

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 22 MAY 2016

DAY : Sunday

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

# The Manila Times

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

## Writ of Kalikasan filed against Zambales execs, mining firms

BY PATRICK ROXAS  
CORRESPONDENT

**S**ANTA CRUZ, Zambales: Anti-mining advocate Concerned Citizens of Sta. Cruz (CCOS) and residents of Infanta, Pangasinan filed before the Supreme Court (SC) a writ of *kalikasan* against the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), local officials of Zambales and five mining firms to put an end to what they claim as destructive mining operations in the province.

The petitioners asked the SC to issue a temporary environmental protection order (TEPO) and direct the mining firms, the provincial government of Zambales and the municipality of Sta. Cruz to immediately take steps to stop the contamination of farms, villages and water sources of Sta. Cruz resulting from their unsystematic mining operations; and for the local Philippine National Police to enforce environmental laws, including apprehension of violators, among others.

Respondents in the case filed on Friday were DENR Secretary Ramon Paje; outgoing Zambales Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.; Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) director Leo Jasareno; former acting Region 3 MGB director Danilo Uykieng; MGB-Region 3 OIC Lope Carino, Jr.; Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) director Juan Miguel Cuna; EMB-Region 3 director

(BNMI); Eramen Minerals, Inc (EMI); LnL Archipelago Minerals, Inc. (LAMI); Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. (ZDMC) and Shangfil Mining and Trading Corp.

CCOS chairman Dr. Ben Molino and his co-petitioners said that the continued operations of the mining companies in Santa Cruz town violate RA 7942, otherwise known as the Mining Act of 1995 and its implementing rules and regulations.

They lamented that the continued operation of the mining companies is causing much destruction in the mountains, watershed, forests, farmlands, water systems and livelihood of all residents and posing a continued threat to their lives.

They cited in their petition the destructive impact of a number of typhoons in the past few years resulting from unsystematic mining operations in the town.

They said the public respon-

Lormelyn Claudio; and outgoing Santa Cruz municipal Mayor Consolacion Marty.

Also included in the complaint were MGB Multipartite Monitoring Team head Lauro Garcia Jr.; EMB-3 former Multipartite Monitoring Team head Dennis Celestial; Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO)-Zambales OIC Laudemir Salac; Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) Zambales OIC Raymond Rivera; members of the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Zambales*; incoming Santa Cruz mayor Luisito Marty, under whose term mining operations started in the town; members of the *Sangguniang Bayan ng Sta. Cruz*; and Chief Insp. Orlando Reyes, Sta. Cruz Police Station chief.

Likewise included as respondents are officers and directors of Benguet Nickel Mines, Inc.

dents named have been remiss in their duties in implementing existing environmental laws and regulations.

The CCOS urged the high tribunal to render judgment against all respondents, granting the privilege of the writ of *kalikasan* and writ of continuing mandamus, commanding relief by compelling the DENR, MGB and EMB to perform their mandates, and to take measures to conserve whatever remains of the farms and villages of Sta. Cruz and Infanta towns where the mining firms operate.

They also specifically asked to make respondent mining firms to rehabilitate the portions of farms, fishponds, water sources and other areas affected by their unsystematic mining operations; and to undertake at their own expense measures to minimize and prevent further contamination of the environment.



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**SOURCE OF LIFE** Healthy seas sustain a rich marine biodiversity. PHOTO FROM WWW.EXPLORER-PHILIPPINES.COM

## Sea rehab key to food security – DENR

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has stressed the urgency on the need to preserve healthy and productive oceans with rich marine biodiversity to ensure food security and sustainable development for present and future generations.

"We have to rehabilitate our seas to secure its ability to produce sufficient food supply for the current and future generations. If we lose them, we will lose our supply of food and other needs," Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim of the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) said in a radio interview.

Lim issued the call as the nation celebrates the Month of the Ocean (MOO) this May, with the theme "Biodiversity for Food SeaCUREity," that emphasizes the

importance of marine biodiversity to food security.

According to Lim, the sustainable use of marine resources is essential to ensuring long-term food security and protecting marine biodiversity, which is under severe threat from habitat loss, climate change, ocean acidification, pollution and overexploitation of commercial fisheries.

Aside from the MOO, Lim said the country will also join the rest of the world in celebrating the International Day for Biodiversity (IDBD) on May 22 under the theme "Mainstreaming Biodiversity: Sustaining People and their Livelihoods."

This year's IDBD theme, she said, aims to inform the public on the relevance of biodiversity in sustaining people and livelihoods.

The BMB head pointed out that linking biodiversity and livelihood will "greatly impact people because it equates to investing in their lives."

"Our oceans are part of ecosystems diversity together with forests, islands and seas which include mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs and mud flats. All these should be cared for because they have their own vital functions and roles in the development of the agriculture and fisheries sectors and other marine-based livelihood", she said.

Lim, meanwhile, called attention to unsustainable fishing methods and uncontrollable garbage disposal in the seas, which she said should be stopped to prevent further damage to coral reefs and marine life.

She also reminded fishermen to be more concerned about the long-term effects of illegal fishing methods.

Although the country celebrates MOO and IDBD only in the month of May, Lim said the attention and concern for marine resources should be a year-round responsibility.

"As an archipelagic country, the protection of our marine resources or marine biodiversity should be a primary concern," she said.

The Philippines is the fifth among the 17 megadiverse countries in the world declared by Conservation International in 1998. Its terrestrial and marine ecosystems are habitats for different birds, sea creatures, plants and other animals.

**JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ**



THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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### Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park's potentials trumpeted

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT**

TACLOBAN CITY, Leyte — The Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park (MVNP) located along the boundary of Burauen, La Paz and MacArthur towns in the province is being trumpeted as another tourism attraction which the province could very well promote.

Governor Leopoldo Dominico L. Petilla told local media that the number of tourists, both domestic and foreign, visiting the MVNP has been observed every year. He said last year, over 5,000 tourist visitors to the area were documented.

Petilla said tht it is expected that more tourists will visit the park upon completion of the concreting of the road leading to the MVNP later this year.

Leonardo R. Sibbaluca, Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Eastern Visayas (DENR-8) said the tourism potentials of the MVNP has been spearheaded by his office since the first MVNP Outdoor Festival last Feb. 13, 2016 which was themed "Promoting MVNP ecotourism, conservation, education and ensuring quality life of local communities."

Sibbaluca said the cool environmental conditions of prevailing in the MVNP is more or less comparable to Baguio. He added that Mahagnao Volcano with an elevation of 860 meters or 2,820 feet which is the focal point of the natural park, is classified as a dormant volcano by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS). It last reported eruption was way back in 1865.

The DENR-8 chief added that the forestlands surrounding the park and the verdant landscapes and panoramic scenery are attractive to tourists, particularly those who appreciate and commune with nature. He also said that among the activities that tourists may welcome in the natural park is boating or kayaking at Mahagnao Lake.

Proclamation no. 184 dated August 27, 1937 created the MVNP which has a total area of 635 hectares. Mahagnao Volcano National Park with an area of 635 hectares (1,570 acres). It was later renamed Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)'s National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) by virtue of Proclamation no. 1157 dated February 3, 1998.



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## 1 M seedlings to be planted in Pangasinan

DAGUPAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will plant one million seedlings in Pangasinan to replace trees destroyed in grass and forest fires due to El Niño.

Celso Salazar, community environment and natural resources officer in Dagupan City, said the seedlings would be planted in 1,184 hectares of forestlands in the towns of Labrador, Aguilar, Mangatarem and Bugallon.

Among those to be planted are fruit-bearing and forest trees such as mango, narra, mahogany, molave, *bakawan* and acacia.

Salazar called on the public to join tree-planting activities to be held from June to August.

"Let us develop...love for nature and make our planting serious because we are now facing climate change. There is one solution to that, plant trees," Salazar said.

