

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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IN THE NEWS

THE REPORT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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GLOBAL VIEW

The world gets serious about climate change



By **BETH DAY ROMULO**

WORLD leaders gathered at the United Nations in New York on Earth Day, April 22nd, to sign a landmark deal on climate change, four months after negotiating a global climate agreement in Paris. "This is a rare moment in history," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said as he announced that over 170 countries would be signing the agreement. French President Francois Hollande, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and United States Secretary of State John Kerry signed at the United Nations that day. It was the largest one-day signing of an international agreement in history. Philippine Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources Ramon Paje signed for the Philippines.

With the planet heating up to record levels (it was the hottest March in recorded history), sea levels rising, and glaciers melting, the pressure to have the Paris Agreement put in force and to have every country turn its pledges into deeds, was paramount. "Today you are signing a new covenant with the future," the UN Secretary-General said. "The covenant must amount to more than promises."

The agreement will enter into force once 55 coun-

tries, representing at least 55 percent of global emissions, have formerly joined, a process that was expected to take until 2020. But judging by the promises made at the signing, observers think it could happen this year. China, which is the world's top emitter, announced it would finalize domestic procedures to ratify the agreement before the G-20 Summit takes place in China in September. The United States, which is the second largest emitter, said it would ratify the agreement this year. The leaders of Canada, Mexico and Australia also promised to ratify the agreement this year. French President Hollande, who was first to sign the document in Paris, said he would ask parliament to ratify the agreement this summer. US Secretary of State Kerry said the signing of the agreement had to be followed by a re-commitment by world leaders to "win the war" against carbon emissions that make the world hotter each year.

Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, a climate activist, warned that "we can congratulate each other, but it will mean nothing if the world's leaders go home and do nothing... The world is watching. No more excuses. You will either be lauded by future generations or vilified by them."

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Enactment of Green Jobs Act hailed

The country now has a law that promotes the creation of "green jobs" or employment activities that contribute to preserving the quality of the environment.

"This law will shore up support to our commitment to the Paris Agreement to work with the United Nations and other countries against global warming," said Environment Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje, referring to Republic Act (RA) 10771, or the Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016, which President Aquino signed into law on April 29.

"It cements our pledge to pursue policies that would make communities climate change adaptive and resilient," he added.

The Paris Agreement is the new global climate accord dealing with greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020.

It was negotiated and adopted by

representatives of over 190 countries at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December 2015.

The agreement was opened for signature on April 22, Earth Day, and has so far been signed by 177 countries, including the Philippines.

President Aquino had designated Paje to sign the Paris deal for and on behalf of the Philippines at the UN Headquarters in New York City.

RA 10771 defines "green jobs" as employment that contributes to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment, be it in the agriculture industry or services sector.

It includes those that help protect the ecosystems and biodiversity, reduce energy, material and water consumption through high efficiency strategies, decarbonize the economy, and minimize or avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution.

The law grants businesses special tax deductions from their taxable income and duty-free importation of capital equipment on top of the fiscal and non-fiscal incentives already provided for by existing laws, orders, issuances and regulations of the government to encourage them to help generate and sustain "green jobs."

It will also not diminish or limit the incentives granted by prevailing laws like the Philippine Clean Water Act (RA 9275), the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003), and the Philippine Clean Air Act (RA 8749).

Paje said RA 10771 is expected to "propel the delivery of the country's Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce by 70 percent our GHG by 2030 compared to 2000 which will come from the waste management sector."

"In the long term, this will greatly benefit countries like the Philippines which are most vulnerable to climate change," he added. (PNA)



Balita

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GREEN JOBS ACT

PINURI ni Environment Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje ang pagsasabatas ng "green jobs" o employment activities na makatutulong sa pangangalaga ng kalikasan, ayon sa ulat ng Philippine News Agency (PNA).

"This law will shore up support to our commitment to the Paris Agreement to work with the United Nations and other countries against global warming," pahayag ni Paje, tinutukoy ang Republic Act (RA) 10771, o ang Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016, na siyang nilagdaan ni Pangulong Aquino para tuluyang maisabatas noong Abril 29.

"It cements our pledge to pursue policies that would make communities climate change adaptive and resilient," dagdag ni Paje.

Ang Paris Agreement ang bagong global climate deal kaugnay sa greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance simula sa taong 2020.

Ito ay pinag-usapan at inaprubahan ng mga representante ng mahigit 190 bansa sa 21st

Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change sa Paris noong Disyembre 2015.

Ito ay inumpisahang buksan para lagdaan nitong Abril 22, Earth Day, at nilagdaan ng 177 bansa, kabilang na ang Pilipinas.

Inatasan ni Pangulong Aquino si Paje na lagdaan ang Paris deal para sa Pilipinas, sa UN Headquarters, sa New York City.

Ang RA 10771 ay ang "green jobs" na layuning mapangalagaan o muling maibalik ang ganda ng kalikasan.

Ayon kay Paje, ang RA 10771 ay inaasahan na "propel the delivery of the country's Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce by 70 percent our GHG by 2030 compared to 2000 which will come from the waste management sector."

"In the long-term, this will greatly benefit countries like the Philippines which are most vulnerable to climate change," dagdag pa ni Paje.

Daily Tribune

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Small scale mining also bad — Henares

Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) commissioner Kim Jacinto Henares has continued her assault on the mining industry, this time including the small scale miners whom she said are among those that destroy the environment but do not pay taxes.

Earlier, Henares criticized the mining industry for sacrificing many of the Philippines' watershed, places for indigenous persons and even shorelines just for its survival.

"All of them. More so the small scale mining. Who are we kidding? To mine something, you have to destroy something," Henares told The Daily Tribune.

Small scale mining, as defined by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, is unauthorized and unregulated industry because there is no data that can properly identify its operations.

Gold is usually the minerals obtained in small scale mining. Leo Jasareno, executive director of MGB, said small scale mining permits usually come from local government units (LGUs) but there is no government intervention in its operations.

There are an estimated 300,000 small scale miners operating in at least 30 provinces such as Nueva Vizcaya, Ilocos Norte, Abra,

Benguet, Mountain Province, Kalinga, Zambales, Bulacan, Pangasinan, Rizal, Quezon, Camarines Norte, Masbate, Eastern Samar, Samar, Leyte, Southern Leyte, Cebu, Negros Occidental, Surigao del Norte, Surigao Del Sur, Agusan Del Norte, Misamis Oriental, Zamboanga Del Sur, Zamboanga Del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Davao Del Sur, Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley.

Dante Bravo, president of Global Ferronickel Holdings, Inc. a nickel mining firm based in, Claver, Surigao del Norte, said small miners usually target gold which is the only mineral that can be extracted using pick, shovel, crude, goggles and mercury.

"It is allowed to spur economic activity in the provinces," Bravo said. Bravo said the most sensitive part of this type of mining is the use of mercury. This chemical can cause severe damage to environment and humans because of its heavy compounds like dimethylmercury.

"I am not saying we shouldn't develop mining but we should do so realizing that we have to sacrifice something. We should be more than compensated for that. And we should accept all the consequences," Henares added.

Ed Velasco

Ecotourism seen as key to sustainable development in the Cordilleras

By Dexter A. See

KABAYAN, Benguet—Trekking has this to say: the day you watch the sun rise above the clouds atop Mt. Pulag, Luzon's highest peak, is the day you fall in love with the rest of the world.

The stunning vista of a new day rising at a unique vantage point from 2,922 meters above sea level has drawn thousands to the scenic Cordillera highlands that straddle the provinces of Benguet, Ifugao, and Nueva Vizcaya. Hundreds of thousands more are go-

ing to visit in the next days, weeks and months that the years ahead may prove extra challenging for the local communities to sustain.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has already implemented a limit of 500 trekkers a day to protect and preserve the trails that authorities now say are overused, but more needs to be done to make tourism in this part of the country more sustainable. The challenge is not only to address the many environmental issues that threaten the cultural and

ecological diversity of the region but to make local communities benefit more from ecotourism.

According to the Cordillera Conservation Trust, the forests in the Cordillera mountains sustain the life of more than two million people. "In the most remote regions of the Philippine Cordillera, forests mean life for the villages that live within it. It is in these remote villages where the ecosystem is tied to human survival," said JP Alipio, CCT executive director.



