

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 19 MAY 2016

DAY : Thursday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

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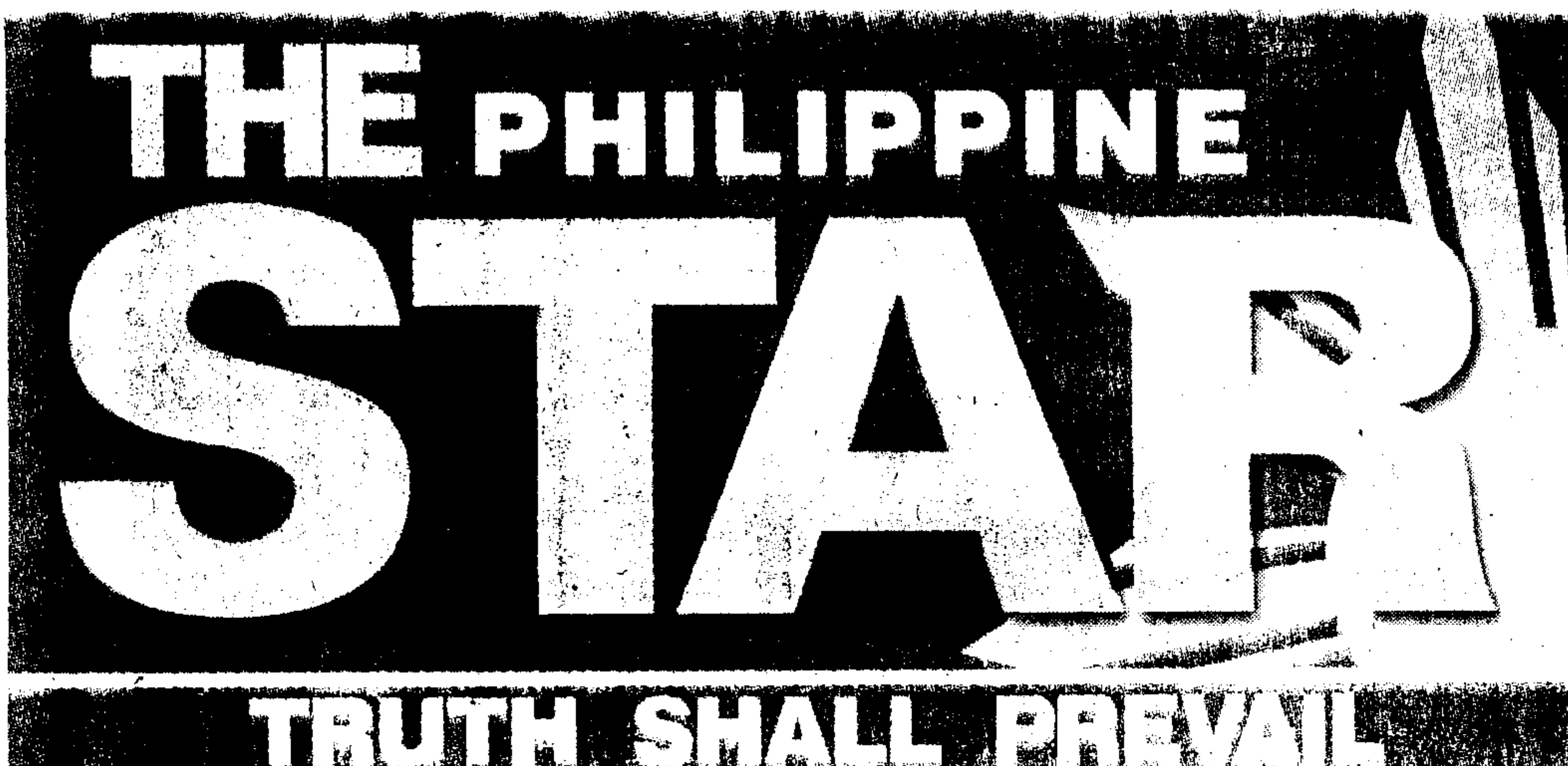
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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Tinanggap ni Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje (ikalawa sa kaliwa) mula kay Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Service Administration (PAGASA) Climate Data Division Chief Rosalina de Guzman (kaliwa) at Bureau



of Soils and Water Management Laboratory Services Division Chief Dr. Gina Nilo (ikalawa sa kanan) ang aklat na produkto ng kaalaman hinggil sa climate change na naging aklat sa tulong ng Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Project (PhilCCAP) upang mas maging maayos pa ang kakayahan ng bansa sa pag-adapt sa epekto ng climate change. Ang iba pang nagawang produkto ng kaalaman ay ang Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of Peñablanca Protected Landscape and Seascape Management at ang Interim Report on Pilot Testing the Feasibility of Weather Index-Based Crop Insurance Application. Kasama rin sa larawan si DENR Assistant Secretary for Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Rommel R. Abesamis (kanan).



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Green jobs = resilient communities

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said "green jobs" will make communities climate change adaptive and resilient.

The Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016, or Republic Act 10771, was recently signed into law by President Aquino.

Paje lauded RA 10771 for promoting the creation of "green jobs" or employment activities that contribute substantially 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," Paje said.

The Paris Agreement is the new

global climate accord dealing with greenhouse gas 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. Aquino had designated Paje to sign the Paris deal in 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 fiscal and non-fiscal incentives already provided for by existing laws, orders, issuances and regulations of the gov-

ernment 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 commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 70 percent 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 said.

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'Tree surgeons' needed to heal 'election-inflicted' wounds

By RUDY FERNANDEZ

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna – With the 2016 national elections over, the country needs "tree surgeons."

Their task: to treat the "wounds" inflicted by politicians and their followers on countless trees that endured campaign materials nailed onto them.

Across the country – especially on busy highways and streets, in parks and plazas – trees have not been spared by election campaigners who nailed and hung their posters on tree trunks and branches.

This was despite government prohibitions against using sharp, solid objects in positioning streamers and tarpaulins on trees.

Even this university town, dubbed a "special science and nature city," was not spared from

such practices of wounding foliage for political purposes.

As the Los Baños-based Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (DENR-ERDB) once warned, "Hammering nails and staple wires and hanging streamers on trees harm the normal functions and health of living trees."

The sharp iron objects penetrating the trunks and branches of a tree will subsequently adversely affect it, a former DENR-ERDB official once told **The STAR** in an interview.

Since a tree is a living organism, it will "feel the pain" of a hard object driven into it.

Some trees can survive the wounds, if small, but others eventually will not if the hard objects stuck into them are big and the injuries they cause serve as entry point of decay-causing microorganisms.

The nails and other hard objects should be removed. If not, these eventually rust and create "metal stress" in the tree's trunk.

"The rust and stains react with the tannic acid and other chemical compounds in the wood, resulting in the tree's decreased resistance to decay," ERDB pointed out.

Any decay or damage on a tree hampers the flow of water and nutrients from the roots to the upper parts, and vice versa. The tree will not have enough supply of water

and nutrients to sustain its needs. The tree's health then suffers and, at worst, the tree dies.

Campaign materials, especially heavy ones such as tarpaulins, are added burdens to a tree.

As forest pathologist Marcelita Pacho said, "It is unfair to trees if campaigns will make them carry posters of candidates during a long campaign period."

Thus, there is a need for "tree surgeons" to save the trees from prolonged pain or wounds and eventually death.

The STAR gathered that there are DENR science research specialists whose task, among other things, is to conduct "tree surgery." Such personnel have been trained for the special chore.

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Cops secure forest, seize 'hot' logs

BAGUIO CITY—Police secured a forest in Bauko town in Mountain Province, after an aerial surveillance last week spotted illegal logging operations that destroyed a six-hectare stretch of woodland.

A police team seized more than 13,000 board feet of lumber valued at P380,000 from trees cut by chainsaws, according to a May 17 report to the office of Mountain Province prosecutor in capital Bontoc town.