He also urged the public to report illegal cutting of trees, irresponsible garbage disposal and *kaingin* farming to help protect the environment. – Eva Visperas



# THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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## Environmentalists back possible next DENR chief

A group of environmentalists has expressed support for Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate, who is reportedly being eyed by the administration of incoming president Rodrigo Duterte as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment said Zarate, who is a lawyer

from Davao City, has fought for the rights of displaced farmers, indigenous people and illegally detained political prisoners.

Zarate is reportedly the choice of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) for the top DENR post.

Zarate was lawyering for human rights victims in Mindanao before Bayan Muna

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

nominated him as one of its two representatives in Congress.

He will sit in the incoming 17th Congress as first nominee of Bayan Muna. The party-list group won only one seat in the House of Representatives in the last elections.

Zarate and his six other colleagues in the Makabayan

bloc belong to the minority in the House of Representatives.

During his first term as congressman, Zarate contributed to his party's distinction as among the most productive in terms of number of legislative measures filed and passed.

Among the measures he filed were House Bill 171 or the People's Mining Bill

and House Resolution 787 proposing a moratorium on new coal-fired power plants.

"We witnessed Rep. Zarate in action when he joined us in a mission in 2014 with the Talaingod Manobo communities in the Pantaron mountain range besieged by mining and logging interests and intense militarization. Along with other Bayan Muna members, Zarate has been part of our

protest actions against illegal mining," Clemente Bautista of Kalikasan PNE said.

"We need a DENR secretary who will stand for the people and the environment," he added.

Duterte earlier offered four Cabinet positions, including the DENR portfolio, to the NDFP and Communist Party of the Philippines.

- With Jess Diaz



THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

MORE VITAL THAN EVER

### The Duterte presidency



BY EDGARDO L. ANGARA  
FORMER SENATOR

**A**DUTERTE cabinet is slowly emerging. It's a mix of new and familiar faces. Future Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre, and Press secretary Salvador Panelo are among the new faces. Finance Secretary-to-be Carlos "Sonny" Dominguez, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, and Peace Negotiator Jesus Dureza are known names, having served in government before.

There are surprising names that have been mentioned or floated. Possibly the most controversial is that of Representative Mark Villar whose family is heavily involved almost throughout the islands in land development and subdivisions. The other equally controversial offer is one made to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) chieftain Jose Maria Sison of four sensitive portfolios affecting the economy: Labor and Employment, Social Welfare & Development, Environment & Natural Resources, and Land Reform. Such offer is unexplainably made, even ahead of a peace negotiation.

The presumptive President is reported to have instructed his transition team to form a cabinet similar to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's. The Canadian Cabinet is composed of 30 portfolios. Trudeau appointed an equal number of 15 men and 15 women, including two Canadian aboriginals, two persons-with-disabilities (PWDs) and three Indian Sikhs. The composition represents gender equality and population mix. It's a cabinet, Trudeau said, that looks like Canada—optimistic and positive. He said his government will be based on trust and teamwork. Of course, Duterte's Cabinet is still in the making and one cannot judge whether it will be based on trust and teamwork.

President-to-be Duterte's 8-point economic policy looks promising and hints at a better deal for ordinary Filipinos. The agenda, it is said, includes raising revenues for better infrastructure and social services; improving human capital through better and more accessible education; and enacting tax reforms to keep more money in the pockets of citizens. What it lacks, I believe, is a commitment to substantive and structural change.

It is right to point that the restrictive and rigid provisions on major areas of our economy are self-inflicted wounds to more sustained economic growth. When these economic barriers were effected during the mid-1930s, our Charter's fathers sought to protect our patrimony and economy against foreign encroachment. In the 21st-century, this constitutional wall of key areas in a modern economy is outright archaic and self-destructive.

But we should look beyond the economic obstacles. I believe our boom-and-bust, non-sustainable development springs not so much from economic hurdles but from an infirm political structure.

We have a central government that is highly centralized and rigidly bureaucratic. We have a President who has control over the appropriation and release of public funds, creating an unhealthy situation where every politician is beholden to him for political survival—the so-called Imperial Manila. It's only in the Philippines where a President can make the entire national budget a source of pork barrel and patronage.

Such a parasitic system dictates government's spending priorities. Long-term plans—such as for human capital development and physical infrastructure development—are pursued parochially, rather than programmatically. This unhealthy structure has strangled countryside development and effectively discourages the

effective development of a political party system. The mass migration of politicians belonging to so-called political parties of various colors and stripes to the new President's so-called party is a nauseating political spectacle.

Consequently, there will be no genuine structural change unless we first tackle basic political reform, and improve our economy more sustainably through better politics.

Other golden opportunities for a new government promising change are two crucial areas of a 21st century economy: the environment and information and communications technology.

For one, the environment is critical to the survival of our planet and the human race. Yet its protection is secondary and almost incidental in national discussions. It's quite a scandal for instance that the government portfolio for the exploitation of natural resources and environmental protection fall under the same institution—the DENR. Very few talk about this latent conflict of interest. As a result, our lands and waters continue to be sacrificed in the name of economic development.

Information and communications technology is another area critical to the 21st century. Filipinos may have been identified as among the most active social media users in the world. But while backbone infrastructure remains inadequate and telco services stay expensive, slow and unreliable, the Philippines will remain behind an increasingly Internet-driven world. We cannot expect to leapfrog into the future when communications remains institutionally lumped with transportation.

For genuine and deep change to come, political and economic reform such as those I have suggested above must be initiated and implemented.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### From A Distance

By CARMEN N. PEDROSA

### What other people think of Duterte

Southeast Asian Studies expert Gu Xiaosong foresees about the changes that Duterte (who calls himself a socialist) will do. "He is likely to concentrate on strengthening the business and economic ties of the Philippines with other Southeast Asian countries.



There will be big changes in our relations with China. Unlike the Aquino government, that sounded more American than the Americans, Duterte will cobble a foreign policy that best fulfills his wish to create more jobs and social services. He will deal with China as well as our relations with other countries that we have neglected.

"The average Filipino citizen has not gained much from the six-year presidency of outgoing President Benigno Aquino III, despite the noticeable growth in the country's economy," he said. That is the source of the phenomenal support that Duterte got in the last elections. It may be paradoxical but the new foreign policy at the same time will be more open to foreign investments.

Duterte received "high support rate" from Filipinos, according to Gu, which may translate to the eagerness of the citizens to experience more economic gains. This may trigger the new administration to focus on developing the Philippine economy.

"After the bravado, macho, jet ski statements during the campaign trail, Duterte is a classical realist" – These are the words used by Richard Heydarian, an assistant professor of political science at the De La Salle University in Manila, in describing presumptive President Rodrigo Duterte and believes that the incoming president will be more of a statesman when he assumes office on June 30, 2016. "If you scratch below the surface, you will see that this guy really understands what's happening," Heydarian added.

Not Trump and Lee Kuan Yew but maybe better, Heydarian further stressed. It's wrong to compare Duterte to Donald Trump because unlike the latter, Duterte have held an executive seat for 20 years and transformed Davao City from a dangerous, chaotic place to be the second highest earner in 2015 in terms of GDP and 4th safest city in the world. In Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew was at the helm for 30 years and established an authoritarian government which turned the country to become an economic powerhouse without much resistance from opposing local groups and politicians.

Duterte was a stand out amongst other presidential hopefuls. During the campaign period, the 71-year-old solon hailing from the south, stood out with his hardline approach to criminality promising to suppress crime, illegal drugs and corruption in three to six months.

Ei Sun Oh, a senior fellow at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies of Nanyang Technological University, said, "Duterte may not take a soft stance on the South China Sea issue, but he will definitely be more flexible in terms of territorial disputes with China."

The domestic political climate of the Philippines, as well as the final decision on the arbitration case, suppresses the expected adjustment to the South China Sea policy of the Philippines, according to Li Kaisheng from the Institute of International Relations at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

The associate research fellow also told the *Global Times* that the presumptive Vice President Leni Robredo is a member of the Liberal Party and might disagree with Duterte should he push to make important amendments to the said policy.