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UN council: More effort needed to confront El Niño

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

El Niño is not a one-off event but a recurring global phenomenon that must be addressed for future generations, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) said yesterday.

The ECOSOC said the international community must boost efforts to build the capacity for disaster risk management and readiness to prevent El Niño weather extremes from causing humanitarian crises in affected countries and impeding their development.

"We must remember that El Niño is not a one-off event but a recurring global phenomena that we must address to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," ECOSOC president Oh Joon said during the opening of a special meeting on "Impacts of the El Niño phenomenon: Reducing risks and capturing opportunities" at the UN headquarters in New York.

"All partners, the UN, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector need to take coordinated actions to tackle El Niño risks," he said.

Oh noted that since last year, the world

has witnessed the most severe El Niño occurrence to date, with many developing countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific suffering under its "devastating and far-reaching impacts."

He said extreme weather conditions have become more frequent, with climate change bringing drought, fire, destruction of agricultural products, poor health and diseases, and displacement of people all over the world.

"These conditions also affect commodity prices and the prospects for sustainable development," he said.

Robert Glasser, special representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction, said although it is too early to assess the full impacts of the current El Niño, it is certain that countries have greater economic exposure to El Niño-related events, while the proportional impact on people and their livelihoods is higher in low-income countries and small developing states.

"Climate change is also likely to increase El Niño risks further, highlighting the need for long-term development

strategies to factor in these risks," he said.

Glasser said that as a result of more accurate seasonal forecasts, there is an increased predictability of occurrence of El Niño cycles and extreme events.

"With this in mind, countries have better opportunities to take action to manage and reduce the related risks and impacts," he said.

He noted that the current El Niño has manifested extreme weather events that have had an impact on a number of countries across the world and affected an estimated 60 million people.

Some countries have experienced greater precipitation leading to floods, while others have experienced severe drought affecting crop yields and livestock production leading to shortage of food and water.

To reduce the impacts of El Niño, Glasser said it was necessary to translate seasonal forecasts and risk data into risk-informed decision-making and actionable guidance so that different development sectors can take proactive measures.

"If development sectors get these forecasts early enough, action can be taken to reduce the effects of El Niño," he said.

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Malaya

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Nickel Asia swings to loss in Q1

LISTED mining firm Nickel Asia Corp. (NAC) incurred a net loss of P300.8 million in the first quarter from a net income of P675.8 million in the same period last year due to depressed nickel prices.

NAC said profitability of the Taganito HPAL Nickel Corp. and Coral Bay Nickel Corp. was affected by very low nickel prices realized during the period.

"The first quarter of 2016 was indeed extremely challenging. It was the worst quarter we've seen for nickel prices in 13 years. On a brighter note, supply tightness is also now being felt in the market, in turn leading to some improvement in nickel ore prices. This is timely as we are now entering our peak shipment season, and we anticipate that our decision to push back shipments of the higher value saprolite ore will turn out to be correct," said Gerard Brimo, NAC president and chief executive officer.

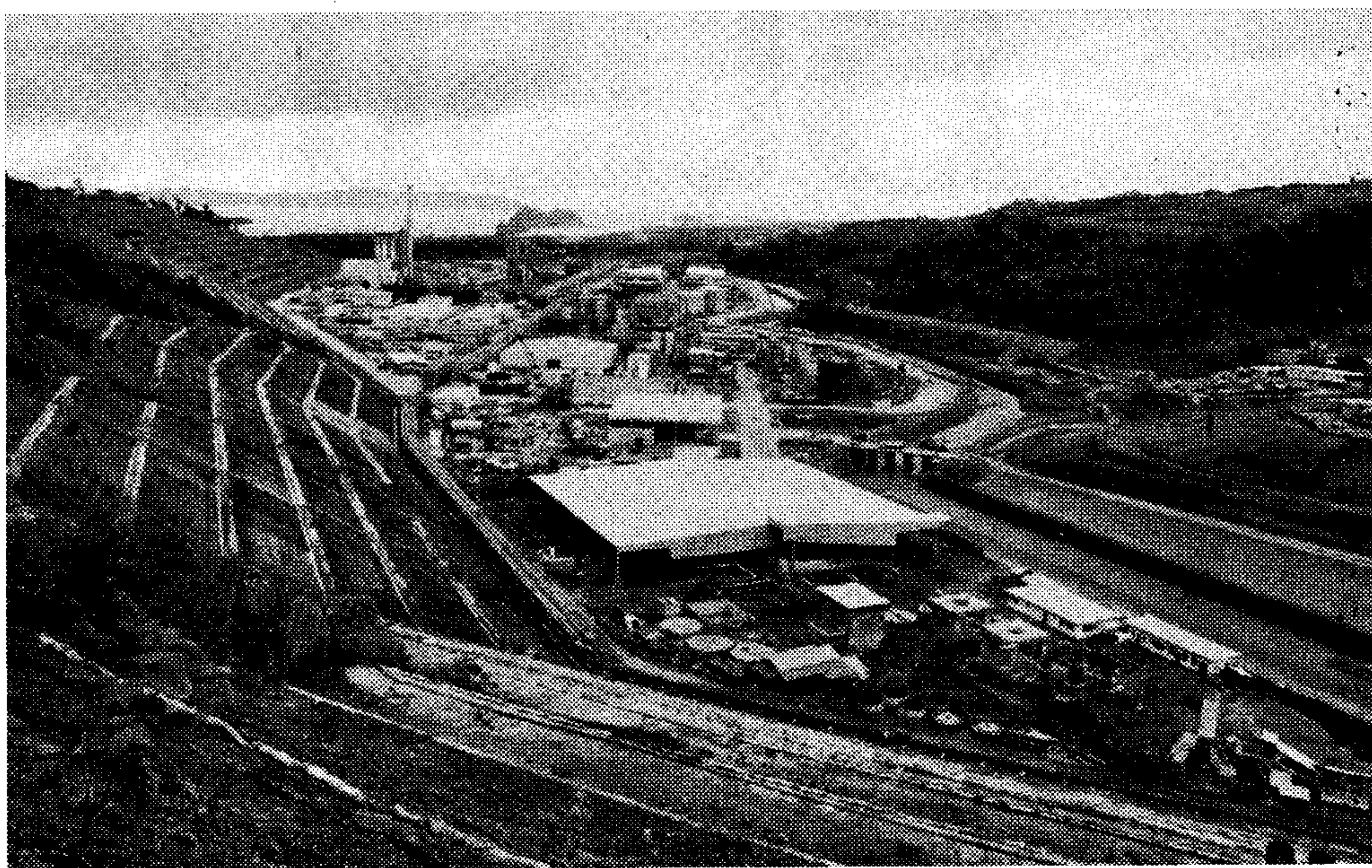
The bulk of the loss of P225.9 million corresponds to the company's share of the losses on its 22.5 percent equity interest in Taganito HPAL Nickel Corp. and its 10 percent equity interest in Coral Bay Nickel Corp.

The profitability of the two plants was affected by low nickel prices aggravated the P39-million pre-operating losses incurred by NAC's 66 percent-owned renewable power subsidiary, Emerging Power, Inc.

Revenues of the company likewise dropped by 45 percent to P1.7 billion against last year's P3.1 billion as the company logged flat sales of nickel ore at 3.49 million wet metric tons (WMT).

In terms of price, NAC realized an average of \$3.85 per pound of payable nickel on its shipments of ore to the two HPAL plants in the first three months of the year.

This compares to an average price of



Nickel Asia Taganito HPAL facility.

\$6.50 per pound of payable nickel sold during the same period last year.

For its export sales, the company achieved an average price of \$15.16 per WMT as against \$32.35 per WMT in 2015.

The company said as of April 2016, all of its four operating mines met the standards of compliance for the issuance of ISO 14001 Certification for Environmental Management Systems, a requirement being asked by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau to allow mining companies to ship their ores abroad.

NAC also reported Taganito HPAL Nickel Corp. has approved the construction of a plant to produce a Scandium intermediate product, which will be refined in Japan to recover Scandium Oxide. The \$35-million plant is expected to be operational in the

third quarter of 2018 at an initial production rate of about 7,500 kg. per year.