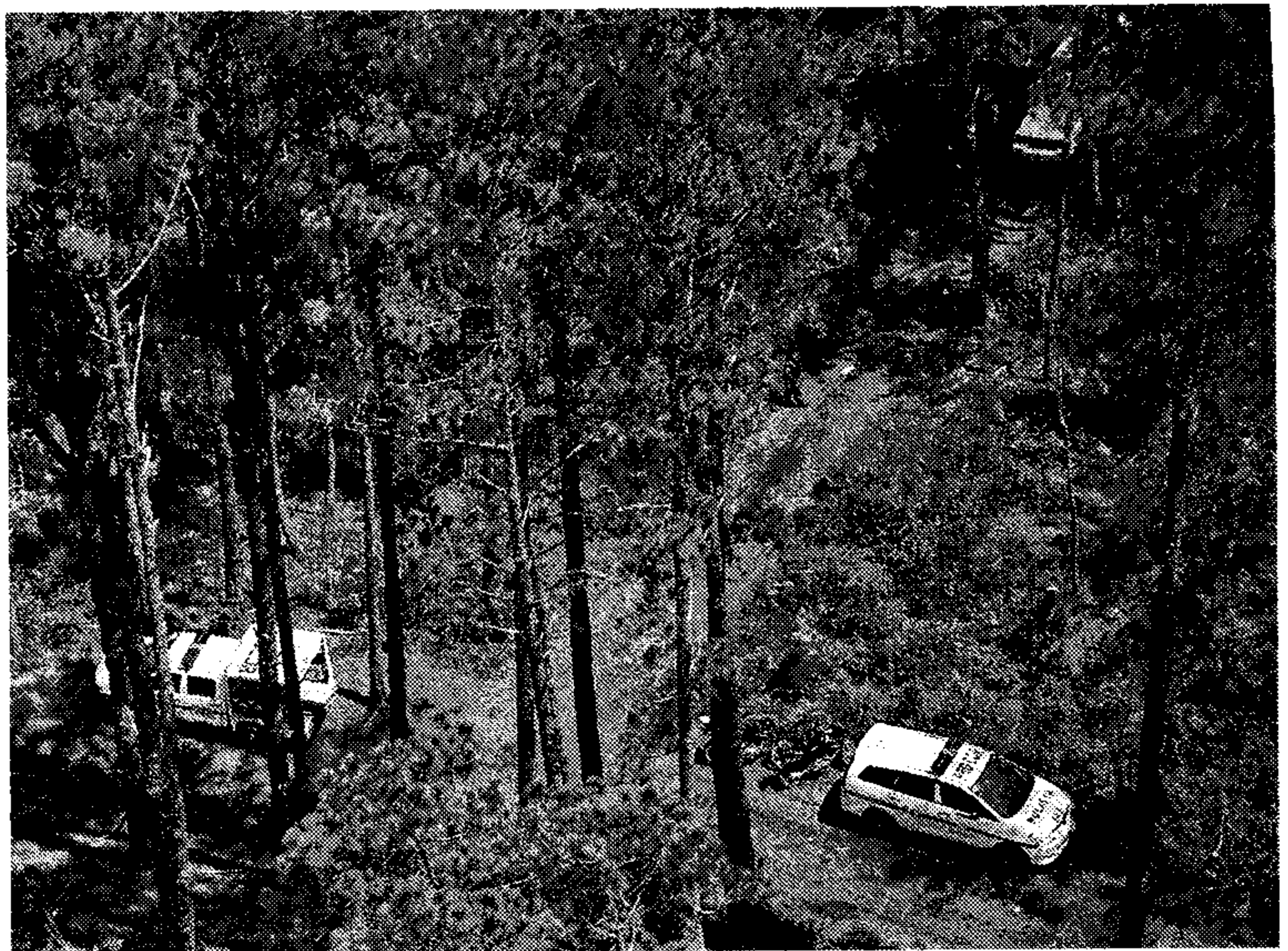
No one was caught at the logging site, sources said, but the police held for questioning five people, including a village official.

The logging site was found by Air Force personnel last week during a routine reconnaissance flight.

Also on Tuesday, a forest ranger, Ariston Libag, and policemen stationed in Bokod town, Benguet province, chanced upon an abandoned logging site at Sitio Shontog in Barangay Bobok-Bisal, according to the Cordillera police. They hauled 230 board feet of lumber valued at P6,900.

In Bulacan province on Monday, Army soldiers seized 300 board feet of red Lauan and the vehicles used to transport the illegal lumber from the mountains of Doña Remedios Trinidad (DRT) town.

Acting on a tip, soldiers from the Army's



48th Infantry Battalion set up a dragnet at Sitio Buasao in Barangay Sapang Bulac and found six motorcycles and an Isuzu Elf van containing the lumber abandoned on the road.

The confiscated items were turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. **Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon and Carmela Reyes-Estropo, Inquirer Central Luzon**

POLICE enter the site of illegal logging in a forest in Bauko, Mountain Province and secure the area.

RICHARD BALONGLONG
/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

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HOT PINE LUMBER – Mt. Province Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) head Octavio Guanzon (right) and Police Regional Office-Cordillera director Chief Supt. Ulysses J. Abellera inspect the illegally-sawn pine lumber worth P.5 million seized in Bauko, Mt. Province, last Tuesday at the compound of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Cordillera Administrative Region (DENR-CAR), Bontoc, Mountain Province.

Photo by CESAR REYES

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Shut dumpsites in Western Visayas – DENR

By **TARA YAP**

ILOILO CITY – Local government units (LGUs) in Western Visayas must take initiatives to shut down all remaining open dumpsites.

This was the appeal made by Atty. Jonathan Bulos, Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Environmental Management Bureau in Western Visayas (DENR-EMB-6).

Bulos said that EMB-6 has found that only 51 percent of local governments in the region are compliant with the Ecological Solid Waste Management Law.

With a 49-percent non-compliance

rate, Bulos said LGUs must not wait for the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) to act.

Last February 2016, the Office of the Ombudsman filed complaints against six LGUs on behalf of the NSWMC for violating the Ecological Solid Waste Management Law. These LGUs were Ajuy, Banate, Concepcion, Sara, and Sta. Barbara towns in Iloilo province and Nabas town in Aklan province.

Actually, Bulos said, there are more non-compliant LGUs in the region than the six LGUs which are being probed by the Ombudsman.

For instance, he said, Janiuay in Iloilo province was found to be with an

open dumpsite. Janiuay Mayor Frankie Locsin ordered its closure last May 11, 2016.

Whether or not politics is involved in closing Janiuay's open dumpsite, Bulos reiterated that LGUs must close down and rehabilitate these dumpsites.

"Under the law, open dumpsites are illegal," Bulos told Manila Bulletin.

"This is not just about environmental concerns, but this is also about the health risk posed by improper garbage management," he added.

Meanwhile, the six LGUs facing complaints by the Ombudsman have until August 2016 to comply with the requirements of Republic Act No. 9003.

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Marine protected areas in Southern Leyte enhance coral ecosystems

TACLOBAN CITY, Leyte – The marine protected areas (MPAs) all over the province of Southern Leyte have enhanced the marine environmental conditions and coral ecosystems, a report from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, regional office 8 (DENR-8) said.

DENR-8 Regional Director Leonardo R. Sibbaluca told reporters that MPAs are off limits to fishermen to allow preservation of the environmental conditions in the areas. No fishing or other marine activities are allowed in the MPAs.

Sibbaluca said in less than three years the number of MPAs in the province managed by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Management Office (PENRMO) has grown to more than 70 sites. He clarified that PENRMO is the counterpart of his office as mandated by Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991.

Sibbaluca informed reporters that MPAs also help in the conservation and protection of mangrove stand in the province. "Most of the MPA areas include large mangrove forest areas serving at the same time as natural barriers for the coastal communities against storm surges during strong typhoons," Sibbaluca said.

The MPAs greatly enhance or improve the fishery resource of the province as the protected areas serve as the undisturbed breeding ground of fishes, Sibbaluca said. (Restituto A. Cayubit)

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₱200-million German-funded Panay forest project kicks off

By TARA YAP

ILOILO CITY – The ₱200-million Forest and Climate Protection (ForClim-Phase II) Project for Panay Island of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) has kicked off with a program for cocoa farmers.

Dr. Klaus Schmitt, ForClim Project-Phase II principal advisor, recently signed a recent agreement with Edward David, president of the Cocoa Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. (CocoaPHIL).

According to Schmitt, GIZ and CocoaPHIL aims to promote “sustainable production, management, and marketing of cocoa with the goal of contributing to and improving the socio-economic conditions of upland farmers.”

GIZ allocated ₱2.8 million for cocoa farmers from 20 towns where the Panay Mountain range straddles.

These farmers are going to be paid to maintain cocoa farms in a combined area of 200 hectares in Aklan, Antique, Capiz, and Iloilo provinces.

For its part, DENR-6 serves as technical and monitoring partner of GIZ for ForClim Project-Phase II.

DENR-6 Regional Director Jim Sampulna reiterated that ForClim Project-Phase II is pushing for sustainable approaches in forest management.

Sampulna explained that the local government units covered are the ones to implement ForClim Project-Phase II.

DENR-6 can extend technical assistance to LGUs that still lack Forest Land Use Plan or Comprehensive Land Use Plan.



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AGROFORESTRY, SPRING-BOX WATER SYSTEMS FOR ISABELA FARMERS

ROSY-CHEEKED Betty Panapit (in photo) once had to trek 4 kilometers just to fetch water up and down the jungled slopes of Sitio Pulang Lupa in Barangay Batong Labang, a rugged, mountainside community near the city of Ilagan, Isabela.

And now she doesn't need to walk farther for fresh water that flows directly down to the 35 families in her immediate area. "*Malaking tulong po talaga ito para sa amin, lalo na sa panahon ng El Niño* (this is a

big help for us, especially during El Niño)," she says. Panapit and her community have discovered how living in harmony with nature can transform lives.