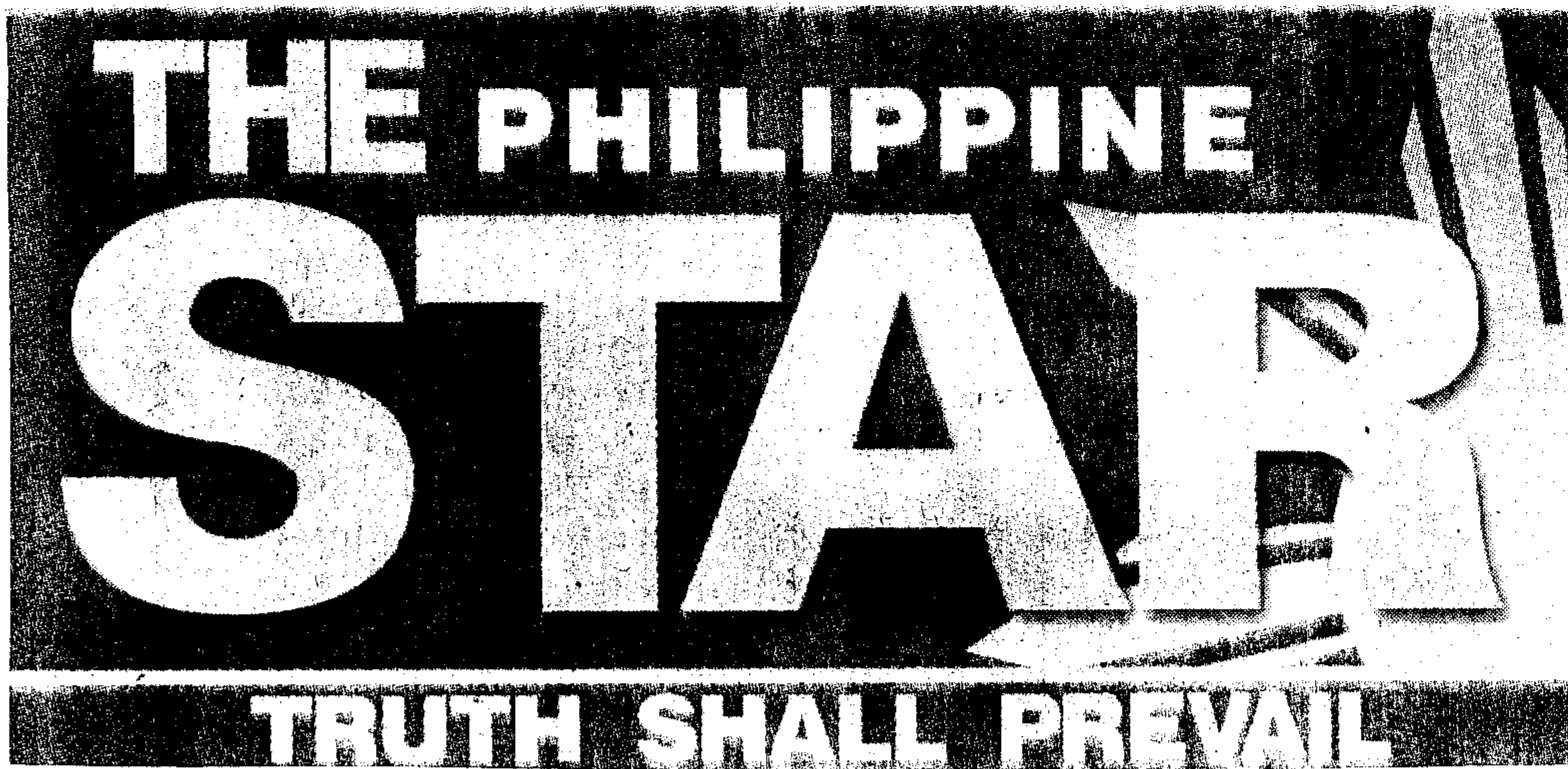
Duterte was congratulated by the Chinese foreign ministry. The ministry also expressed its hopes for the new Philippine president to foster support to the archipelago's bond with China.

The ICAPP bureau include its founding chairman, former Philippine Speaker Jose de Venecia; co-chairman and secretary general Chung Eui-yong of South Korea; vice chairman, Deputy Prime Minister Sok An of Cambodia; and Special Rapporteur, Pakistan senior Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, representing the 23-man Standing Committee from Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, West Asia including the Arab world, Australia, New Zealand and the small Pacific island states.

The Asian political leaders endorsed President-elect Rodrigo Duterte's initiative to put an end to Asia's longest-running communist insurgency, set a prolonged ceasefire and include Cabinet-level communist representatives in the new government and his call for federalism as an instrument to end the Muslim insurgencies, develop Mindanao and the regions, and decentralize the national government.

They said they will ask the leadership of governments in Southeast Asia to support the setting up of joint naval patrols by the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei navies against piracies and radical groups in the Malacca Straits, Sulu Sea and Southeast Asian waters.





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*What other people think of Duterte*

The ICAPP bureau also called for initiatives for negotiated bilateral or multilateral political settlements in the South China Sea, East China Sea, revival of the six-nation Korean talks, a formula for the long-neglected Muslim-Rohingya refugees in Myanmar, new solutions to the bloody Iraq-Syria-Libya crises, and revival of the global Inter-Faith Dialogues at the UN to reduce the bitter Sunni-Shiite Muslim conflicts and the unspeakable violence of radical ISIS extremism.

The tricontinental leaders said they will contribute efforts to mobilize political parties, governments, parliaments, and the private sector in the continuing campaign against poverty, since one percent of the world or some 80 persons are said to own more than 50 percent of the world's wealth, intensify the global effort against climate change and environmental degradation, and the unceasing violent politico-religious extremism.



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PAGTANAW AT PANANAW

PAGKAKAPANALO NI RRD,  
ISANG PHENOMENON

**Bert de Guzman**

**N**OONG 2010, isang alkalde ang nahalal na bice presidente sa bansa. Siya ay si VP Jojo Binay. Ngayong 2016, isang alkalde ang nahalal na presidente. Siya ay si Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte (RRD). Si Binay ay tumanda sa kahihintay na maging pangulo, pero nanatiling malusog at buhay si PNoy sa loob ng anim na taon. 'Di ba't ang VP ay sinasabing "spare tire" o pamalit sakaling magkasakit at maimbalido o mamatay ang pangulo?

Iba ang naging sitwasyon ni President Rody sapagkat siya ay magiging pangulo ng Pilipinas na finalo ang mga kalaban na may mga pambansang katayuan, tulad nina Sen. Grace Poe, ex-DILG Sec. Mar Roxas, VP Binay at Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago. Talagang isang phenomenon ang tagumpay ni RRD sapagkat sa kabila ng kanyang mga kapintasan, pagmumura, pag-aming killer, masasakit na biro, pambababae, siya pa rin ang binoto ng mga Pinoy kaysa mga karibal sa pulitika na itinuturing ang mga sarili na disente. Anyway, nangako naman si Duterte na ngayong siya ang magiging pangulo, siya ay magiging "prim and proper" na.

Handa si presumptive President Rody na bigyan ng apat na posisyon ang kilusang komunista (Communist Party of the Philippines) sa kanyang Gabinete. Ito ay ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Labor, at Department of Social Welfare and Administration.

Inanyayahan din niya si Jose Ma. Sison, founder ng CPP, na umuwi sa bansa at inalok na maging miyembro ng kanyang Gabinete. Si RRD ay naging estudyante ni Joma sa Lyceum of the Philippines.

Determinado ang machong alkalde na ipatupad ang parusang kamatayan sa 'Pinas upang makatulong sa pagsugpo ng krimen sa bansa. Gagawin niyang kakila-kilabot ang pagpapataw ng death sentence sa pamamagitan ng pagbigti sa public places upang masaksihan ng taumbayan. Aatasan din umano niya ang military snipers na barilin ang mga suspected criminal bilang bahagi ng kanyang "ruthless law-and-order crackdown."