Scandium is a rare earth element that is primarily produced in China and Russia used as a Scandium-Aluminum alloy for aircraft manufacturing, as well as for the production of fuel cells and other specialty products.

The company also reported that its gold-copper exploration subsidiary, Cordillera Exploration Co, Inc., has approved a drilling program by its 100 percent-owned subsidiary, Newminco Pacific Mining Corp.

The P45 million drilling program, which is expected to start this month, consists of 3,000 meters of holes designed to test for the lateral and depth extensions of a series of outcropping gold-bearing quartz veins in the province of Zambales.

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Likas-Kayang Pilipinas environmental concert staged at the SM Skydome

Mall-goers had the rare opportunity to see an environmental performing arts group share its advocacy through dance during *Likas-Kayang Pilipinas: An Environmental Concert* held recently at the Skydome at SM City North EDSA.

A joint project of SM City North EDSA and Sinag Arts, the performance by Mga Anak ni Inang Daigdig was just in time for the worldwide celebration of the Earth Day.

Mga Anak ni Inang Daigdig is an environmental performing arts group composed of young adults and children who were born or have grown up in Smokey Mountain — which was said to be the third largest untreated garbage dump in the world. With that, they are committed to protect the environment and to encourage everyone to treat each other kindly, through the different dances and rituals they perform on stage.



Fr. Ben Beltran, executive director and founder of Mga Anak ni Inang Daigdig with soprano Dr. Fides Cuyugan-Asencio

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Javier tastes first electoral defeat in Antique

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ANTIQUE Gov. Exequiel Javier was voted out of office on Monday in an unprecedented loss, his first electoral defeat in nearly three decades in politics.

The provincial board of canvassers proclaimed Vice Gov. Rhodora Cadio as the new governor on Tuesday night. Cadio (National Unity Party) garnered 131,203 votes while Javier (Liberal Party) got 99,881, or a margin of 31,322 votes.

Her running mate, Edgar Denosta, was proclaimed vice governor, defeating Javier's running mate, Victor Condez, and independent Eduardo Fortaleza.

Javier's son, Rep. Paolo Everardo Javier (LP) was reelected with 116,435 votes, over his closest rival, Raymundo Roquero (United Nationalist Alliance), 85,087.

Javier, younger brother of slain former governor and anti-Marcos leader Evelio Javier, has dominated Antique's politics since 1987. Evelio was gunned down on Feb. 11, 1986, while monitoring results of the snap presidential election between then President Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon "Cory" Aquino.

Evelio's death helped galvanized anger and resistance against the Marcos dictatorship, which ultimately led to the Edsa People Power Revolution on Feb. 22-25,

1986. He is considered a martyr for fighting and dying for his ideals of freedom, dignity, good governance, justice and peace.

Exequiel benefited from Evelio's stature. He served as representative of the province's lone congressional district for six terms from 1987 to 1998 and from 2001 to 2010. He was also the governor from 1998 to 2001 and 2010 to 2013.

He won a second term in 2013 but was removed from office by Comelec in February last year for an election offense. The Supreme Court nullified his removal, enabling him to return to his office in March.

Javier has faced criticisms of alleged corruption and for ruling

contrary to the ideals espoused by Evelio. He has repeatedly denied and refuted the charges as the work of his political rivals.

In Monday's elections, he lost to Cadio in all but one of the 18 towns. He won only in Caluya town, which hosts the mining operations of Semirara Mining and Power Corp.

Javier lost even if 11 mayoral candidates, including incumbents allied with him, won in their municipalities. His son obtained more than 30,000 votes over six other candidates.

The winners of seats in the provincial board were led by Javier's allies—Rolly Molina (first district) and Rosie Dimamay (second district).

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A more transparent IP heritage preservation

OUR indigenous peoples never fail to amaze me. Whenever I visit a province and go to IP communities, I always discover marvelous things about our culture and heritage. Our indigenous cultural communities are rich in traditional knowledge covering almost all aspects of life--agriculture, health care, forestry and fishing, mining, architecture, arts and crafts, music and literature.

Despite their overwhelming contributions to our history, culture and heritage, our IPs remain among the most underserved, unserved, and neglected citizens.

The Philippines is home to 14 to 17 million indigenous peoples.[1] They share a common situation with other indigenous peoples in other parts of the world. Because of historic injustices of the past -- dispossession of lands and resources, and continuing discrimination -- indigenous peoples are one of the sectors most adversely affected by globalization. This phenomenon not only threatens to marginalize indigenous communities,

it threatens the very foundation of their existence and identity.

Our IPs are threatened by unsustainable extractive industries and development projects that encroach and ravage their lands without their informed consent. Their way of life is also adversely affected as they are uprooted from the very soil to which they are spiritually and fundamentally linked.

Despite modernization and acculturation, inevitable as these may be, we cannot turn a blind eye to these concerns because our indigenous communities, along with their vast knowledge, rich culture and traditions are vital in solidifying the mold of every nation's identity. If we lose it, we may as well have lost who we are.

As a legislator, as well as in my personal capacity as an advocate of cultural preservation, I have introduced programs and converged with some agencies of government to address the concerns of our IPs.

We had regional assemblies in 2012 and the national indigenous cultural

summits with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. This yearly National IP Summit engages our indigenous peoples in policy development, implementation and evaluation of programs for their communities.

We have also opened livelihood opportunities, especially for indigenous weaving communities through trade fairs, in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry and the Center for International Trade Exhibitions and Missions. We continuously showcase the indigenous knowledge systems and practices of ICCs through projects such as the Hiblang Lahing Filipino, the country's first permanent textile gallery at the National Museum; the Dayaw TV series on the preservation of the country's culture and heritage, in partnership with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts; and the Cordillera Region's coffee table book on indigenous knowledge systems on agriculture and forest conservation.

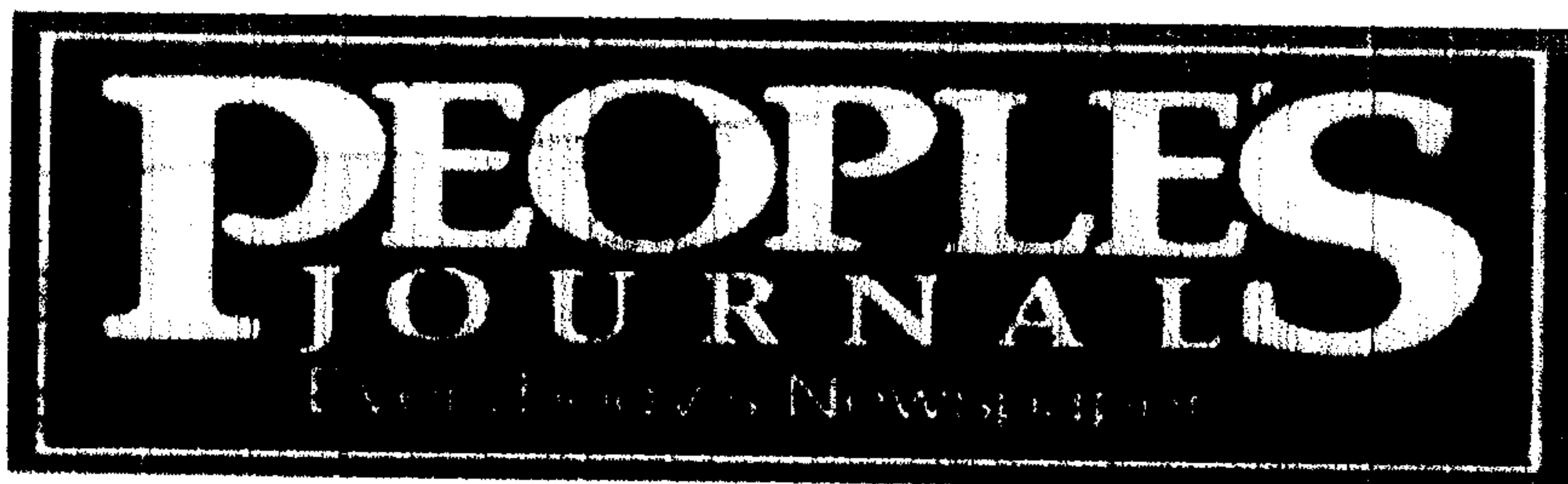
We continue to implement these programs and



Message of Senator Loren Legarda delivered during the Launching of Specialized Integrity, Transparency and Accountability in Public Service, Modules for Indigenous Peoples held at the Office of the Ombudsman, Quezon City on May 10, 2016 -- Ed

initiate many other projects to protect our IPs and promote our heritage. But we know that there are many other concerns and more pressing needs we need to address for the benefit of our IPs and ICCs.