The World Wide Fund (WWF) for Nature, in partnership with Sun Life Foundation and the US Embassy Manila's United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Abuan Integrated Watershed Management Project, recently constructed five concrete spring-box water systems to distribute potable water to upland-farming communities.

The USAID financed the preparation of a water-resource inventory, demographic survey, environmental-impact review, plus construction supervision and management. Sun Life Foundation, meanwhile, financed the provision of cement and steel bars, while the residents donated gravel, sand, plus their time and labor to build the spring boxes.

Spring-box water systems are enclosed water containers built atop fissures, cracks or pores where the water naturally seeps out. Over time the boxes collect water while keeping out debris, like rotting twigs and leaves. Water is then filtered and channeled down to communities for household activities, like cooking, bathing, drinking or growing vegetables.

During El Niño and other extreme weather events, spring

boxes can help ensure that enough potable water is available for families that need most of it.

To augment the spring boxes, Sun Life Foundation also planted 15,169 mango, citrus and cacao seedlings. This agroforestry drive has enriched 69.45 hectares of once-barren grassland since 2012. "I now have 180 new mango and 200 satsuma citrus trees, which can help feed my family for years to come," says project beneficiary Arsenio Cacliong. Agroforestry allows crops and trees to coexist, thus, it increases land productivity; improves water recharge; and minimizes erosion.

This is a unique approach to reforestation—allowing the balanced intercropping of trees, shrubs and crops to create more productive, profitable and sustainable plots. Since 2009 WWF and its allies have helped 466 Isabela farmers plant 70,786 fruit-bearing trees, which were chosen to provide farmers economic incentives to nurture saplings to maturity.

The move aims to reforest the Abuan watershed, a once-verdant forest that has since been converted to an endless sprawls of corn and rice. Shielding the eastern face of Luzon for 340 kilometers and spanning 359,486 hectares, the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park is both the longest mountain range and its largest protected area.

Over 150 endemic animal species, from the iconic Philippine eagle to the critically endangered Philippine crocodile—slither, scuttle or soar above its vigorously vegetated ridges. In turn its forests provide water for 35,570 hectares of rice fields and corn-plots in the city of Ilagan.



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Fruit trees, water spring boxes give Isabela farmers food and water

Rosy-cheeked Betty Panapit once had to trek four kilometers just to fetch water up and down the slopes of SitioPulangLupa in Barangay BatongLabang, a rugged, mountainside community near the city of Ilagan, Isabela.

Today, fresh water now flows directly down to the 35 families in her immediate area. "Malaking tulong po talaga ito para sa amin, lalo na sa panahon ng El Niño at tagtuyot (this is a big help for us, especially because we are being hit by the El Niño)," she says. Betty and her community have discovered how living in harmony with nature can transform lives.

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The move aims to reforest Isabela's Abuan watershed – a once-verdant forest which has since been converted to endless sprawls of corn and rice. Shielding the eastern face of Luzon for 340 kilometers and spanning 359,486 hectares, the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park is both the Philippines' longest mountain range and its largest protected area.

Over 150 endemic animal species – from the iconic Philippine eagle to the critically-endangered Philippine crocodile – slither, scuttle or soar above its vigorously-vegetated ridges. In turn, its forests provide water for 35,570 hectares of ricefields and cornplots in the city of Ilagan in Isabela.

By planting trees and protecting the watersheds of Ilagan, WWF, Sun Life Foundation and USAID are bolstering the capacity of Isabela's farmers to deal with worsening climate change effects like El Niño.



Photo courtesy of WWF

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Palawan mine ready to operate

BY JED MACAPAGAL

LISTED mining firm Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc. (GFNI) said its affiliate Ipilan Nickel Corp. (INC) is now ready to operate after having secured a vital permit from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

The company said MGB granted the INC project in Palawan its partial declaration of mine project feasibility covering 343.3 hectare parcel of mineral production sharing agreement no. 017-93-IV.

GFNI said the remaining area of more than 2,000 hectares shall be subject to further exploration as the Palawan-based mine starts development for trial shipments by the fourth quarter of the year.

The company added the approved annual production rate of the project is currently at 1 million dry metric ton (DMT) or 1.538 million wet metric ton (WMT).

However, the Philippine Mineral Reporting Code's technical report said the explored portion of the property has proven there are probable ore reserves of 28.6 million WMT at 1.43 percent nickel and 24.01 percent iron from a measured and indicated mineral resource of 50 million DMT at 1.23 percent nickel and 24 percent iron.

From the said report, further exploration was also recommended towards the unexplored region in its northern part to expand the ore reserves and to extend the mine life beyond 12 years.

GFNI said it plans to pursue the ex-



Ipilan mine.

pansionas recommended as well as the exploration work. It also has the option to maximize production depending on market conditions and to further increase capacity pending the results of the exploration and approval of additional permits.

The company recently reported a 77

percent drop in its net income last year to P1.112 billion compared to the previous year's P4.817 billion due to lower shipments.

For this year, GFNI said it will further implement cost-cutting measures to lower operating costs while it prepares for another exploration in Surigao which is expected to have results by midyear.

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Ipilan Nickel authorized to develop part of Palawan exploration area

GLOBAL Ferronickel Holdings, Inc. said its Palawan-based affiliate Ipilan Nickel Corp. (INC) received approval for its feasibility study from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and is cleared to start operations for part of its exploration area.

The company said in a disclosure to the bourse on Wednesday that INC "is now ready to operate with the granting by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of its Partial Declaration of Mine Project Feasibility covering a 343.3 hectare parcel of Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) No. 017-93-IV."

The remaining area of more than 2,000 hectares, however, shall still be subject to further exploration.

FNI is set to start the development of the approved area and conduct trial shipments by the fourth quarter of this year. The approved annual production rate for INC totals one million dry metric tons (DMT) or 1.538 million wet metric tons (WMT).

According to the Competent Person's Technical Report, prepared in accordance with the Philippine Mineral Reporting Code, the explored portion of the property has proven and probable ore reserves of 28.6 million WMT at 1.43% for nickel and 24.01%

for copper from a measured and indicated mineral resource of 50 million DMT at 1.23% nickel and 24.0% copper.

The report recommends further exploration in untapped regions to expand the ore reserves and to extend the mine life beyond 12 years. It also suggested an increase in mine production capacity to 3.0 million WMT within two years.

Global Ferronickel said it plans to pursue the report's recommendations "depending on market conditions and to further increase capacity pending the results of exploration and approval of permits." — **Janina C. Lim**

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Benham Rise off Aurora, Isabela eyed as prime commercial fishing ground

Benham Rise, the Philippines' newest territory located 250 kilometers east of Aurora province, is part of the spawning grounds of the highly valuable Pacific bluefin tuna.

As such, the government is eyeing the Benham Rise as a potential fisheries hotspot in the country's eastern seaboard facing the Pacific Ocean and off the provinces of Aurora and Isabela.

Benham Bank, the shallowest portion of the 13-million hectare Benham Rise or seamount, is one of the traditional fishing grounds of coastal dwellers on the northeastern coast of Luzon, according to Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Director

Asis Perez.

However, the area is also "a hotspot for poachers, especially long-liners from neighboring countries," said Perez, who also serves as DA undersecretary for fisheries.

Fish galore

Perez said among the fish species found in Benham Bank are albacore tuna, which was the dominant species in 2015, and big-eye tuna, which was monitored in 2013.

The highly-prized Pacific Bluefin tuna spawn in the western Pacific, including Benham Rise, according to fisheries expert Jose Ingles of WWF-Philippines.

He said there is a huge potential for ecosystems preservation in Benham Bank to protect commercially valuable fish species, noting that big-eye tuna is already overfished.

"This can be our contribution to the global economy," Ingles said.

Management framework

"With its wealth of marine resources, there is a need to craft a management framework for Benham Rise," added Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines' Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea.

The Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set

to organize a workshop on management strategies for the sustainable use of resources in Benham Rise, as there is a need for complete baseline assessment of the region.

One of the options being considered is to propose the declaration of Benham Rise as a marine managed area, with Benham Bank as the core zone with protected status, and the rest as exploration areas.

Marine biodiversity

Marianne Pan-Saniano, marine scientist of Oceana Philippines, said Benham Bank is blanketed with coral assemblages, sponges, and algae.

Organisms in what is known as the mesophotic zone, found at depths of up to 150 meters, can tolerate low light penetration. The underwater plateau serves as a refuge and nursery for many economically important fish. (PNA)



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Solon seeks stiffer penalty for waste disposal, importation

CITING health hazards, a party-list solon is proposing a total ban and stiffer penalties on the importation of all kinds of wastes from other countries.

Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza filed House Bill 6032 which aims to amend the Republic Act (RA) 6969, also known as "Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act of 1990."