Sa presscon sa Davao City, inihayag ni RRD na uutusan niya ang security forces na magsagawa ng "shoot-to-kill order" upang makaramdan ng takot ang mga bulok na elemento ng lipunan. Pagkatapos daw ng kanyang inagurasyon sa Hunyo 30, ilulunsad niya agad ang paglipol sa mga drug pusher, rapist, at smuggler. Ipagbabawal din niya ang pagbebenta ng alak sa pampublikong lugar at magtatakda ng curfew sa mga menor de edad. Gayunman, puwedeng uminom ng

alak sa loob ng bahay. Exempted din sa liquor ban ang mga hotel at tourist areas. Sana ay maipatupad niyang lahat ito ang hindi lalabag sa batas at karapatang-antao ng mga mamamayan!



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### PHL urges developed countries to help vulnerable ones fight climate change

By DELON PORCALLA

The Philippines is asking first-world countries to act with dispatch and provide substantial financial assistance to nations most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, and at the same time help them deal with its adverse effects on nature.

Climate Change Commission vice chairman Secretary Emmanuel De Guzman cited the need for a wide-ranging assistance to enable states most at risk to meet the below 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature goal set under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The Philippines is among countries vulnerable to severe impacts of climate change.

De Guzman said that while countries work to implement their existing and increased Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, "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 said at the opening of the United Nations Bonn Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, held from May 16 to 26.

"Delivering a concrete roadmap on reaching the joint commitment of \$100 billion in additional finance, independent of pre-existing Official Development Assistance commitments, will hasten implementation of concrete country-level adaptation and mitigation actions that will benefit our stakeholders," he said.

Members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum 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, 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.

According to de Guzman, a review on the level of financial flows is important to make it consistent with the goal of achieving the below 1.5 degrees Celsius global warming cap.

"(Our) sister initiative, the V20, is already active in promoting a financial system response consistent with 1.5 degrees Celsius," 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.

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 degrees (Celsius) 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

## Investing in biodiversity is investing in our future

By TITON MITRA

Special to the BUSINESSMIRROR

AS presumptive President Rodrigo R. Duterte's agenda is progressively developed, International Biodiversity Day offers a timely reminder of the importance of effective management of a country's natural wealth.

Few places in the world are as rich in biodiversity as the Philippines: considered as one of 18 mega-biodiverse countries, harboring more diversity of life per hectare than any other country in the world. This immense natural wealth (and it is a remarkable asset) is, however, at significant risk.

Overexploitation and unsustainable practices, encroachment in forested areas, pollution, overfishing, poor land-management practices and natural disasters exacerbated by climate change are contributing significantly to an

alarming rate of biodiversity loss.

So what's at stake? Some 52,000 recorded plant and animal species (the Philippines ranks fifth globally in the number of plant species). A total of 464 reef-building coral species, or nearly half of all known coral species in the world. An estimated 10,000 aquatic species, or approximately one-fifth of all known species globally. In fact, the country's marine waters are seen as the epicenter of marine biodiversity on Earth.

Worryingly, this natural abundance is now on a watch-list of biodiversity hot spots. The Philippines has at least 700 species threatened with extinction. Forest cover has dwindled to a meager 7.2 million hectares, or 24 percent of the country's total land area. Only 2 percent of the coral-reef areas are in excellent condition.

These numbers are not just a concern of aesthetics—of preserv-

ing natural beauty—but are also a critical economic and social issue.

Biodiversity managed effectively can help reduce poverty, preserve livelihoods and traditional lifestyles, and can make a significant contribution to national economic growth. Almost 70 percent of the country's population is dependent on the environment and natural resources for a living.

These resources, if utilized sustainably, can make a remarkable difference to the lives of many Filipinos. Global sales of pharmaceuticals derived from genetic resources accounts for between \$75 billion and \$150 billion.

A study commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme found that the net present sustainable bioprospecting value of the Philippines's forests is approximately \$36 million annually in perpetuity. The goods and services provided by marine-





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Investing in biodiversity is investing in our future

coastal resources of the country are estimated to be over \$556 million annually. And, of course, the correlation between conserving natural beauty and generating significant revenue from tourism is obvious.

If biodiversity management becomes effective, it produces revenue, which, in turn, provides the financing for biodiversity management. If the condition of the biodiversity of ecosystems improved, their contribution to resilience building of communities to the effects of anthropogenic and natural pressures (e.g., climate change) is better, and their ability to provide ecological goods is increased. These are virtuous circles, indeed. So whether it is an economic or social argument or driven by a broader concern to ensure highly diverse areas remain so, it is clear that we must immediately secure

and enhance what is left of these resources. A number of measures can be readily adopted. First, spending on biodiversity has to increase. The current spending of the government for biodiversity conservation is 0.08 percent of the GDP for 2008 to 2013, and that is only 0.31 percent of the national budget.

Second, immediately secure the remaining pockets of biodiversity. For example, there are 1,816 marine-protected areas (MPAs) throughout the Philippines, covering more than 400,000 hectares. The challenge, however, is that only 10 percent to 15 percent of these MPAs have been effective in protecting the resources in them.

Finally, provide the incentives to consolidate and increase research and development (R&D) investment in characterizing the country's genetic pool in biodiversity areas. Fast-tracking

translation of R&D results to commercialization through the private sector will provide not only significant returns on investment but a strong source of revenue for the government.

The repercussions of biodiversity loss are much more expensive than the cost of sustaining, protecting and managing biodiversity. The quantity and quality of water, food, pharmaceuticals, energy—almost everything that sustains life—suffer. We need to move quickly to viewing biodiversity as an investment that can deliver significant economic and social returns. It is possible. It is promising. And it would provide a major contribution to both economic development and poverty reduction in the Philippines.

■ Titon Mitra is the country director of the United Nations Development Programme in the Philippines.



THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900

# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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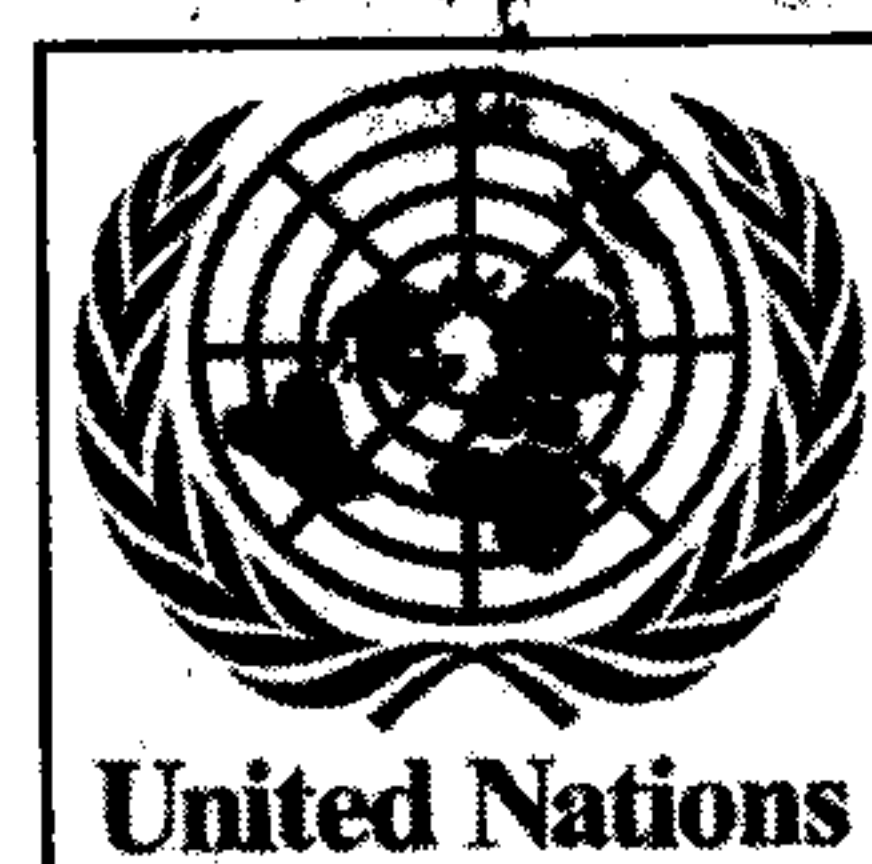
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

INFORMATION

## Biodiversity, sustaining people and livelihoods



**I**NTERNATIONAL Day for Biological Diversity – or biodiversity – is observed every year on May 22. It was adopted by the United Nations (UN) on December 20, 2000, to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues and measures to preserve endangered habitats. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), with 193 member-countries, including the Philippines, leads the global celebration. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau spearheads the activities in the Philippines.