Basic services remain wanting in most geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. Our actions and inaction have placed lives on the line, despoiled their lands, threatened their culture and deprived them of their rights. Our eyes were



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TRANSPARENT IP HERITAGE
LORAN

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opened to the depth and diversity of the challenges our IPs face. The question is: How sincerely will we address these issues that affect our IPs' very survival?

The challenge here is that, in order to safeguard our indigenous communities and our heritage, we must refrain from extracting our IPs from the communities they live in, otherwise, we expose them to influences which could alter the very tradition we aim to preserve. We should not take them out of their community, rather, we should bring the services to their community.

To address this, we have proposed the establishment of Indigenous Peoples Resource Centers, which shall serve as access centers to enhance delivery of basic, social, technical and legal services. Centers shall be composed of the following service areas, namely: Statistical Service Area, Human Development Index Service Area and Domains Management Service Area.

These Centers will help address problems of IPs and provide essential ser-

vices such as employment, livelihood, enterprises, health services, scholarships and trainings.

Further, these Centers shall embark on the documentation of indigenous knowledge, systems and practices, indigenous political structures, and customary laws which are vital in achieving cultural integrity.

The proposed measure I submitted to the Senate has been approved but we are awaiting the approval of the counterpart measure in the House of Representatives. But last February, we have inaugurated the country's very first IP Resource Center housed at the University of the Philippines Visayas - Center for West Visayan Studies. I hope that our SUCs in other provinces and regions will host an IP Resource Center as well even without the legislation yet.

These IP Resource Centers can also be a venue for the Office of the Ombudsman's outreach service to our IPs to provide them with the needed information about the role of the Ombudsman and other agencies of government in

granting permits for the exploration of their land and natural resources.

I am glad that the Ombudsman is reaching out to our IPs to know more about the impact of government programs in their communities.

We, in the Senate, will also continue to work on legislation for the benefit of our IPs--to preserve their traditions; to safeguard their cultural property rights; to guarantee equal employment opportunities; and to prohibit discrimination based on ethnicity, race, religion or belief, among others.

We still have a long way to go in effectively protecting the rights of our IPs, but we should not lose hope. We must continue to work together and assure the role and significance of our IPs in our country.

I am hopeful that this program of the Ombudsman will be an effective tool that would lead us to a clearer path on how we can confront the challenges and effectively build policies to protect our indigenous peoples.

Thank you.

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Giant clams 're-wilding' waters near Semirara mine site

IT SO happens the Consunji-led company has discovered a way to prepare the future of both its host communities and island environment, even if it's one borne out of coal mine operations.

In 2006, the company released 150 pieces of the *Tridacna gigas*, an endangered species of giant clams, near the

waters of Panian mine on Semirara Island in Caluya, Antique province. Citing research, the firm says these giant clams cannot thrive in polluted waters, thus serving as an indicator of the health of the bodies of water near the mine.

Little did management know the re-seeding activity would eventually present the company an opportunity to contribute to the conservation of the endangered giant clams and to the rehabilitation of the reefs in the area—mitigating the mine's impact on the lives of the people and the environment.

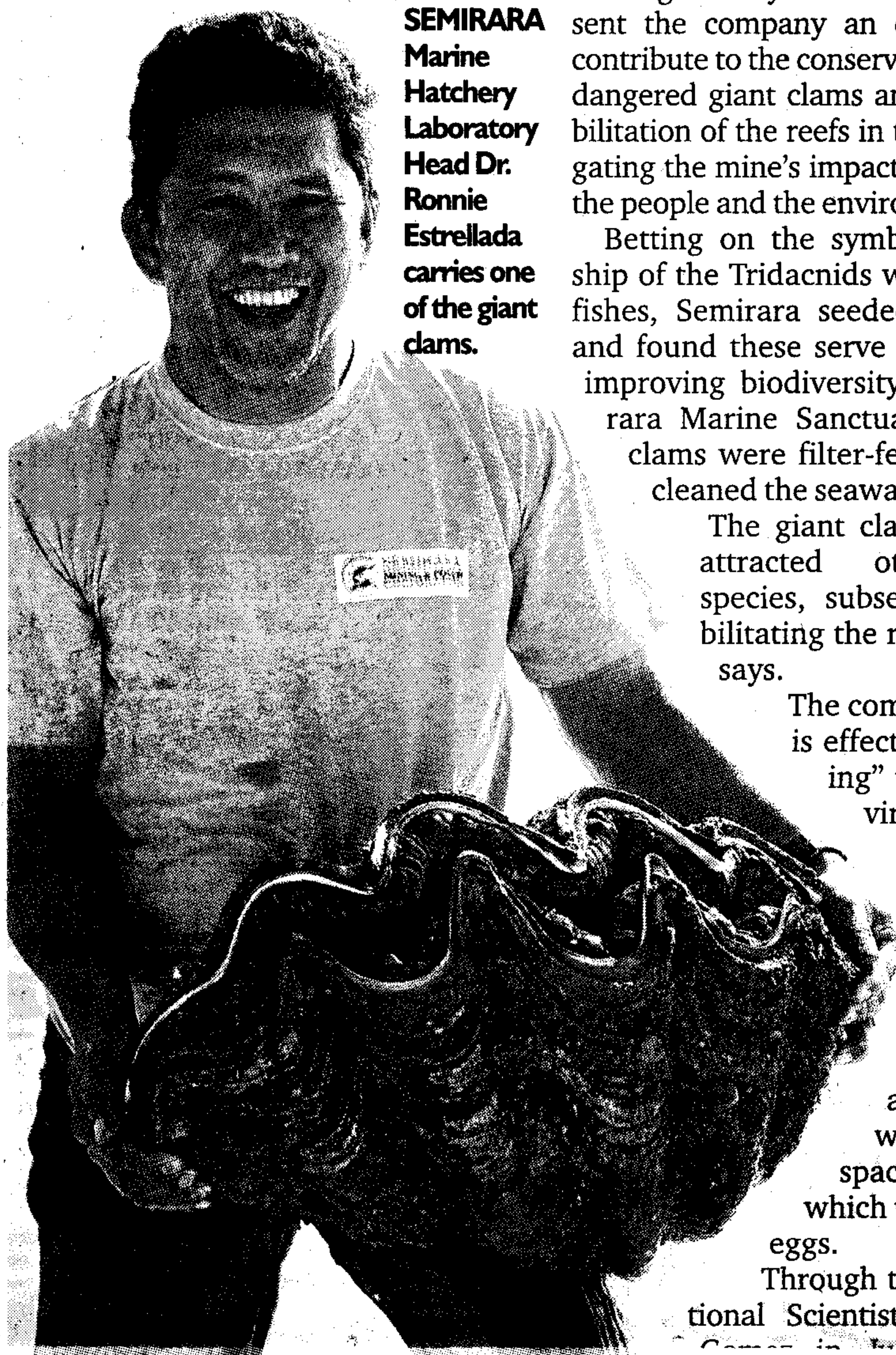
Betting on the symbiotic relationship of the Tridacnids with corals and fishes, Semirara seeded giant clams and found these serve as catalyst for improving biodiversity in the Semirara Marine Sanctuary. The giant clams were filter-feeders, or they cleaned the seawaters.

The giant clams eventually attracted other marine species, subsequently rehabilitating the reefs, Semirara says.

The company says this is effectively "re-wilding" the fishing environment in the area. The clams' large, hard shells literally "build" reefs, providing fishes and soft corals with protected spaces within which to hide and lay eggs.

