in Baseco, Manila, yielded truckloads of non-biodegradable packaging, most of which bear the logos of well-known firms.

"I invite them to join our monthly coastal cleanup activities so that they can see for themselves that their products compose the majority of solid wastes collected by our volunteers, and how trash

ruins the mangrove trees and affects marine life," Villar said in a statement.

She also suggested making cleanup activities in Manila Bay a part of big companies' corporate social responsibility programs.

"It will also help if the companies could put in their product labels a reminder how to properly dispose the containers or wrappings after use," Villar said.

"Just like cigarettes and alcohol, which are hazardous to health, they should also indicate that wrappings are non-biodegradable and hazardous to the environ-

ment," she added.

Villar noted that the cleanups she regularly holds at the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area and Baseco mostly yield containers of shampoo, soap, cleaning products, personal care products and food.

Villar was at Baseco on May 2 for the monthly cleanup in the area. She was joined by over 300 volunteers.

Villar said she dismayed to find that the mangrove trees she planted during her last cleanup in the area were dead or dying and covered with trash. — Christina Mendez