One of the amendments to RA 6969 is Section 3 which states "This

Act shall cover the importation, manufacture, processing, handling, storage, transportation, sale, distribution, use and disposal of all unregulated chemical substances and mixtures, AND ALL RECYCLABLE AND NON-RECYCLABLE HAZARDOUS WASTES in the Philippines, including the entry even in transit, as well as the keeping or storage and disposal of hazardous and nuclear wastes into the country for whatever purposes."

Under the bill, violators should be penalized with minimum of 25 years and maximum of 50 years imprisonment and an exemplary damage of at least P2 million.

Atienza said a total ban on the importation of all kinds of wastes from other countries would not only protect the health of the people but also protect the country from becoming the dumping ground of the world.

Jester Manalastas

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Duterte, *iligtas mo ang mga bata*

"LABING-WALONG taon akong tumira sa US. Pagbalik ko ngayong taon na ito, hindi na nawala ang sipon at ubo ko. Nagpatingin ako sa duktor at nagpa x-ray, walang problema sa baga ko. Dumi ng hangin ang dahilan ng ubot sipon ko sabi ng duktor," pahayag ng isang nanay at kakilala ko na kausap ko nitong araw ng Martes.

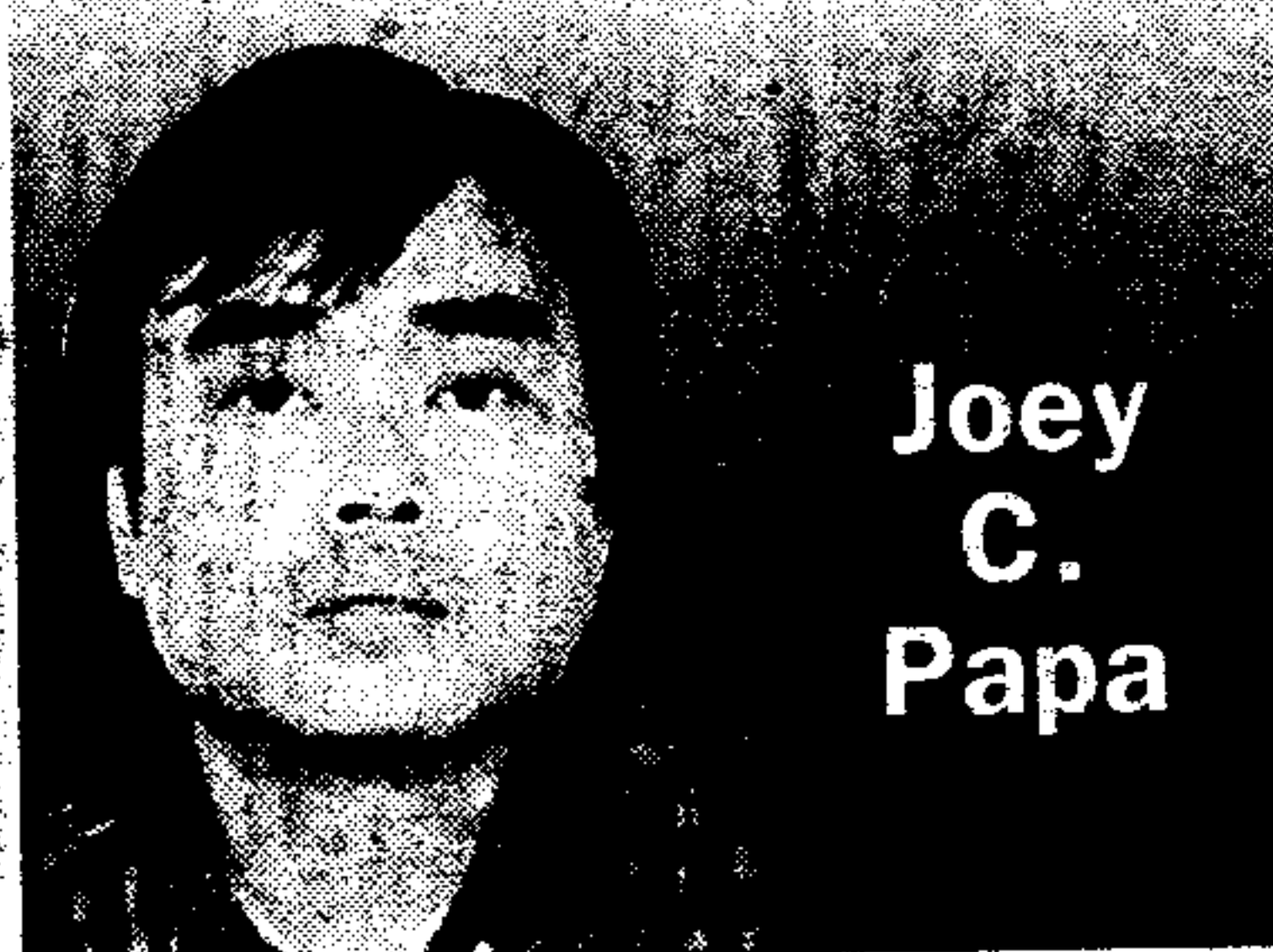
Masama talaga ang uri ng hangin ngayon sa bansa natin. "Air quality is really bad. It can kill," sabi ng isang duktor na nakausap ko noon. "Nakamamatay ang hika."

Naalala ko tuloy na hika ang ikinamatay ng isang opisyal ng Philippine National Police may ilang taon na ang nakararaan, ayon sa balita. At sinabi rin sa akin noon ng isang duktor na kailangang may lagi tayong dalang gamot na binanggit niya ang ngalan for emergency purposes. Natawa ako noon ngunit sinabi niyang seryosong bagay 'yon dahil puwedeng ikamatay ang hika. Ang asawa ng duktor ay may sakit na hika.

Ang kakilala kong nanay ay matagal din namang tumira sa Pilipinas at nag-alaga ng mga anak bago nagpunta sa US bago inalagaan ang ina sa bansang 'yon. Ngayon ay nararanasan na niya ang maruming hangin o usok-lason polusyon sa ating bansa. "Pero grabena ngayon ang polusyon sa atin kaysa dati!" pasigaw niyang nasabi.

"Lagi na akong may mask na suot kung lumalabas ng bahay. Kahit saan ka humarap, bumubuga

BANGON KALIKASAN



Joey C. Papa

ng usok. Hindi lang naman sa Metro Manila mahirap huminga dahil sa polusyon. Pumunta ka sa Norte, mausok na rin. Pumunta ka sa South, mausok din! Ang dami nang sasakyan sa Pilipinas. Nakaparada na lang sa mga kalsada at bangketa!" daing ng nanay na bumalik sa bayan natin.

"Sana magawan ng paraan ito ni Mayor Duterte pag-upo niya bilang pangulo. Parang isinumpa na ang Pilipinas tuloy sa dumi ng hangin! Lason talaga ang polusyon!" Itigil na ang patuloy na pagpasok ng maraming sasakyan, malaki omaliit man. Para bang ang yaman-yaman ng Pilipinas! Ang dami namang nakatira sa mga bangketa at ilalim ng tulay at mga namamalimos!" taghoy ng nagbalik na ina sa bansa.

"Kung hindi magagawan ng solusyon ni Mayor Duterte bilang presidente ang problema ng matinding trapik at usok-lason polusyon, mababawasan ang kredibilidad niya bilang matapang na lider. Maliit

lang ang Davao City kung ihahambing sa buong Pilipinas. Kug nakamamatay ang iligal na droga, nakamamatay din ang usok-lason polusyon!" dugtong ng ina.

Tila nga hindi nabigyang pansin ng administrasyong Aquino ang lason sa hangin. May mumunting information campaign na isinagawa ngunit sapat ito. Sa pagtindi ng global warming at climate change, pag-init ng temperatura ng mundo na nararamdaman na natin ngayon sa sobrang init at alinsangan ng panahon. Mahirap kumilos lalo na ang mga pangkaraniwang tao na nagtatrabaho sa mga lugar na walang air-condition.

Sumosobra naman lalo ang carbon emission dahil sa malaking konsumo ngayon ng kuryente na pinatatakbo ng mga plantang gamit ay fossil fuel. Ang enerhiyang nagmumula sa katubigan ay nanganib dahil sa tindi ng sikat ng araw.

Malaking hamon sa incoming Presidente Rodrigo Duterte ang karapatan ng maraming Pilipino para sa isang malusog na kapaligiran at kalusugan. Nasa Konstitusyon ito. Natatandaan ko ang ilang salitang binitiwang niya sa TV ad noong kampanya habang hawak niya ang bandila ng Pilipinas. "Mahal ko ang aking bayan..."

Iligtas mo Pangulong Duterte ang bayang Pilipinas sa usok-lason polusyon. Iligtas mo ang mga bata mula sa mga sakit na dulot ng maruming hangin.