This year's theme, "Mainstreaming Biodiversity; Sustaining People and Their Livelihoods," focuses on biodiversity as foundation for life and for essential services provided by ecosystems, as well as on people's livelihoods and sustainable development in all areas of activity, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and tourism. The 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP 13) in Cancun, Mexico on December 4-17, 2016, will focus on mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors. The critical role of biodiversity in sustainable development is discussed in a Rio+20 outcome document. "The World We Want: A Future for All."

The celebration calls for action to protect biodiversity, which refers to the variety of life on earth, its beauty and abundance, that concerns both sustainability of life in all its forms and health of the ecosystem in which they thrive and grow. Species

of plants, animals, and microorganisms, diversity of genes in these species, various ecosystems on the planet such as deserts, rainforests, and coral reefs are all part of biologically diverse Earth.

Man's well-being is linked with biodiversity; food production, clean air, and safe water depend on it. Biodiversity and ecosystem provide goods and services for human health, including nutrients; regulate pests and vector-based diseases; and mitigate climate change. More than three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity, while over 1.6 billion people rely on forests and non-timber forest products for livelihoods. Habitat degradation and loss of biodiversity directly affect human well-being, poverty reduction and global sustainable development.

The Philippines celebrates the day to inform on the relevance of biodiversity in sustaining people and livelihoods within biodiversity-rich areas. It is one of world's 17 megabiodiverse countries and is home to 80 percent of entire planet's biodiversity. It's over 7,100 islands harbor some of the richest ecosystems and species in the world. It has over 6,000 plant species, over 530 bird species, 165 mammal species, 235 reptile species, nearly 90 amphibian species, more than 280 freshwater species of fish, and rich flora and fauna.

As a party to the Paris Agreement, the country is not only committed to reduce its carbon emissions by 2030, but is adopting measures to empower communities, enhance systems to reduce disaster risks and improve natural ecosystems resilience.



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# BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

## Benham Rise: New ecological frontier

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](#)

*First of two parts*

**S**CIENTISTS from government agencies and the private sector are scheduled to hold next week an interagency oceanographic exploration in the Benham Rise Region (BRR)—the country's newest territory 250 kilometers off Aurora and Isabela provinces—in order to further explore the Benham Bank, and discover its secrets.

Experts and other stakeholders are pooling their resources for the exploration, with the hope of coming up with an informed decision on how to best manage the new Philippine territory, which is bigger than Luzon, Samar and Leyte combined. The shallowest portion of the underground at the Benham Bank is estimated to be 35 meters from the surface. It is believed to be rich in oil, natural gas and other minerals, such as manganese.

This will be the fourth official oceanographic exploration to be conducted in the area, after the territorial claim by the Philippines was approved by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos) in April 2012. The Unclos, an international agreement in which the Philippines is a party, defines the limits of territorial seas of countries where they can exploit marine resources.

The inclusion of the BRR in the country's continental shelf and territory was approved by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of the United Nations on April 12, 2012, including part of the seabed that extends beyond 200 nautical miles from the country's baseline, covering a seabed area of 52,340 square miles. The government hopes to benefit from the massive mineral and gas deposits in the region to achieve complete energy sufficiency.

### Oil and gas

SINCE 2013 various government agencies have been visiting the BRR to explore the territory and possibly exploit its natural wealth. As early as 2014, the Department of Energy (DOE), through its Oil Industry Management Bureau, wanted it explored for oil, excited of its potential economic benefits. The militant group Pambansang Lakas

## 250 km

**The Benham Rise's distance from Aurora and Isabela provinces**

ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya-Pilipinas), meanwhile, welcomed the government's opening of the Benham Rise to fishermen, but warned that any attempt to exploit the rich fishing ground will be met with strong resistance.

"Any attempt to exploit and destroy the abundant waters of Benham Rise, like rampant exploration of oil and gas perpetrated by foreign and local large oil firms, is a big no for the fishers," Salvador France, Pamalakaya vice chairman, told the BUSINESSMIRROR in an e-mail message.

### Commercial fishing

FISHERMEN in Aurora province have been reporting that they were also seeing foreign poachers and fishing fleets, usually owned by Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, roaming around the area.

Pamalakaya criticized the government for neglecting to prevent foreign poachers from exploiting the waters that are supposedly for the Filipino fishermen.

"The government and concerned agencies should block the entry of any foreign-owned fishing fleets to give way to small fishermen and other local fish producers to promote domestic consumption."



# BusinessMirror

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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Benham Rise: New ecological frontier

"We welcome the government's eagerness to open up and explore the abundance of the Benham Rise, but we hope that its real score is not to peddle it to corporate giants who blatantly destroy our natural resources for their profit at the expense of people's

livelihood and environmental degradation," France said.

### Fishing ground

RESEARCH teams from the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) have been visiting the BRR for years as part of their efforts to determine the territory's potential to boost fisheries production.

Being a traditional fishing ground and a spawning area for commercially viable fish, environmental groups see the need to come up with a sustainable management framework for the BRR to give stakeholders strong participation. More than oil, natural gas and other mineral resources, the country's top fishery official sees the BRR as a major fishing ground that needs to be protected.

Preliminary research conducted by scientists as early as 2013 revealed that the Benham Bank is a spawning ground of assorted fish, including the Pacific Bluefin tuna.

"Two weeks ago, our research vessel [MV DA-BFAR] set sail for the Benham Rise. Next week the DA-BFAR team will go back to the area with scientists from UP Marine Science Institute [UP MSI]," Director Asis G. Perez,

head of the DA-BFAR, told the BUSINESSMIRROR in a telephone interview on Tuesday.

### Unexplored

SPEAKING mostly in Filipino, Perez said the vastly unexplored region, with experts managing to get only a glimpse of what the new territory has to offer during previous explorations, has the potential of increasing the country's annual fisheries production.

He said it needed to be further explored to be able to come up with a science-based management framework that will ensure sustainability of fish production, particularly tuna. This week, he said, the plan is to get more valuable information, hopefully, a clearer picture of what needs to be done by the government.

"What we were able to know so far is very little compared to what we need to learn. We will continue our exploration to get a complete picture of the Benham Rise. From there, we will be able to craft a suitable management framework for the benefit of our fishermen," he said in mixed Filipino and English.

### Benefits

AS early as 2013, fish aggregating devices have been put up on the Benham Rise, Perez said.

Fishermen are now enjoying increased productivity by using ropes and biomass like coconut leaves to attract schools of fish, and eventually larger fish with high commercial value, he said.

Schooling or shoaling, the process of attracting small fishes, will attract bigger fish in one area, such as tuna, which demand or domestic consumption and export is huge, will make fishing a breeze, he said.

"So far, we have anecdotal reports that fishermen from Aurora and nearby areas are now benefiting from these fish-aggregating device we have put up," he said.

### Hot spot

ENVIRONMENTALISTS pushing for sustainable management of the Benham Rise also warned that the area is an emerging fisheries hot spot owing to poachers from neighboring countries, unless a more stringent protection mechanism is adopted.

Participants of a multistakeholder forum cosponsored by not-for-profit Oceana Philippines at the University of the Philippines last month resounded the call for its protection and conservation against overfishing and other destructive fishing methods.