Through the help of National Scientist Dr. Edgardo

**SEMIRARA
Marine
Hatchery
Laboratory
Head Dr.
Ronnie
Estrellada
carries one
of the giant
clams.**



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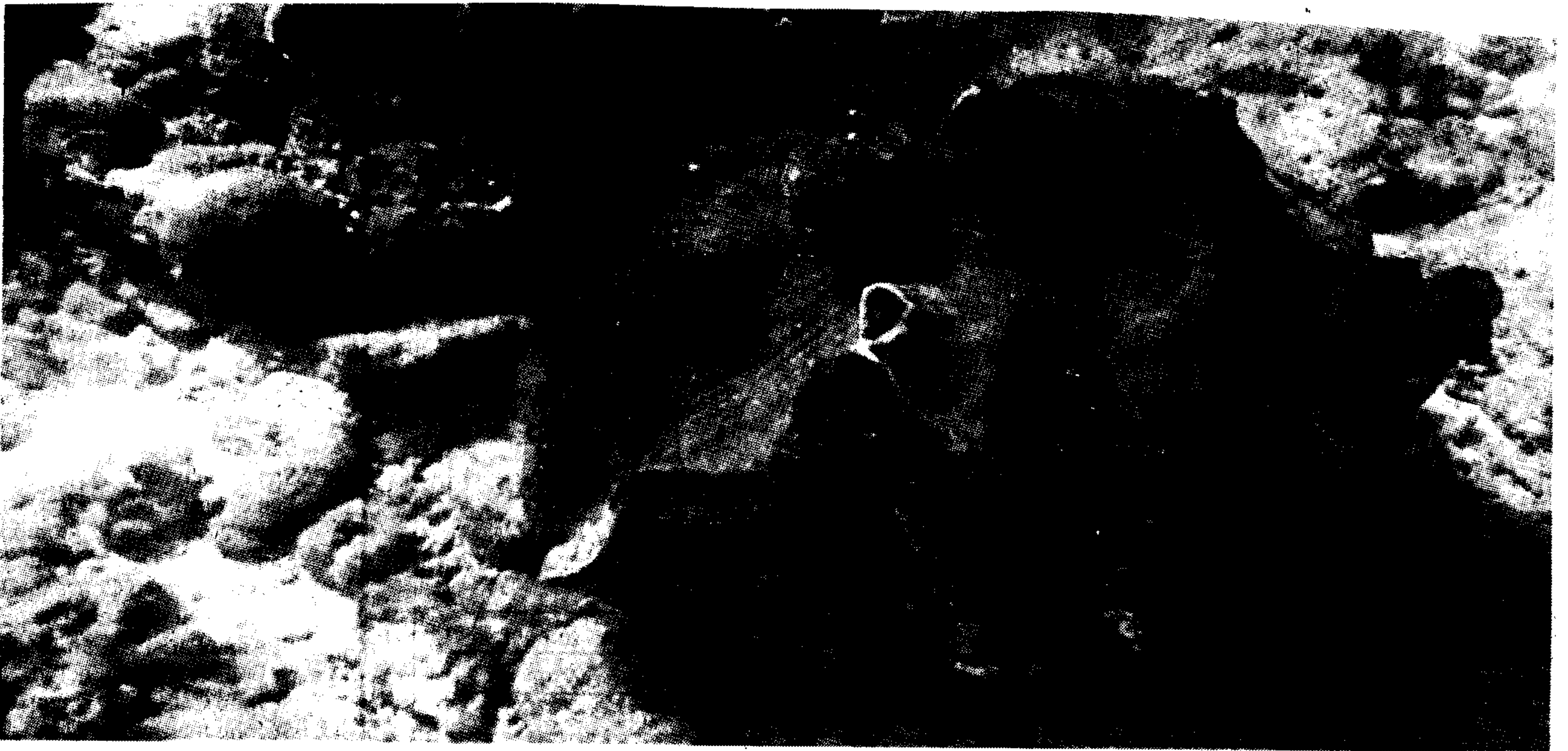
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Giant clams, "re-wilding" waters near Semirara mine site



GIANT clams improve biodiversity in waters near Semirara mine.

company-funded Semirara Marine Hatchery Laboratory exchanged resources with the Marine Ecology Center of Sabah, Malaysia. The latter brought in the *Hippopus porcellanus* (giant porcelain clams) in order to help boost the biodiversity in the island.

Today, seven species are under the care of the laboratory. Semirara mining says the rich biodiversity in the area means reestablishing fishing as the island's main source of livelihood.

By end-2014, the facility would have reseeded 21,145 of the 85,975 giant clams born in Semirara. Giant clams spawned at the Semirara Marine Hatchery Laboratory are reseeded at the Semirara Marine Sanctuary.

The firm has also drawn recognition for its work in the island.

"Our company was named first runner-up in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) category of the 2015 Asean Energy Awards in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for our reef rehabilitation efforts in Semirara Island," company president and COO Victor A. Consunji said at the company's stockholders meeting in end April.

He said the company wants to create a corporate culture anchored on good governance practices. In 2015, the company was included in the top 50 publicly listed Philippine companies that scored high based on the Asean Corporate Governance Scorecard.

"We envision to continue providing holistic support and development of our host communities through our CSR initiatives for sustainability. After

surviving—with no casualty—the strongest typhoon that hit the country, Typhoon Yolanda, we undertook to further strengthen emergency preparedness of the whole municipality of Caluya," he said.

"I would also like to mention that as of 2015, we have planted trees and mangroves in almost 625 hectares, more than tenth of the total size of the 5,500-hectare island. Of this area, around 200 hectares are mangrove plantations," he said.

He said the firm would also continue to support education in the island. "When classes start in June, Semirara will be K to 12 ready with the additional 12 classrooms we are building in Divine Word School of Semirara." **Riza T. Olchondra**

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Royal Botanical Gardens: Mixed report on the world's plants

LONDON (AP)—A report billed as the first comprehensive look at world's plants finds a planet slowly being ravaged by changing land use, mostly conversion of forests to agriculture to feed a growing population, and climate change.

The "State of the World's Plants" study is designed to provide a baseline for annual reports that will measure how many plant species are being discovered, and how many are being lost forever.

How many plants are out there?

The report estimates there are 391,000 vascular plant species known to science, with an average of 2,000 new ones being discovered and named each year.

Brazil, with its vast rainforests, has led the way in the last decade with the highest number of newly discovered species.

That sounds encouraging, but a daunting 21 percent of global plant species are currently threatened with extinction, the report finds, as habitat is gobbled up for



Carlos Magdalena, botanical horticulturist looks towards the flower of Paphlopedillum Rothschildianum, an endangered plant, at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in London, Monday, May 9, 2016. Kew Gardens held the launch of the first ever State of the Worlds Plants report. The report is the first of its kind in the plant world. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)

"The positive is we're still discovering lots of new plants, about 2,000 each year, new plants for food, for fuel, for drugs," said Kathy Willis, science director at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. "On the negative, we've seen a huge change in land cover, mainly driven by cultural activity, with a little bit of climate change in there as well."

The goal, she said, is to better understand the factors driving these negative changes — and to change them to protect more plants from extinction.

The report by one of the world's leading research institutions involved more than 80 scientists. Here are some of its findings:

human use.

Why does it matter?

The new study documents 31,128 plant types put to a specific use, mostly for medicine (17,810 plant species used in the pursuit of good health), but also for human food, animal food, fuel, materials and other things.

Plants provide many of the building blocks used for textiles and construction materials.

The study found "significant gaps" in the collection of DNA data and specimens from many parts of the world that would hinder efforts to preserve plant diversity in the face of changing climate and land-use patterns. It also seeks to pinpoint locations

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Royal Botanical Garden Mixed
report on the world's plants

where botanists should focus collection efforts to boost food security and find plants that can adapt.

By a British climate scientist

It is too early to accurately judge the impact of climate change, Willis says, but the report finds most of the world's ecosystems have experienced a greater than 10 percent change in land-cover in the last 10 years, due to changes in land use and climate change.

Studies by a research institute in Colombia included in the report establish timelines for the loss of certain foods in Africa, finding that up to 30 percent of land used for growing maize and bananas won't be viable by the end of the century. The figures for beans are even higher, with 60 percent of the land likely to be unfit for that purpose.

But some crops — particularly yams

and cassava — are found to be much more resilient, making them important candidates for more research and investment as the world copes with mounting food insecurity as population rises and productive land dwindles.