(bangonkalikasan@yahoo.com)

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Phl calls for higher emission reduction pledge

By JANVIC MATEO

Climate Change Commission (CCC) secretary Emmanuel de Guzman called on member-countries of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to pledge for bigger reduction in their respective greenhouse gas emissions.

During the opening of the UN Climate Change Conference Monday in Bonn, Germany, De Guzman said governments across the globe must set more ambitious targets in their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to preserve the gains of the historic Paris Agreement.

He said higher emission reductions are necessary to achieve the below 1.5 degrees Celsius global temperature goal that was set in the Paris pact.

"(We) saluted the outcome at Paris because it manifested an increase in the level of ambition of our collective enterprise to fight dangerous climate change and protect the most vulnerable," said De Guzman.

"(But) we are all aware that our current INDCs translate to an estimated three degrees of warming, or double the long-term goal. Work needs to start now if we are to have any hope of reaching our goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius," he added.

The INDC represents the greenhouse gas emissions reduction pledges of each state member of the UNFCCC.

Last month, nearly all parties to the UNFCCC, including the Philippines, signed the Paris Agreement at the UN headquarters in New York, signifying that efforts toward the entry into force of the climate deal are underway.

The Philippine government is expected to ratify the Paris Agreement this month, according to CCC.

De Guzman said that while nations work to realize current pledges, all parties must likewise begin to update and set more ambitious contributions and take into account "the concept of equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in light of different national circumstances."

"We call for submission of updated INDCs – with higher targets – by 2020 at the latest, as provided for by the Paris outcomes. The long-term low emission development strategies for 2020 must also demonstrate consistency with the long-term goal," he said.

"According to the Paris outcomes, developed countries should continue taking the lead in implementing mitigation efforts. We are counting on you to lead," he added.

The Philippines chairs the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), a group of nations highly vulnerable to climate change. It is at the forefront of an advocacy for global efforts toward low carbon economy to limit global warming to well below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

De Guzman noted that CVF member-countries, whose contribution to global carbon emissions is "marginal," have however shown strong leadership in mitigation efforts.

He said that the Philippines, for instance, has submitted an initial and conditional INDC with 70 percent emission reduction to the UN body, which can be attained through stronger international partnerships.

"We set the bar high," De Guzman said. "(We) need radical follow-up on mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, finance, capacity (building) and technology to live up to the ambitions we have set for ourselves in international law. By doing so, we will survive and thrive," he said.

The climate change conference organized by the UN will run until May 26.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PHL appeals for support for 'vulnerable' countries

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

Twitter @jonlmayuga

THE Philippines, through the Climate Change Commission (CCC), is appealing for the support of developed countries to help vulnerable nations deal with the adverse impacts of climate change.

Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman, vice chairman of CCC, made the appeal during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn recently, as he sought for a wide-ranging assistance to UN member-states that are at most risk like the Philippines to meet carbon-emission reduction targets, and achieve the ultimate goal of limiting below 1.5 degrees Celsius global temperature increase by 2030 under the historic Paris agreement forged in Paris, France, last December.

In a news statement, de Guzman, who acts as President Aquino's alter ego to the UN meeting, said, while both developed and developing countries work to implement their existing and increased Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), "there are limits to what vulnerable countries can achieve, given our national circumstances and respective capabilities."

"Early and substantial provision of finance, capacity-building and technology will stimulate global action and greater ambition," de Guzman told the conference, which is being held in Germany from May 16 to 26.

According to de Guzman, delivering a concrete road map on reaching the joint commitment of \$100 billion in additional finance, independ-

ent of preexisting Official Development Assistance commitments will hasten implementation of concrete country-level adaptation and mitigation actions that will benefit our stakeholders.

De Guzman said members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF),

which include the Philippines, expect the funds administered through the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility to have simplified application and approval processes in order to allow efficient delivery of financial assistance.

The CVF, which is currently chaired by the Philippines, is comprised of nations highly vulnerable to climate change. It is at the forefront of an advocacy for a collective effort to cut down global warming and pursue a low-carbon economy.

A review on the level of financial flows is important to make it consistent with the goal of achieving the below 1.5°C global warming cap, he said.

"[Our] sister initiative, the V20, is already active in promoting a financial system response consistent with 1.5°C," he said.

The V20 or the Vulnerable Twenty Group is composed of finance ministers from countries most vulnerable to climate change. It recognizes the power and potential of finance as an integral tool in solving challenges posed by climate change.

On the other hand, de Guzman underscored the importance of initiatives in the development of the Loss and Damage Mechanism as a distinct stream from adaptation.

De Guzman said the CVF sees the Loss and Damage Mechanism "crucial" to guaranteeing that communities will be able to recover from impacts of climate change since "even achieving 1.5°C will result in a considerable increase in loss and damage."

"Support in these areas, as well as realizing the balance between adaptation and mitigation by 2020 at the latest, will, quite simply, save lives, given the level of humanitarian impact of climate change," he noted. "The fulfillment and empowerment of human right was our guiding light in Paris."



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Price of rice stable despite ill effects of El Niño

BY MARY GRACE PADIN

@_enren

THE price of rice in the domestic market remains stable despite the drop in the country's paddy rice production brought about by the ill impacts of El Niño, the National Food Authority (NFA) said.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed the average farmgate price of palay as of the week ending May 10 reached P18.08 per kilogram, only 0.14 percent lower than the P18.05 per kg recorded in the same period last year.

This, despite the 9.97-percent decrease in the country's palay production during the first quarter of 2016. Palay output during the period was recorded at 3.93 million metric tons (MMT), lower than the 4.37 MMT produced in 2015.

The PSA attributed the drop in production to El Niño and the damage caused by Typhoons Lando and Nona in late-2015.

NFA Spokesman Angel Imperial Jr. said in a phone interview the price of the staple barely moved,

as the agency was able to promptly preposition rice stocks through the government-to-government (G-to-G) importation done in the last quarter of 2015.

"The importation we have done was able to cushion the impact of the current El Niño episode to the country's rice supply and prices," he said.

According to the official, rice stock inventory in the Philippines is currently at 2.73 MMT, which is sufficient for 85 days.

About 1.13 MMT of the total inventory is deposited in NFA warehouses, while 886,000 MT and 706,000 MT are with the households and commercial warehouses, respectively.

The NFA, through a G-to-G scheme, imported 500,000 MT of

rice in the first quarter of the year to cover the anticipated deficit in the country's rice production brought about by El Niño.

The latest report from the Department of Agriculture showed around 918,912 metric tons (MT) of crops worth P8.68 billion have already been damaged by El Niño and pests in 2016. Of this value, P7.01 billion was from El Niño damage.

The rice sector took the brunt of the effects of the drought, with P3.47 billion in total production loss.

Meanwhile, Imperial said there is still no immediate plan to import additional volumes of rice to augment the country's inventory in preparation for the lean months.

But the NFA said it has already prepared the groundworks for all possible importation scheme that can be considered by the next administration.

"We have already prepared all the possible rice importation schemes for the 500,000 MT standby authority given by Malacañang, be it through the minimum access volume scheme or by government-to-government scheme so the next administration can quickly execute them should they decide to," former NFA Administration Renan B. Dalisay earlier said.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

COPING WITH EL NIÑO

Isabela farmers receive fruit trees and water spring boxes

A lot of households in the countryside, especially those of farmers, were heavily affected by the lack of rains due to the El Niño phenomenon that has beset many parts of the country since last year, compounding the problem of irrigation for farmers.

One of those who have suffered from the climate anomaly is Betty Panapit who used to trek four kilometers just to get water from the steep slope of Sitio Pulang Lupa in Barangay Batong Labang, a coarse mountainside community near the city of Ilagan, Isabela.

With the help of World Wide Fund for nature (WWF) in collaboration with Sun Life Foundation together with the US Embassy Manila and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Panapit, along with the members of her community, no longer need to painstakingly walk long hours just to get water because of the five concrete spring box water systems that were constructed to help provide fresh, potable water to upland farming communities with the help of Abuan Integrated Watershed Management.

Spring box systems are water containers built atop crannies where water flows out naturally. Over time, the boxes will collect water while preventing twigs and plants from getting in. Water is then filtered and channeled down to communities,



The spring boxes provide potable water that can be used for household activities

providing potable water that can be used for household activities and irrigation for farming. The spring boxes will be of big help in providing potable water that will be readily available for families that may need it especially since they don't have to trek long distances just for water.

"Malaking tulong po talaga ito para sa amin, lalo na sa panahon ng El Niño at tagtuyot (this is really a big help for us, especially at this time when we are suffering from El Niño)," she says.

With the help of these spring box water systems, Panapit and many others can have a better life.

USAID sponsored the preparation of a water resource inventory, demographic survey, environmental impact review, and the construction supervision and management while Sun Life Foundation financed it by providing cement and steel bars. Residents also did their part by providing gravel and sand, plus their time and labor to build the spring boxes.