For environmental advocates, exploring new ecological frontiers



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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*Benham Rise: New ecological frontier*

within the country's territory offers an opportunity to craft a management framework before losing the natural resources from overexploitation and unbridled development that will potentially harm the network of marine ecosystem in the vast territory, conservation-advocacy group Oceana Philippines Vice President Gloria Estenzo-Ramos told the BUSINESSMIRROR in an interview on Tuesday.

"For us, of course, we see an opportunity of leaning toward ocean conservation. This is a new territory, and there is no management framework yet for the Benham Rise. Exploring the Benham Rise, will help the government and other stakeholders to come up with an idea on how it is best protected," she said.

In May 2014 scientists from the UP MSI were able to reach the bottom of the Benham Bank, the shallowest portion of the Benham Rise, and were able to take photographs and videos of what is beneath its pristine blue waters.

Using a not-so-high-tech gadget, such as a waterproof digital camera, scientists were able to document and record the exciting new discoveries in the Benham Bank, which is now being eyed to be declared as a "no-take zone." ***To be Concluded***



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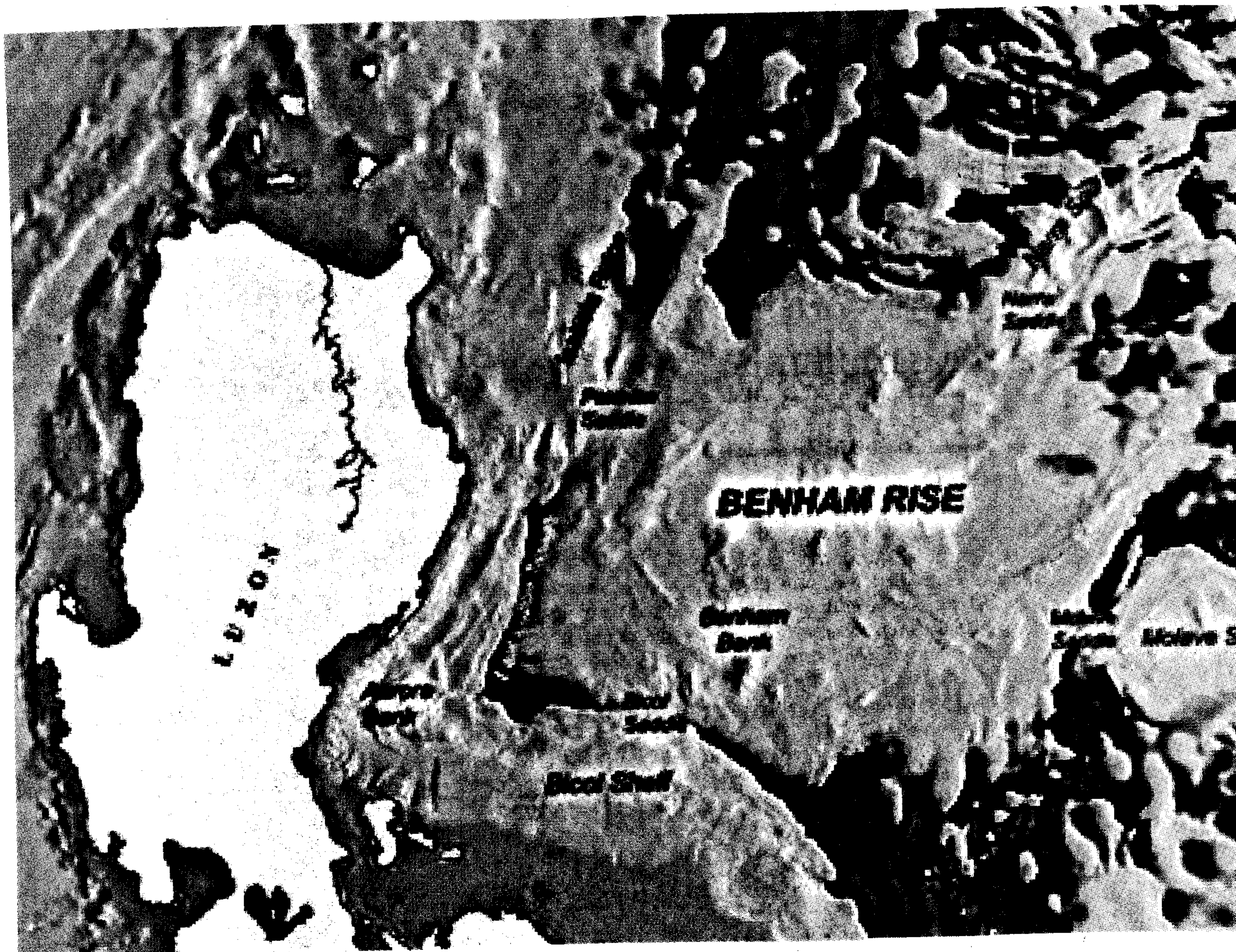
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# BusinessMirror

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Benham Rise:





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Record-breaking heat

**T**HE HEAT is on and, frighteningly, has been all year. Quoting American scientists, The Associated Press reported: "Thanks to a combination of global warming and an El Niño, the planet shattered monthly heat records for an unprecedented 12th straight month, as April smashed the old record by half a degree."

**EDITORIAL** The report went on to say that the monthly climate calculation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) showed that the average global temperature in April was 14.8 degrees Celsius, or 1.1 degrees warmer than the average in the 20th century. This after NOAA declared 2015 the hottest year ever—a distinction that 2016 looks certain to grab.

This year, the Philippines' weather bureau Pagasa recorded the highest temperature ever recorded in the country—52.3 degrees C in Cabanatuan City. As Filipinos baked in the summer heat, it's hardly comforting to know that we are not alone. Earth actually experienced the hottest April on record, with peak temperatures recorded in Africa, South America and Asia. In fact, almost every month saw a new record for warmest ever. "...[S]o many [records] in a row that break the previous records by so much indicates that we're entering uncharted climatic territory [for modern human society]," Texas A&M University climate scientist Andrew Dessler told AP.

There can be no denying the reality of climate change now. "Today you are signing a new covenant with the future," United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon told the 170 world leaders who signed in April the landmark Paris Agreement. He warned: "We are in a race against time."

The Paris Agreement originally intended to keep the rise in global temperature under 2 degrees C through a reduction of greenhouse gases. It requires ratification by 55 countries responsible for 55 percent of the total greenhouse gases, with a target implementation date of 2020. The temperature threshold has since been moved from 2 degrees to 1.5 degrees C.

Climate studies have shown that a rise in global temperature by 2 degrees C would lead to the submersion of land where today 280 million people live, including parts of Mumbai, New York and Shanghai, and overwhelm island-nations such as Fiji, Kiribati and Tuvalu.

Climate activist and former US vice president Al Gore dis-

cussed the all-important figures when he visited the Philippines in March. He said: "I am so happy that the 2-degree goal was modified with the reference to 1.5 [degrees]. One way to think about this is this: We have already seen an increase in just about 1 degree, and the north polar ice caps are melting rapidly, the land-based size of Greenland and Antarctica is beginning to melt much more rapidly, sea level is rising. We are getting closer to the danger zone with the melting of the arctic permafrost that could release a lot of methane emissions that are even more dangerous than carbon dioxide."

Gore also warned about the effects of climate change on vulnerable countries such as the Philippines, as seen in the devastation wrought by Typhoon "Yolanda" in 2013. He said these superstorms were "likely to come stronger with the continued warming of the oceans."

The warnings become more urgent as the weather gets worse. That everyone needs to do their part to curb the spike in global temperatures is spelled out in a Project Syndicate commentary by Sen. Loren Legarda and Rep. Marcela Guerrero of the Philippines and Costa Rica, two of the 43 countries that make up the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

"The goal is an ambitious one. But vulnerable developing countries are committed to helping achieve it," Legarda and Guerrero wrote of the Paris Agreement. "Such initiatives are more commonly associated with advanced economies than with developing countries. And the rich world does have a moral obligation to move first and faster—with policies, technologies, and finance—to reduce the emissions that cause global warming. But we also recognize that developing countries have a responsibility to act and that doing so can generate immense economic, social, and public health advantages for their citizens."