What's a name?

The obscure process of discovering, describing and naming a new species may seem of little practical value, but Timothy M.A. Utteridge, head of identification and naming at the Royal Botanical Gardens, says the information is vital if scientists are to protect plants.

He helped name 12 new species last year and sees a remarkable number of new plants pinpointed in Australia, Brazil and China, all of which are developing new computer databases with nearly comprehensive details about their plants.

That's step one in protecting those

plants, he said.

"If this plant doesn't have a name, and it falls over in the forest, no one knows," he said. "Once we have a specimen, and a name, we put that on the map," he said, adding that it's important for "conservation assessment."

Who collected it?

Lest anyone doubt Kew's bona fides, consider the origin of some of the samples hidden away in the vast herbarium — including the ones collected in the Galapagos Islands by Charles Darwin.

The scientist, whose theory of evolution has helped shape modern thinking, enjoyed a long, intense friendship with William Hooker, who was an early director at the botanical gardens, and Darwin used Hooker's son Joseph as a taxonomist to work on the plants Darwin had brought back from his travels.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

INDCs and Philippine economic and energy realities

Energy poverty can kill today, not 30 or 100 years from now because of “man-made” warming or climate change. Dark streets at night because of expensive electricity and unstable energy mean more road accidents, more crimes. Or households using candles are courting more fires, more destruction to private property. And households using traditional biomass for cooking endure indoor pollution and invite various respiratory diseases.

Thus, it is unwise for governments to institute measures that will make electricity even more expensive and make the construction of power plants become more costly and bureaucratic. Depriving the people of more access to cheaper electricity and stable energy sources is violation of their human rights, the right to live in safe communities, and road travel at night, the right to productive work and studies, the right to entertainment with families and friends, anytime they like.

Consider the following data on energy poverty in the ASEAN from the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). We exclude Brunei and Singapore in this list because they have 100% provision of energy for their people (see table).

In 2013, some 21 million Filipinos were still using candles or noisy gensets at night, consuming more diesel, another fossil fuel. And some 53 million Filipinos were still using firewood and charcoal (meaning more illegal cutting of trees) for cooking, or cow dung, causing more indoor pollution and respiratory/health problems later.

Is this a good situation for the country and our people? Maybe if one advocates de-industrialization and low standard of living as much as possible, the answer is yes.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITHOUT ACCESS TO MODERN ENERGY SERVICES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, 2013

	No access to electricity million	% of popn	Use biomass for cooking* million	% of popn
Indonesia	49	70%	48	89%
Myanmar	36	68%	49	93%
Philippines	21	21%	53	42%
Cambodia	10	66%	13	88%
Malaysia	0	0%	0	0%
Laos	1	13%	4	65%
Thailand	0	0%	0	0%
Maldives	0	0%	0	0%
ASEAN	86	44%	116	45%

*Based on WHO and IEA databases

SOURCE: IEA AND ERIA, SOUTH EAST ASIA ENERGY OUTLOOK 2015

MY CUP OF LIBERTY BIENVENIDO S. OPLAS, JR.

Expensive energy, costly prices of commodities and services, should be among the last things that we should aspire for our people.

The Philippine government through the Climate Change Commission (CCC) submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting in Paris last year this Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG):

“The Philippines intends to undertake GHG (CO₂e) emissions reduction of about 70% by 2030 relative to its BAU scenario of 2000-2030. Reduction of CO₂e emissions will come from energy, transport, waste, forestry and industry sectors.”

This means that we should cut our carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 70% compared to a business as usual (BAU) scenario.

How will several industries be adversely affected? Mainly through more expensive electric-

ity as more expensive, subsidy-dependent renewables like wind and solar will be forced-fed into the grid and distribution utilities. Even if cheaper electricity from coal and natural gas plants are available, they will be second priority when power from intermittent but expensive sources are available. So our monthly electricity bills will keep rising.

Also, more electric tricycles and jeeps will be fielded via tax-funded programs, like the ADB loan of \$300 million (around P17.2 billion) for 100,000 new e-trikes in the country. Purchase of e-trikes is borne by taxpayers, their daily electricity charging is also borne by taxpayers via charging stations in municipal/city halls.

And firms will be forced to procure more capital-intensive processes, meaning higher operational costs to be passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices of goods and services.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) early this month wrote to the CCC questioning that commitment of a high target, 70% GHG emissions by 2030 as this will put undue pressure on local industries and strain the growth of the economy. The PCCI said, it supports GHG emission reduction but that “high

target” is impractical. Their proposal was 40% reduction.

Good call by the PCCI. Expensive energy, costly prices of commodities and services, should be among the last things that we should aspire for our people.

Those alarmist scenario of “more severe weather”, “unprecedented, unequivocal global warming” and catastrophic “man-made” climate change remain questionable. Climate changes from warming to cooling to warming to cooling, in natural and endless cycles, since the planet was created some 4.6 billion years ago. Consider this data for instance (see chart).

The big or very strong El Niño of 2015-2016 has a precedent, the big El Niño of 1997-1998. And almost always, big El Niño is followed by big La Niña, see the early '70s cooling and the prolonged La Niña from 1998-2000.

Continued demonization of CO₂ — a useful gas that we humans and our animals exhale, the gas that our plants, trees, and crops use to produce their own food via photosynthesis — is creating more distortions in energy and economic policies.

We should not aspire to rival Myanmar and Cambodia, much less North Korea, in energy poverty. Government — through the CCC and DENR especially — should get out of overly ambitious alarmism in energy rationing.

This subject was not highlighted in the recent Presidential elections but President-elect Rodrigo Duterte was quoted in one forum during the campaign period that he supports more coal power plants to sustain the country's rising energy needs. Let us hope that he will stick to this policy. ■

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

The price of fragmentation

OF THE five original Asean states, the Philippines and Indonesia have been the two worst performing economies. Ours is a country of around 7,100 islands (plus a few more during low tide, as the joke goes); Indonesia is a country of around 13,600 islands. Could these two countries' archipelagic nature be the primary reason?

Obviously, a country broken up into numerous islands calls for a different approach to development than one with a contiguous land area, like Thailand and the other mainland Asean states. For one thing, the cost and efficiency of interisland versus land transport can differ widely. Opportunities for economies of scale in the provision of energy infrastructure, particularly electrification, are limited in a territory that is geographically fragmented. The communication network would likewise be more expensive and probably less efficient. And because direct people-to-people contacts are hampered by physical geography, building a sense of nationhood built on social, political and cultural cohesion is a more formidable challenge than in a country whose land is contiguous.

Beyond the difficulty of linking physically disparate areas, our country and Indonesia may have also been held back by a failure to appreciate the unique circumstances of an archipelagic economy, including in development planning. For economies whose territories feature large areas of internal waters, the significance of the maritime economy ought to be substantial, and yet may tend to be overlooked and neglected. That is, development planning may devote disproportionate attention to land-based assets and economic (and even social, cultural and political) activities, to the neglect of the vast potential contributions of the maritime economy.

Indeed, the seas in between our islands and along our coasts are immensely rich in natural resources and economic value. These arise not only from the value of the fishery and other marine resources therein, but also from the value of potential tourism and other services (e.g., tidal energy) they

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could provide. It is even likely that a square kilometer of sea contains higher potential economic value than a corresponding square kilometer of undeveloped land. For one thing, our marine biodiversity could well be richer than the diversity of life on our lands. The challenge is in sustainably harnessing the wealth embodied in the seas—i.e., without depleting marine resources or destroying marine habitats through pollution or destructive exploitation (such as through dynamite fishing).

How important is the maritime economy to the overall economy? A 2010 paper by Dr. Romulo Virola and his associates at the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) cited the widespread economic significance of the maritime sector in terms of employment, foreign exchange earnings, investments and linkages with other sectors. For instance, growth and development in the shipping industry alone would induce substantial investments in port construction/facilities and services associated with it, manufacturing of maritime-related products, and so on. The benefits would further permeate the numerous downstream industries using maritime products and services. At the same time, income generated by the maritime sector will stimulate demand for consumer goods and services in general. All these yield tremendous income multiplier effects.