To add to the spring boxes, Sun Life Foundation also planted 15,169 mango, citrus and cacao seedlings for the area's agro forestry requirements. This will enable crops and trees to coexist in an environment that will provide water recharge, minimize erosion and increase land productivity. This is an attempt to restore Isabela's Abuan watershed – a once-lush forest which has been converted to corn and rice farming.

Agro forestry is the managing of lands involving the growing of trees while surrounding the crops. This practice has improved the 69.45 hectares of desolate grassland since 2012. "I now have 180 new mango and 200 Satsuma citrus trees, which can help feed my family for years to come," says project beneficiary Arsenio Caeliong.

This way of reforestation allows the balancing of trees, shrubs and crops that will create more sustainable plots.

Since 2009, WWF, along with its partner institutions, have since helped 466 Isabela farmers plant 70,786 fruit-bearing trees that were chosen to provide incentives for farmers who need it.

Over 150 endemic animal species – from the symbolic Philippine eagle to the critically endangered Philippine crocodile, benefits from the vegetation. Its forest provides water for 35,570 hectares of rice fields and corn plots in the city of Ilagan in Isabela.

"Sun Life Foundation champions sustainable solutions in all the advocacies we support. This project is one such initiative," says Sun Life Foundation chairman of the board Riza Mantaring. "We are proud to be WWF-Philippines' partner and we will continue to support

projects that will offer a brighter life to Filipinos for generations to come."

USAID is working with the stakeholders to improve the adaptability of watersheds, farmlands, and other economic sectors in the Abuan Watershed to climate change threats. The Abuan Integrated Watershed Management Project pilots the Department of Science and Technology's smarter agriculture program by refining the capacity of farmers in adapting to climate change. To date, this USAID-supported grant has increased the capacity of nearly 7,000 stakeholders to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

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Editorial

Paghandaan ang La Niña

PAGKATAPOS ng El Niño, ang La Niña naman ang nakaamba sa maraming bahagi ng bansa, ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA). Karaniwan na umanong ang kasunod nang malakas na El Niño ay malakas ding La Niña. Ang malakas na La Niña ay naranasan noong 1999 kung saan walang patlang ang buhos ng ulan. Dahil sa walang tigil na pag-ulan, nagkaroon ng landslide sa Cherry Hills Subdivision sa Antipolo City kung saan 58 tao ang namatay.

Sabi ng PAGASA mararamdaman ang La Niña sa Oktubre at magtatagal hanggang Marso 2017. Ang mga probinsiyang makararanas nang grabeng pag-ulan ay ang Isabela, Quezon, Samar, Leyte, Surigao, Agusan at ang Bicol Region.

Narapat itong paghandaan ng susunod na gobyerno. Tiyak na nagbalikan na naman sa gilid ng estero at ilog ang mga squatters na inilikas noon. Sa kasagsagan ng mga pagbaha sa nakaraang taon, maraming nakatira sa mga tabing estero ang inilipat ng Aquino administration sa mga lupang binili ng gobyerno. Binigyan pa sila ng perang pambili ng mga gamit sa pagtatayo ng bahay pero makaraan lamang ang ilang buwan, muli na namang nagbabalikan sa gilid ng estero. Muli na namang nagtayo ng barung-barong at nagkumpul-kumpol na naman. Hindi na nabantayan kaya dumami na naman. Delikado na naman ang kalagayan sa paparating na pagbabaha. Nanganganib na naman ang buhay nila sa paglaki ng tubig.

Ang problemang ito ang kinakaharap nang paparating na Duterte administration. Sila ang magmamana ng problemang iniwan ng papaalis na administrasyon.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rainy season approaching – PAGASA

By ELLALYN B. DE VERA

More frequent afternoon or early evening rains and thunderstorms indicate that rainy season in the country is approaching, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said yesterday.

According to Anthony Lucero, OIC of the PAGASA's Climate Impact Monitoring and Prediction Section, the rainy season will likely commence between late May and mid-June.

"We are expecting a normal onset of the rainy season because El Niño is already in its declining stage," Lucero said, noting that the country experienced a delay in the onset of rainy season last year due to the prevailing El Niño phenomenon.

He, however, explained that the current El Niño may have a lingering effect that could last until August. This will be manifested by fewer number of tropical cyclones entering the country's area of responsibility.

Rains, winds and thunderstorms were felt in Metro Manila and nearby areas the past days and these occurrences usually lasted about one to two hours.

Today, the tail-end of a cold front will continue to affect extreme Northern Luzon, while the intertropical convergence zone will affect Southern Mindanao.

Cloudy skies with light to moderate rains and isolated thunderstorms will be felt over Batanes, Calayan and Babuyan Islands, Zamboanga Peninsula, Soccsargen, and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

War and peace and water

WASHINGTON, DC—India is currently facing its worst water crisis in years, with an estimated 330 million people—one-quarter of its population—affected by severe drought. Ethiopia is also dealing with its worst drought in decades, which has already contributed to the failure of many crops, creating food shortages that now affect around a tenth of the population. Under such circumstances, the risk of tension over resources is high.

In the past, droughts of this severity have led to conflict and even wars between neighboring communities and states. One of the first in recorded history erupted around 4,500 years ago, when the city-state of Lagash—nestled between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern-day Iraq—diverted water from its neighbor, Umma. Competition for water sparked violent incidents in ancient China and fueled political instability in Pharaonic Egypt.

Today, actual wars between countries over water resources are uncommon, owing to improved dialogue and cross-border cooperation. But, within countries, competition for scarce water is becoming a more common source of instability and conflict, especially as climate change increases the severity and frequency of extreme weather events. As we detail in the new World Bank Group report, “High and Dry: Climate Change, Water and the Economy,” limited and erratic water availability reduces economic growth, induces migration, and ignites civil conflict, which fuels further potentially destabilizing migration.

This cycle has been apparent in some regions for decades. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, periods of low rainfall over the last 20 years have often been followed by spikes in violence, civil wars, and regime change. And in

COMMENTARY

Laura Tuck



many parts of rural Africa and India, a decline in rainfall has acted as a “push factor” for internal or cross-border migration to more water-abundant places, often cities, creating new social pressures as the numbers of displaced people grow.

In our report, we predict that water scarcity could act as a conflict-risk multiplier, fueling cycles of resource-driven conflict, violence and displacement, especially in already water-stressed regions, such as the Middle East and the Sahel in Africa, where agriculture remains an important source of employment.

Fortunately, there is a way to avoid the cycle of poverty, deprivation and conflict. If countries take action now to implement effective water-management policies and practices, backed by well-designed incentives, they can not only reverse the slide toward water scarcity but also raise their rates of economic growth by as much as 6 percentage points per year.

One water-scarce country that has taken action to improve its resilience to climate change is Morocco. In years of low rainfall, Morocco’s river-basin authorities give the lowest priority to crop irrigation, the largest consumer of the country’s water. But, of course, agriculture remains critical to feed the population. So the government has been investing in modernizing irrigation infrastructure to provide farmers with more efficient water services that enable

them to adjust more easily to variations in water availability.

The Moroccan authorities are also working to improve groundwater governance, to avoid overextraction. Farmers engaged in rain-fed agriculture receive support that helps them to make better use of rainfall—such as through the introduction of climate-resilient practices like direct seeding—resulting in higher yields than traditional practices produce during dry years.

The message from Morocco—and from our report—is that, with smart water policies and interventions, countries can ensure a climate-resilient, water-secure future. At the core of effective water-management strategies will be improved planning for water-resource allocation, the adoption of incentives to increase efficiency, investment in infrastructure for improved water security, and better urban planning, risk management, and citizen engagement. The recently created International High-level Panel on Water, comprising 10 heads of state, will be promoting precisely this agenda to foster better water management globally.

Of course, not every country will follow the same path in safeguarding a water-secure future. But, as countries develop their strategies, they can look to one another for ideas and insights into what works—and what doesn’t. With strong and prudent action, governments around the world can cope effectively with the natural limitations and uncertainties affecting water resources, ensuring that their people and economies are prepared for what might lie ahead.

Project Syndicate

Laura Tuck is the World Bank Group vice president for sustainable development.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

MAKE A MERITOCRACY

THE elections were a chance for the people of the Philippines to appoint someone they could relate to, a guy who came across as a regular Juan de la Cruz like themselves, and who they thought would bring about the kind of change that would benefit them.

Rodrigo Duterte has proven himself a capable administrator of his bailiwick, Davao City. Everyone I've spoken to who is from Mindanao, people coming from all across the demographic, say that he's made Davao a safe and vibrant city. His influence, some Mindanaoans say, even extend to nearby areas such as General Santos City and South Cotabato, and beyond.

So Duterte won by a landslide, in an election that saw the highest voter turnout in 12 years. "Change is coming!" But has it?