The two lawmakers emphasized how, for vulnerable countries, the battle against climate change is a battle for survival. "We cannot succeed on our own; this much is certain. The Climate Vulnerable Forum represents a tiny share of global emissions. We need the industrialized countries and the giants of the developing world to redouble their efforts to reduce their emissions, so that global warming can be limited to 1.5 degrees. Only then can disaster be averted."

Indeed, everyone must pull together. It's later than we think.



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**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

## EL NIÑO MAY LINGER AT START OF LA NIÑA

ALTHOUGH the El Niño dry spell phenomenon is weakening, a climate specialist said it might still persist even with the onset of the La Niña which is expected to emerge in the third quarter.

Joseph Basconcillo, a climate specialist at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, said El Niño was on the decline as normal weather conditions might be experienced during the May-June-July season.

"El Niño is in decaying stage," Basconcillo said, summing up the global advisory from the International Research Institute at Columbia University, the Bureau of Meteorology in Australia, the Tokyo Climate Center in Japan and the Apec Climate Center in South Korea.

"With this current state, La Niña Watch is now in effect. A La Niña event is characterized by a persis-

tent cooler than average sea surface temperature anomalies [below -0.5 degrees Celsius] over the tropical Pacific," he said.

Basconcillo said Pagasa predicted that there would be more rains from the month of May up to July as local thunderstorms, inter-tropical convergence zone, lower pressure areas, tropical cyclones and other factors would be coming in.

Pagasa also expected tropical cyclones, ITCZ and LPAs in the August-September season, he said.

In spite of the prospect of heavy rains in the later part of the year, Basconcillo said, the traces of El Niño would still be felt in the next few months from now.

"El Niño will still have a lingering effect," he told reporters and government and nongovernment representatives during a forum on El Niño and La Niña in Cagayan de Oro on Friday. **PNA**



# THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### El Niño felt until yearend – Pagasa

By GERRY LEE GORIT

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – The El Niño phenomenon marked by the unusually long dry spell will still be felt until the last quarter of the year even as La Niña's presence will be experienced all over the country, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

PAGASA climate specialist Joseph Basconillo said the El Niño is on the decline as normal weather conditions may be experienced during the May-June-July season.

"El Niño is in decaying stage," Basconillo said, citing the global advisory from various climate agencies.

"The current El Niño continues to weaken in the tropical Pacific. Majority of climate models suggest that El Niño is in its decaying stage, returning to ENSO-neutral condition by mid-2016," PAGASA said.

ENSO refers to the El Niño Southern Oscillation, an irregular periodical variation in winds and sea surface temperatures over the tropical eastern Pacific Ocean affecting much of the tropics and subtropics. The warming phase is known as the El Niño and the cooling phase as La Niña.

Meanwhile, PAGASA said the possibility of a developing La Niña is favored during the second half of 2016.

"With this current state, La Niña watch is now in effect. A La Niña event is characterized by persistent cooler than average sea surface temperature anomalies (below -0.5 degrees Celsius) over the tropical Pacific," the weather bureau said.

From this month up to July, PAGASA has predicted more rains as local thunderstorms, intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ), low-pressure areas, tropical cyclones and other factors will be coming in.

Tropical cyclones, ITCZ and low-pressure areas are also expected in the August-September season, it said.

In spite of the prospect of heavy rains in the later part of the year, Basconillo said traces of El Niño would still be felt in the next few months.

"El Niño will still have a lingering effect," he said.

Basconillo said local governments must now prepare for the onset of La Niña to mitigate its impact to communities.



MABILIS SA BALITA

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS



### Ready ba ang Metro Manila sa ulan?

Nagbabanta na ang malakas at maraming ulan na kapalit ng naranasan nating El Niño na nagpagutom sa mga magsasaka sa maraming probinsya lalo nasa Mindanao, tulad ng babala ng Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical Astronomical Administration (PAGASA).

Okey lang sa mga probinsya na kailangan na kailangan na ang ulan para makapagtanim na at pa-

ra makaipon na rin ng sapat na tubig ang mga dam para magkaroon ng sapat na tubig para sa mga irrigation at supply naman sa mga nakatira sa mga Metro Manila.

Matagal nang idinadalangin ng mga taga-probinsya ang ulan para sa kanilang sakahan at laguerta kung tawagin sa amin sa Cagayan para kahit papaano eh makapagtanim ng gulay para sa pang-araw-araw.

Kailangan na rin ang ulan para mawala na rin ang init ng panahon na nagpahirap sa ating lahat kaya ready na, lalo na mga taga-probinsya sa ulan.

Ang tanong ko lang, ready na rin ba ang Metro Manila at mga karatig lalawigan sa maraming ulan na ayon sa PAGASA ay malalakas na ulan? Malaking question mark ang tugon ko sa tanong na ito.

Alam ninyo ba kung bakit? Subukan ninyong silipin ang mga waterways sa Metro Manila. Napakarami pa ring mga basura sa mga ilog. Bumabaw na ang mga daluyan ng tubig dahil sa dami ng basurang itinapon ng mga iresponsable nating mga kababayan.

Silipin ninyo rin ang iba pang dalayun ng tubig, marami kang makikitang mga basura na tiyak na magpapabara sa tubig kapag dumating na talaga ang panahon ulan na pa-

lagay ko hindi na magtatagal ay darating na.

Medyo nagkalimutan yata sa paglilinis dahil lahat ng mga Local Government Units (LGUs) sa Metro Manila ay nagiging abala sa pangangampanya sa nakaraang mga buwan.

‘Yung responsibilidad nilang maglinis ng mga kanal ay tila nakaligtaan nila dahil sa pulitika dahil kung hindi nga naman sila mangampanya ay baka matalo sila at mawalang sila ng kapangyarihan.

Pagkatapos nang pagkatapos ng eleksyon, inasahan ko na ang mga nananalong pulitiko lalo na ‘yung mga incumbent ay ipag-uutos sa kanilang mga tauhan na maglinis ng mga ilog at kanal pero wala pang kumikilos.

Mukhang ninanamin pa ng mga nanalong mga pulitiko ang kanilang tagumpay at siyempre inuuna ang selebrasyon pero kailangan na nilang

kumilos habang may araw pa para maglinis.

Magkakasisihan na naman pagdating ng ulan lalo na kapag hindi na ulit madaanan ang mga bahaging kalsada tulad sa Metro Manila sa panahon ng ulan. Karaniwang sinisisi ang national government sa problemang ito.

Malaki ang magagawa ng LGUs para maibsan ang baha na nagpatigil din sa buhay ng mga tao kapag panahon ng ulan pero kung kuku-yakuyakoy lang sila eh talagang magkakaroon tayo ng problema.

Kaya ‘yung tanong ko kung ready ba ang Metro Manila sa paparating na ulan? Hindi po! Idalangin na lang natin na huwag masyadong mag-uulan sa Metro Manila kundi sa mga probinsya na higit na kailangan ang ulan. Huwag lang naman sobra ang ibuhos na ulan para hindi naman makapuwertuwisyo. (dpa\_btaguinod@yahoo.com)



# The Manila Times

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## UN names special envoys for El Niño climate

**UNITED NATIONS, United States:** UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Friday appointed former Irish President Mary Robinson and Kenyan diplomat Macharia Kamau as special envoys for El Niño and climate.

The El Niño weather phenomenon, which occurs every two to seven years, affects rainfall patterns and causes both drought and flooding.

Its effects can be seen in places like Sudan, where the UN estimates 400,000 people will need food aid due to El Niño-related drought. Neighboring Ethiopia is experiencing its worst drought in 50 years.

The phenomenon has "created massive needs across the world," the UN said in a statement, particularly in east Africa, southern Africa, Central America and the Pacific.

"This year's El Niño is taking place in a world already dramatically affected by climate change. More extreme weather events are expected in the future, and these hit the poorest communities—those least respon-

sible for climate change—first and hardest," the statement said.