Apart from shipping and its related activities, the maritime economy encompasses fisheries and aquaculture, recreational activities and tourism, offshore energy exploration and extraction, and a large number of other related economic services. Part of the neglect described earlier may be traced to inade-

quacy of statistical data on these economic activities, which tend to be generally incomplete and untimely, if not outright unavailable. A key challenge, then, is to develop a systematic framework for tracking the maritime economy and fully account for its contribution to gross domestic product—something Virola and his NSCB associates sought to do.

All these suggest some peculiar elements that need to be addressed in development planning for an archipelago. First, islands must be well interconnected with efficient air and sea transport facilities. The "nautical highway" based on roll-on-roll-off shipping facilities that could span from Aparri to Tawi-Tawi seeks to address this need. In the 1990s, the government crafted a blueprint for an efficient nationwide multimodal transport network to provide a seamless system where passengers and cargo could easily move between and across land (road and rail), sea and air transport modes. It remains largely a blueprint.

With the peculiar archipelagic nature of our country, we also need strong institutional support for fisheries and our maritime economy. As it is, fisheries are relegated to a line bureau under the Department of Agriculture, which has had enough difficulty catering effectively to the needs of the crop and livestock sectors, let alone fisheries. We should also have a separate strong body dedicated to strengthening the maritime sector covering shipping, shipbuilding and ship repair, among other things—things in which an archipelagic country like ours would normally be expected to be inherently strong.

We need to have a clear vision for the country built on strong recognition that our territory is composed of four-fifths water and only one-fifth land. That outside forces are now developing significant parts of that territory under our noses may partly be blamed on this traditional failure to fully consider the potentials and requirements of being an archipelagic economy.

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Telco continues to build disaster-resilient communities

Residents of Madridejos in Bantayan Island were armed only with basic information on disaster when Super typhoon Yolanda hit their community on Nov. 8, 2013.

This prompted Lougie Escala of Madridejos town to attend a seminar to enhance his knowledge on disaster preparedness.

The Disaster Preparedness Training was organized by Smart Communications last March 29-30 for the seven ecclesiastical districts of the Archdiocese of Cebu at the Schoenstatt Shrine in Talisay City.

The seminar tackled weather disturbances and forecasts, cataclysms like earthquakes and after effects like tidal waves and tsunamis, typhoons and accompanying storm surges and landslides.

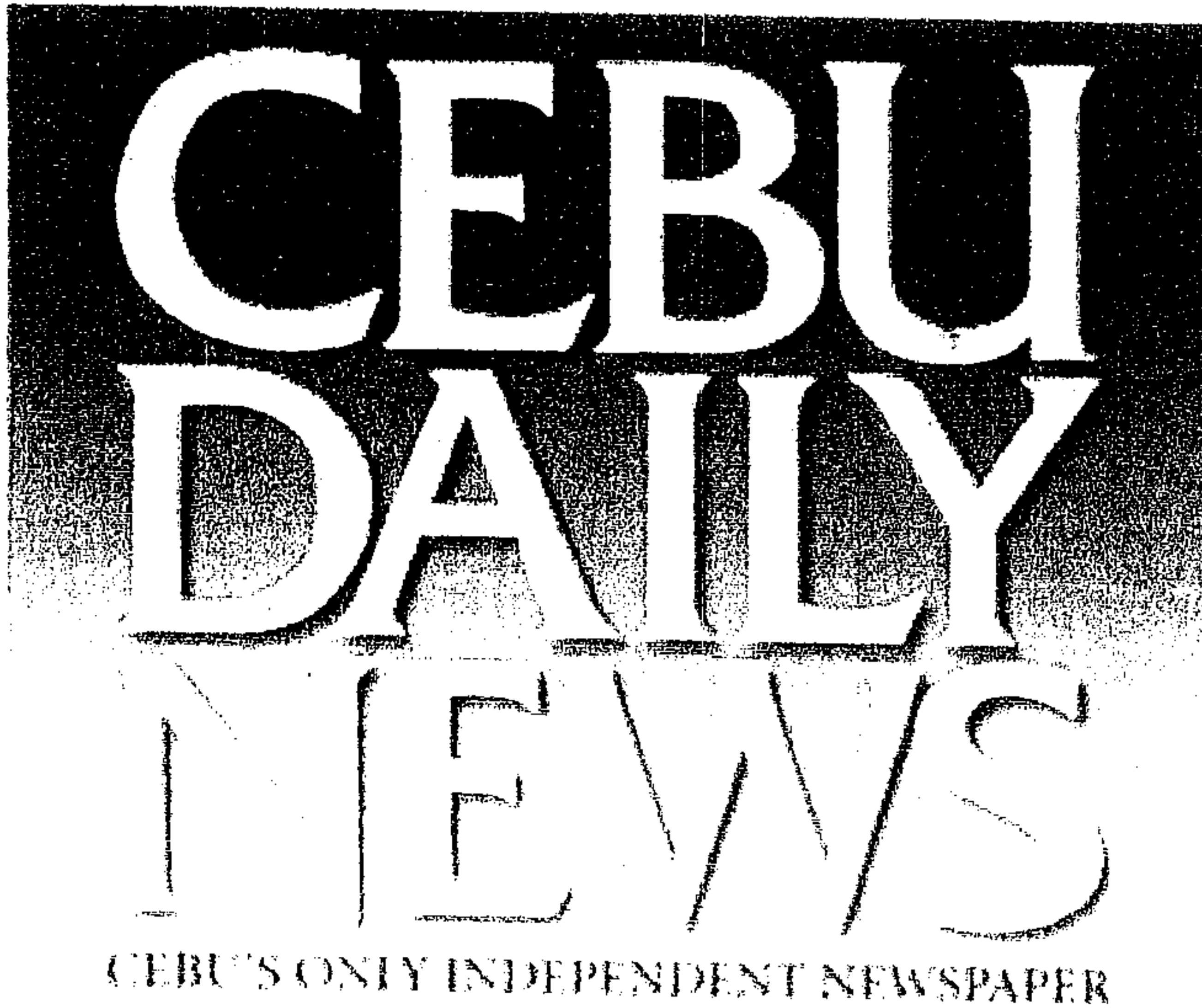
Escala said the most important learnings on disasters were those that involved assessing an area's susceptibility, reducing risks to the community, and coming up with a plan of action.

DISASTER RESPONSE

The two-day training, organized in coordination with the Commission on Service of the Cebu Archdiocese, was a follow through for a similar one that Smart conducted for the clergy, said Atty. Maria Jane Paredes, Smart Public Affairs manager for the Visayas and Mindanao.

Paredes said the seminar aimed to form disaster risk and response coordinating councils for the seven church districts in Cebu. She added that the representatives from the ecclesiastical districts will then relay what they've learned to the vicariates and parishes, which will then form their own disaster coordinating groups that will serve to complement the efforts of local government units.

"It's about educating people so they are prepared when calamities occur. The church has an organization down to the last chapel and the capability to reach even the most remote families," she added.



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Telco continues to build disaster - resilient communities

"With more people getting affected by worsening calamities, there is a vital need to make available a template that would prepare communities and make them safer in the face of disasters like typhoons and earthquakes," said Dr. Cedric Daep, chief of the Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office.

DEATH PENALTY

Daep talked about disaster risk reduction and preparedness and how they were able to institutionalize measures in his province during the seminar. Albay in the Bicol Region hosts an active volcano and is right in the path of tropical cyclones.

"If our efforts are not complementary, it will not work. There must be community participation. You should learn what to do in case of disasters so that you are safe even if government fails to do its job. Not knowing what to do during calamities is a death penalty," he told the participants of the training.

According to him, the central philosophy of a culture of reduction is to remove the risk so it results in zero damages and casualties and does not require a response but it involves strictly sticking to a land use plan and requires government and the private sector working together.

VULNERABLE AREAS

Fr. Socrates Saldua of the Archdiocesan Commission on Service said that while local governments have a program on disaster readiness, it hasn't gone down to the grassroots mostly due to political differences.

"This is why we have come up with an alternative. Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma understands the problem and agrees to have teams that can focus on the most vulnerable areas of Cebu," Saldua explained.

Saldua said they were grateful to Smart for extending their help by sharing connections and resources for the two-day seminar.