The Duterte team initially bared plans to appoint a "Trudeau"-style Cabinet, thought by many to mean progressive, meritocratic, and egalitarian, especially with regard to gender. Half of Trudeau's team are women. So the actual list of new cab-secs was a disappointment: all are male. The only woman named so far is Andrea Domingo to Pagcor, and that's not a line agency, that's a GOCC. Plus the selection of Las Piñas representative Mark Villar to DPWH is controversial.

So what's new? The people rejected the previous administration's patronage politics—let's hope this is not another reiteration.

The only area so far where drastic change really occurred, or will occur, is Duterte's offer of four departments to the Communist Party of the Philippines—Environment and Natural Resources, Social Welfare and Development, Labor and Employment, and



Agrarian Reform. These departments are connected to precisely the issues the CPP has been struggling for years to resolve.

This announcement alarmed a great many people, which is no surprise because government demonized the communists for decades, and the CPP hasn't helped their own cause any by continuing their armed struggle.

But there are those who point out that the inclusion of the communists in government could be a good thing.

Former Environment Secretary Mike Defensor said last May 16 in a much-shared Facebook post that many who "continued the path of activism and became part of the communist movement" are "now professionals who in their own small way contribute in [sic] the social transformation of our country."

He himself, he said, was a member of the Kabataang Makabayan (youth arm of the CPP), and went on to name some prominent personalities who were, or are, also "part of the Communist Party which may be unknown to many."

"My point in writing this," he said, "is to inform my friends that the Communist Party is not a shadowy organization out to kill and conquer our nation but a group of individuals who sincerely want change for the betterment of this country... Do not be scared of the CPP entering the Cabinet. This may be the step towards finally ending a decades-old war..."

This appointment of communists to the Cabinet is actually less disappointing than some

other choices made so far, and the shape of the proposed Cabinet as a whole.

It is not too late for the Duterte administration to bring the change they promised by making their government a meritocracy, rather than the usual payback time for supporters.

To Team Du30: put the best and most qualified people to work to eradicate corruption in government and deliver basic services. Ban the sycophants and the turncoats. Don't be misled by glad-handing extroverts who foist off the real work on the industrious introverts in the background. Find the overlooked toilers who actually get things done—they're the ones who the people need, and not the experts in self-promotion or public relations looking out for themselves.

In the end, it should come down to who can do the job right and on time. Hopefully the incoming administration realizes this and makes the right decisions, for the sake of the long-suffering Filipino masses who put them in power in the first place.

The National Book Development Board recently announced the categories for the NBDB Trust Fund 2016, which gives grants for the development of manuscripts in certain areas of Philippines knowledge where the materials are few or non-existent. The three categories open this year are Mother Tongue, Senior High School, and Intellectual Property Rights. The deadline for Mother Tongue manuscripts is July 31, and for the other two categories, Sept. 30. Visit nbdb.gov.ph for details, or call (02)929-3887 or email oed@nbdb.gov.ph.

Facebook: Jenny Ortuste, Twitter: @jennyortuste, Instagram: @jens-december

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

A clean Philippines

IT'S HARD to go beyond discussing Rodrigo Duterte because, really, what else is there? The subject must consume our interest because it will consume our lives over the next six years. (And, yes, Mr. Ferdinand Marcos Jr., it will be six years. There is no "Plan B" or any other wild idea. And in regard to the VP race, I hope whoever loses has as much love for the Philippines as Mar Roxas does. He said: "It's not about me. It's not about anyone. It's about how we love our country and how we'll do all that we can for her." The loser should not drag out the decision, but just accept it graciously.)

Today I'm going to suggest a few things that presumptive President-elect Duterte might want to do. The people voted for him because he promised what this administration didn't give: action. It was change they wanted; the straight path (*daang matuwid*) was but a rutted dirt road. They want a cemented one, built fast. But fast wasn't in this administration's vocabulary.

Expectations are high, but so is the level of fear. No one quite knows what to expect from this enigma of a man. A man who came from nowhere to become the leader of 100 million people. What will he do? Are his threats and outrageous comments just comments? Or is it really the way he is going to direct the country?

If I were an optimist I'd say, as his supporters have, that it's all just winning talk. He'll be different. A pessimist would fear the return to Marcosian dictatorship. Well, I'm neither an optimist nor a pessimist. As an engineer, I'm a realist. The glass isn't half-full or half-empty; it's too big. Disciplining buses on Edsa or restricting them to curbside lanes won't solve the problem, as optimists might hope. Taking half of them off the road and paying drivers a fixed salary will.

President Duterte needs to start with some quick actions that have immediate and noticeable impact so that people come quickly on board. They can say, "Wow, this is a man who gets things done." Longer term support then follows.

President Aquino's "no *wangwang*" policy had that effect. But he didn't go beyond it, so it remained an isolated, out-of-the-box change. I be-

LIKE IT IS

Peter Wallace



lieve Duterte is going to be very out-of-the-box, sometimes—and it may be cause for worry—on things about which we may not be too happy. For instance, I don't believe in a liquor ban or in any other ban unless really, really necessary. Bans only encourage violation and crime.

There are things I'd do immediately that would really make people sit up and take notice: Declare a clean Philippines, rice at half price, and free-flowing traffic in Manila.

Puerto Princesa is a clean city. It is because there are rubbish bins everywhere and littering is penalized. The bins aren't stolen because there are holes in them (you can't take them home for storing rice or water), and the penalty for theft is high. President Duterte can order it nationwide. He did at his *miting de avance* in Luneta, and several hundred thousand people took their trash with them. Those at the rallies of others, or at the polling stations, didn't, because there was nowhere in which to put the trash. And people are careless of their trash.

So, bins. Let the private sector provide them so none of the nonsense of public bidding, lower bidder (a subject I'll discuss one day), etc. Corporations can do it as a public service and, in return, be allowed to advertise on the bins.

I'd also require the beneficiaries of the conditional cash transfer program to devote a day a week to cleaning their environs as payment for the handout. Then establish awards (Filipinos love awards) for the cleanest city, the most beautiful city, overall cleanest and most beautiful. Let's have a clean Philippines.

As to rice, I mentioned this in my column on

Nov. 12, 2015 ("Give the consumer a break"). Unbelievably (does no one want cheaper rice?) there was no reaction. A well-researched PID (Philippine Institute for Development Studies) report determined that if rice were traded on an open market, it would, like other products openly marketed, result in lower prices as competition and source selection flourish. The study concluded that if the National Food Authority were taken out of the trade and control of rice and tariffs were removed, the price of regular milled rice would fall from P33.08 per kilogram to P19.80/kg. I venture to say that 100 million Filipinos would be very happy about that.

The negative side is that it would make life even more difficult for the 2.4 million rice-growers. But would it? It wouldn't if they were assisted to shift to other, higher-value crops, and if they were provided with the water, the seeds, the tools and the techniques that rice farmers in Vietnam and Thailand use. The soil and climate are much the same, so the differences are man-determined. And so, man can fix them.

The thing is it can be done if the will is there.

There's a third thing I'd do for Manila, and that's get traffic moving. It can be done by implementing the one word that defines Duterte: discipline. Buses and jeepneys stopping only at designated stops and close to the curb. Malls and schools with off-street parking, pickup and drop-off areas. Intersections kept clear. Traffic aides trained in ensuring rapid traffic flow. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority given full authority (which local mayors will agree to cede) over traffic movement on all roads. There's much, much more that's beyond this column, but has been well detailed by Eddie Yap of the Management Association of the Philippines and others (myself, too, in my column on July 9, 2015, "Get Angry"). If can be done. Discipline.

A clean Philippines, cheap rice, traffic moving. Awake to a new day. With a new President.

E-mail: wallace_likeitis@wbfb.ph. Read my previous columns: www.wallacebusinessforum.com.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2016

OPINION

When local governments take charge

I OFTEN tell the story about the time I led a study team in a visit to Barangay Loperop up in the hills of Jose Dalman in Zamboanga del Norte. Having been in government once upon a time, I like to ask simple folk a simple question in those situations: "What is the one thing you would ask from government if you had the chance?" I took aside a farmer and asked that question. His answer: carabaos. "We need carabaos so we can till our land," he explained, pointing to the wide areas of land around us, cultivable yet idle.

"So what do you actually get from government?" I pushed on. "Fertilizers and hybrid seeds," the farmer said. "So what do you do with them?" I asked. "We take them anyway, and try to sell them," he said. I turned to the municipal agricultural extension officer, who was with us, and asked why she had not informed agriculture officials of the actual needs of their communities. "But we do tell them, time and time again," she insisted. "All these programs come to us from Manila, and it seems nothing we tell them could change their thinking out there."

And that is what happens when one-size-fits-all fixes are hatched at the top, without regard for actual needs at the bottom.

One hopes that such traditional top-down management of agriculture would change under the incoming administration of Rodrigo Duterte. Some may be disappointed with his designation of yet another politician, former North Cotabato gov. Emmanuel "Manny" Piñol, to head the Department of Agriculture. But with Piñol's background as local chief executive, we may yet see the DA finally letting local government units do the "rowing," and limiting its leadership to "steering" the sector, something for which I have long pushed. And that is because I have seen many LGUs do the DA's work better.