CONSERVE ENVIRONMENT

Pagasa Mactan chief meteorologist Oscar Tabada said rivers and springs in Cebu are drying up while crops are dying because of the absence of rain and water shortage brought about by El Niño.

The drought, which will continue up to May in Cebu based on monitoring by the weather bureau, is just one of the effects and threats of the global climate change.

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Maynilad receives ISO certification on energy management

WEST Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) was recently awarded the ISO 50001:2011, which certifies that the company's energy management systems meet global standards.

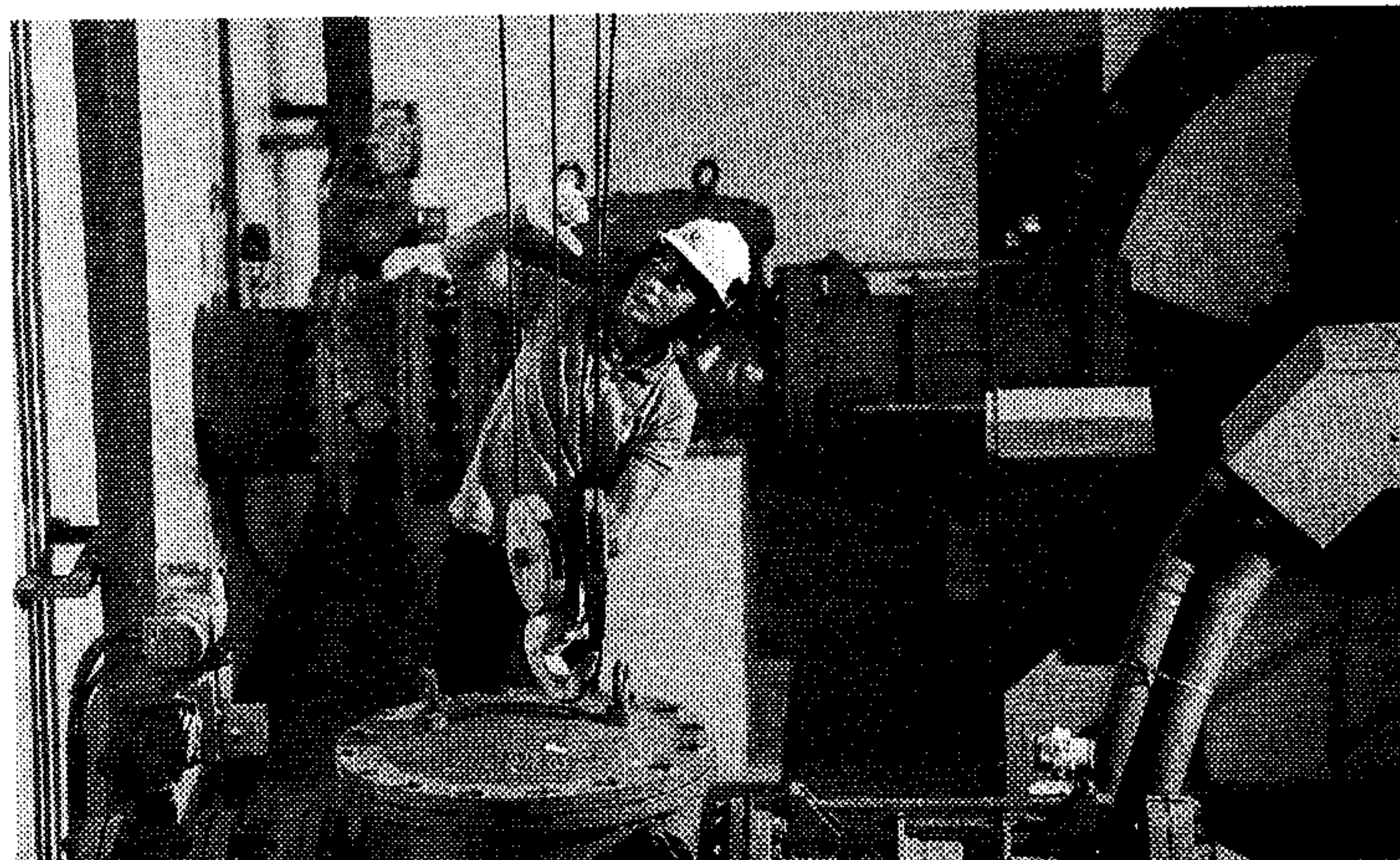
International auditing and certification body TUV Rheinland Philippines recognized Maynilad's compliance in energy efficiency, use and consumption, particularly of its vital facilities—La Mesa treatment plants 1 and 2; pumping stations at La Mesa, Villamor, Pagcor City and Pasay; and Tondo sewage pumping plant.

Maynilad's efforts to enhance its energy efficiency enabled it to register reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and other related environmental impacts. The company was also able to generate savings in its electricity consumption because of its energy-reduction program.

"It was not easy to reduce power consumption given our massive expansion and service improvement projects. But we still identified points for improvement, and managed to pass the strict certification audit. We continue to optimize our resources so we can sustain operations while keeping power consumption to a minimum," said Ramoncito Fernandez, Maynilad president and chief executive officer.

This brings Maynilad's total number of ISO certificates to 151. Late last year, the company was conferred a company-wide ISO certification, making it the Philippine company with the most number of ISO certificates for multiple sites.

Maynilad is also the first and only water company in the country to receive the ISO 14064:2006 certification for the verification of its greenhouse gases or carbon footprint quantification and reporting initiative.



Maynilad's efforts to enhance its energy efficiency enabled it to register reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and other related environmental impacts.

Maynilad is the largest private water concessionaire in the Philippines in terms of customer base. It is the agent and contractor of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System for the West Zone of the Greater Manila Area, which is composed of the cities of Manila (certain portions), Quezon City (certain portions), Makati (west of South Super Highway), Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon all in Metro Manila; the cities of Cavite, Bacoor and Imus, and the towns of Kawit, Noveleta and Rosario, all in Cavite province.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

LEVERAGING TECH TO PROTECT MARINE LIFE

OVER 10 percent of the world's population depends on fisheries and agriculture for their livelihood, and for many people, fish is a major source of protein in their diet. Yet, these vital resources are continuously threatened by overfishing, illegal fishing, climate change, water pollution and other dangers to marine life.

This situation prompted the US government to come out with "Fishackathon" in 2014 to tap the expertise of tech-savvy individuals, through a two-day coding marathon, aimed at developing applications that could benefit sustainable fisheries and the communities that they support. From just a handful of US cities during its first year, Fishackathon 2016 has expanded to 42 cities in six continents, in which Metro Manila is included, given that the issue is very relevant in the Philippines.

"The fish that the people relies on for food; the coastal areas, which are so vulnerable to typhoons and water surges; eco-tourism and climate change; and effects of pollution to coral reefs—these are extremely important to the Philippine [marine], and that's why we want to use your talent to help address these concerns. We know firsthand the efficiency and innovation that the tech[nology] sector can bring to the

table in approaching one of the world's biggest problems," US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg told the participants during his opening remarks at Fishackathon Manila, hosted by Globe Telecom over the weekend.

On the other hand, Glenn Estrella, Globe vice president for Digital Ventures, rallied everyone to make a difference both for the Philippines and the world, even as he noted that Globe strongly supports the use of technology in saving and preserving the environment.

"Like any innovation, technology and marine protection are two different ideas that come together. Greater ideas are born from the joining of the minds; I witnessed how the telecommunications industry evolve, and it is very exciting to see what we can do to improve everyone's lives. This [Fis]hackathon is not about popularity or how many people will use the app, but it is about solving a problem," Estrella said. "We would like to see more partnerships and events on



other grassroots topics. We need more activities that touch more people."

Globe is currently very active in its sustainability campaign to create a #WonderfulPH with the use of modern technology. It has ongoing eco-tourism partnerships with Pusod Inc. on protection and enhancement of Taal Lake in Batangas ecosystem; Save Philippine Seas on protection of thresher sharks in Malapascua, Cebu; Sangkalikasan Producers Cooperative on the establishment of an environment-hotline center in Boracay, Malay, Aklan; and Casa San Miguel on livelihood opportunities for those living along the coastal barangays of San Antonio, Zambales.