In 2005, Tuguegarao City won the Galing Pook award for its own Agricultural and Fishery Modernization Program. Then Mayor Randolph S. Ting noted years earlier that of nearly 11,000 households in his city, 6,132 depended on farming and fishing for survival. Annual farm harvest and farmers' incomes were declining, and Tuguegarao in-

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito



creasingly relied on neighboring towns for food and other produce. The city government decided to offer its farmers a complete package of support, including assistance with irrigation, improved seeds, fertilizers, a farm machinery pool, and other needs. Two croppings a year became possible when there used to be only one, with some farmlands getting five croppings in two years. With improved productivity, farm families saw average monthly incomes rise dramatically from P1,000 to P7,000.

Negros Oriental, through then Gov. George P. Arnaiz, embarked on a program called Barangay Agricultural Development Centers (BADC) in 1997. The province had been faced with food shortage and insufficient supply of fresh fish protein. With agriculture and fisheries confined in the lowlands, upland dwellers lived in poverty.

The provincial government embarked on a process of empowerment involving social preparation of beneficiaries to enable them to analyze the conditions of their own community, identify problems and solutions, and participate in development activities, such as project planning and implementation. The BADC provided a venue for convergence of resources and services from various government agencies. It also served as training center for agriculture and fishery development, with the notable feature of farmer-to-farmer mentoring on integrated pest management, organic farming, vermi-composting, contour farming, and natural farming systems. Women were likewise actively involved in training focused on values education, leadership, management skills and community participatory

planning process. From only seven pilot sites in 1998, the program had 74 sites by the time it won the Galing Pook award in 2004. Average annual production of rice multiplied from 900 to 6,648 metric tons; from 1,900 to 11,311 MT for corn; and from 803 to 1,800 MT for vegetables. National Statistics Office data showed average annual farm household incomes in the province to have risen to P90,459 in 2000 from P71,524 in 1997.

The city government of Puerto Princesa in the 1990s saw *kaingin* (slash-and-burn farming) taking a heavy toll on its lush forests. When Mayor Edward Hagedorn began to strictly enforce the Anti-Kaingin Law, people clamored for an alternative and sustainable agricultural system. The city government established the Carabao and Tractor Pool in response. Farmers had to group themselves into five or more members to avail themselves of the services of a carabao or tractor. When their turn came, they helped one another in plowing and harrowing their respective fields, in the traditional *bayanihan* spirit whereby they learned to plan, pool resources and work together.

No payment was charged for the use of the tractor and carabaos, but farmers had to plant at least 100 permanent trees in their lands or in areas identified for communal reforestation. White corn production areas significantly expanded from less than 25 hectares in 1992 to 160 hectares in 1996, and yellow corn expanded from 75 to 450 hectares. Cashew production multiplied from 4,000 to 25,000 MT, while mango grew from less than 1,000 to 24,000 MT. Farmers reduced production costs by 34 percent and reported substantial rise in income. Twinning increased productivity with environment protection and rehabilitation, the project won Puerto Princesa one of several Galing Pook awards that brought it into the award program's Hall of Fame.

Indeed, these and many other similar stories tell me that with the right hand-holding from the DA, agriculture can do better with LGUs taking charge.

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rody won't go after political enemies

By ROBERTZON RAMIREZ and JESS DIAZ

Incoming president Rodrigo Duterte vowed yesterday not to run after his political enemies, but stressed he would ask them to explain certain issues.

Duterte said he would start with Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, from whom he wants an explanation as to why the country has lost control over Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal off Zambales.

"Maybe when I sit as president, I would be asking (some questions). I am not going to prosecute, I am not up to it actually – going after political enemies. But I would just be interested to know why we lost the Scarborough Shoal," Duterte said in a late night live interview over GMA-7's *Saksi*

on Tuesday.

Trillanes lost in the recent vice presidential race. The senator left for Hawaii last Tuesday. A source said Trillanes was on a business trip.

Duterte earlier said Trillanes may have committed treason when he engaged Chinese officials in talks over the South China Sea and West Philippine Sea issue.

Trillanes was a critic of Duterte during the 90-day campaign period.

The senator said Duterte could face impeachment for making remarks that the Philippines has lost its claim to Panatag Shoal.

"Just to inform Mayor Duterte, there is no reclamation in Panatag and I have

our national security officials on record during two Senate hearings that we have not lost Panatag, contrary to some unfounded media reports," Trillanes said.

He said President Aquino had appointed him backchannel negotiator to help ease tensions with China in 2012 following a standoff between the Philippine Navy and Chinese vessels in the resource-rich Panatag Shoal, which is also called Bajo de Masinloc.

But Duterte stood firm that he would press Trillanes to explain why the country lost a territory to China.

"It is not a matter of territorial issues, but it is an issue of an exclusive economic zone...

that would be according to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), that is our economic zone," he said.

"Now, if you put something there, if there is a garrison, there is an obstruction in the waters then it diminishes your interest, economic zone and therefore, in a way you are violating the UNCLOS and also you (also) impeded the freedom of navigation," he said.

Asked about his stand on the country's maritime spat with China, Duterte said he is willing to hold bilateral talks with Beijing or enter into a joint exploration agreement with the Asian power. He

also made clear he supports the country's arbitration case before the Permanent Court of Arbitration based in The Hague.

China has refused to participate in proceedings in the arbitral court, insisting it has sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea.

Per policy basis

Meanwhile, senatorial aspirant and former justice secretary Leila de Lima said she would not give "blanket support" to Duterte, whom she had criticized for alleged human rights violations. "My support for him will be on a per-policy basis," she told ABS-CBN News Channel.

She said among the incom-

ing administration's policy initiatives she would support are the resumption of peace talks and the continuation of the Aquino administration's programs like the conditional cash transfer.

She said she would oppose Duterte's proposal for the reimposition of the death penalty.

"There is no empirical data to support the claim that the death penalty deters crime," she said.

De Lima said she fears that if capital punishment were restored, "poor and innocent people would be put to death because they have no access to good lawyers and our justice system is imperfect."

– With Rudy Santos

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Coal dust risk to Great Barrier Reef

SYDNEY – A study released on Tuesday has found that a high concentration of coal dust can quickly kill coral on Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

The research by the Australian Institute of Marine Science discovered coal dust could also slow the growth rate of seagrasses and fish.

"Corals exposed to the highest concentrations of coal dust died within two weeks," author Kathryn Berry said.

"Corals exposed to lower concentrations of coal lasted longer, but most of them also died after four weeks of exposure."

She noted that while some fish and seagrass died from coal dust exposure, it mostly stunted their growth by half compared to clean water.

The study found coal dust entered the marine environment at loading and storage facilities, or when it is blown into the sea during transport.

Researches also noted a shipping disaster as a possible risk to the reef.

"Risks to the Great Barrier Reef posed by large coal spills depend on the probability of an accident and the potential impacts to marine life," author Andrew Negri said.

"While the likelihood of a major spill on a coral reef or seagrass meadow is low, we are now beginning to understand the likely consequences."

Researchers hope the results will send a message to coal shipping companies in Australia and across the world. (PNA/Xinhua)

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

EDITORIAL

'Woefully unprepared'

After destructive storm surges and torrential flooding in recent years, people in coastal communities have become aware of the risks posed by extreme weather disturbances attributed to global warming. There is also heightened public awareness of the need to make coastal areas resilient to disaster. In the areas devastated by Super Typhoon Yolanda, building back better became a catch phrase.

Yet despite awareness of the risks, a recent study showed that cities around the globe including Metro Manila remain "woefully unprepared" for disasters. The study conducted by the World Bank showed a weakness or failure in planning for extreme weather and other calamities.

Experts have stressed that building resiliency is possible. There are measures that can be quickly implemented, such as ensuring that drainage canals are kept clear of obstructions. The World Bank study notes that stopping the construction of homes or buildings on floodplains in Manila can ease the severe flooding that has become a regular scourge in the National Capital Region and surrounding areas.

The study also suggests planning

for more green space as well as construction of residences and schools above flood-prone zones. Another proposal is to curb the extraction of groundwater – a major reason for the gradual sinking of several coastal cities. In Metro Manila, the expansion of piped water distribution service has drastically reduced the extraction of water from the ground through pumps particularly in southern communities. But groundwater extraction has not been completely stopped.

Other studies in previous years have shown the lack of preparedness in Metro Manila to cope with disaster in case of a powerful movement along a major earthquake fault that cuts through the mega city from Marikina to Laguna and Cavite.

There are urban planners with sufficient knowledge about building for disaster resilience. The World Bank and other development agencies also have experts who can provide advice, while several countries are also prepared to share their experiences in building disaster-resilient infrastructure. The incoming administration must get serious about building resilience into vulnerable cities and other coastal communities.