"Aid is not enough; a longer term approach is required in order to build the resilience of the most vulnerable."

The new special envoys will be responsible for "raising the profile and sounding the alarm," Ban said in the statement.

"It is vital that we scale up our humanitarian response urgently. To do that we need the full support and attention of the international community," he was quoted as saying.

Robinson had previously served as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and as Ban's special envoy for climate change.

Kamau is Kenya's ambassador to the United Nations and former president of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Board. He was co-chair of the UN General Assembly working group on sustainable development goals, which includes the fight against climate change.

AFP





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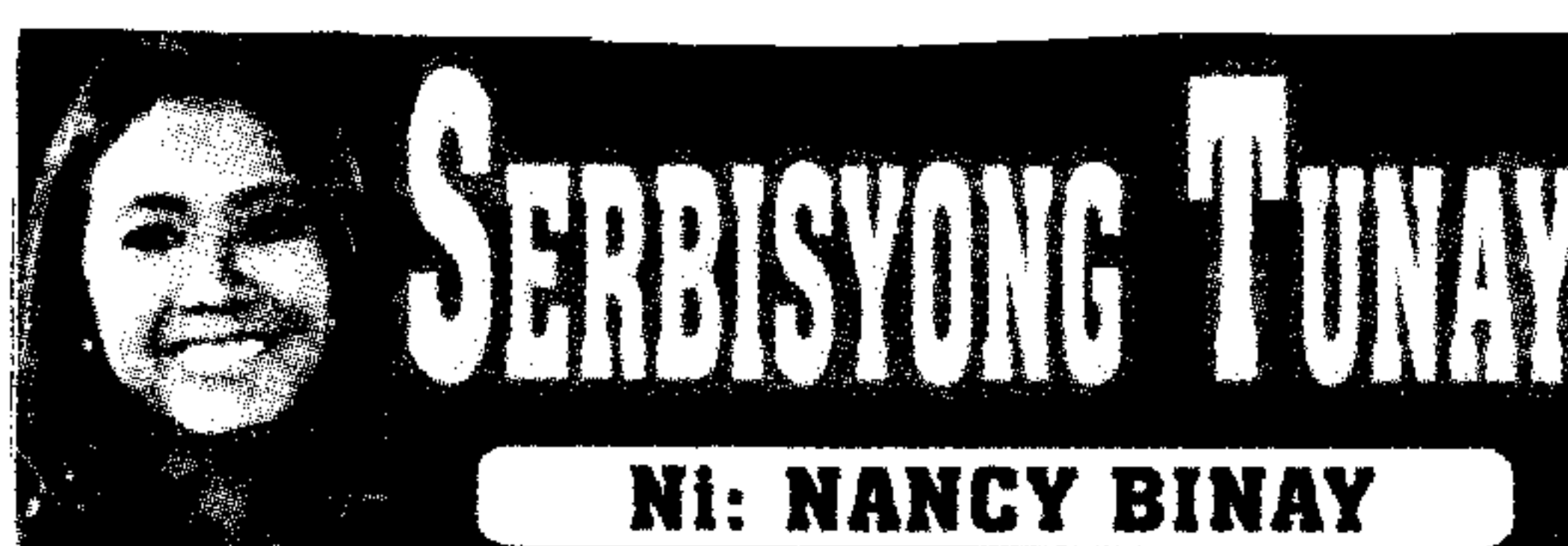
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### Mag-ready na sa La Niña!

NAGBABALA kailan lang ang PAGASA na maaaring kasunod ng matinding init na ating nararanasan ngayon ay ang La Niña sa napakalakas na pagbuhos ng ulan.

Talagang isyu na ngayon ang climate change. Dahil sa kapabayaan ng tao ay nasira na nang husto ang kalikasan, kaya naman hindi na natin mawari ngayon ang panahon kung dati ay kaya ng kaunting pagtapal sa bubong ang mga bagyo, ngayon, sa dalas at tindi ng bagyo ay hindi na lamang bubungan ng ating mga tahanan ang ating iniinda.

Nariyan ang matinding pagbaha na hindi lamang perhuwisyo sa pagpasok sa trabaho, nagdadala pa ito ng samu't saring mga sakit sa mga lumulusong dito.

Sa pagpasok ng panibagong mamumuno, ang mamamayan ay naghahangad ng pagbabago. Ngunit, hindi lang pagbabago sa mamumuno sa atin ang dapat nating pagtuunan ng pansin.

Dapat ang pagbabago ay magsimula sa ating mga sarili, sa ating mga pamilya, sa ating mga tahanan. Paano ba humantong sa ganitong extremes ang ating panahon kung hindi dahil sa pananamantala natin sa ating kapaligiran?

Dapat ma-realize na natin na problema ito at dapat tayong magbago upang maibsan ang mga epektong dulot ng ating kapabayaan kay Inang Kalikasan.

Sa ating mumunting mga kayang baguhin para sa ikabubuti ng kapaligiran tulad ng pag-segregate sa basura, pagtatapon sa tamang basurahan at sa hindi pag-aaksaya ng tubig at kuryente ay maaari na tayong makatulong.

Tunay na mahalaga ang pagbabago pero kung tayo mismo ay hindi handang magbago para sa ikabubuti ng ating kapaligiran, malamang ay lalo tayong babayuhin nang malalakas na bagyo at lalo tayong makararanas ng matinding init na pumapatay sa agrikultura ng ating bansa.



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MABILIS SA BALITA

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### Harassment sa Scarborough Shoal, natigil

Kinumpirmang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) na malaya nang nakakapangisda ngayon ang mga mangingisdang Pinoy sa Scarborough Shoal.

Sinabi ni BFAR Director Asis Perez na wala pa silang natatanggap na reklamo mula sa mga mangingisda na naha-harass ng mga Chinese authorities.

“Wala po tayong naririnig na reklamo ngayon. That can be an indication na wala pong nangyayaring adverse o

hindi magandang nangyayari sa mga mangingisda,” pahayag ni Perez.

Sinabi naman ni Prof. Rommel Banlaoi, executive director ng Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research, na resulta ng kanilang patuloy na pakikipagnegosasyon sa China ang pagbabago ngayon sa Scarborough Shoal.

Inamin ni Banlaoi na posibleng nakatulong ang intensyon ni presumptive President Rodrigo Duterte na makipag-ayos

at magkaroon ng diyalog sa China para maging bukas ang naturang bansa sa negosasyon at payagan na makapangisda ngayon ng malaya ang mga Pinoy sa karagatan.

Matatandsan na una nang sinabi ni Duterte sa pakikipagusap nito kay Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua kamakailan sa Davao City na bukas ito sa bilateral talks sa China para wakasan na ang nagaganap na territorial dispute.

“Hindi niya (Duterte)

iwi-withdraw ang posisyon sa international tribunal pero ‘di niya itutulak ito dahil ang intensyon niya ay to repair the damaged relations. Kung hindi magtagumpay ang bilateral talks bubuhayin ang kaso sa international tribunal at gagamitin niyang leverage,” paliwanag ni Banlaoi sa naging pag-uusap ni Duterte at ng Chinese ambassador.

Pag-aari ng Pilipinas ang Scarborough Shoal ngunit inaangkin ito ng China. (Tina Mendoza)





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### **Bulacan has 1<sup>st</sup> solar-powered parish**

THE National Shrine and Parish of St. Anne in Hagonoy, Bulacan recently installed a solar power panel generator system, the first ever in the diocese, as part of showing care for the environment.

According to Msgr. Luciano Balagtas, parish priest and shrine rector, the solar power generator system was installed by SolaRex International and Steel Corporation.

On normal days, the solar-powered generators can supply the needed electrical consumption for the church, especially with the shrine's eight Sunday Masses, aside from daily weekday Masses.

The prelate said it will considerably reduce the shrine's electrical bill in the long run.

Since Hagonoy is prone to flooding, the alternative power source can be a way to supply electricity to the shrine

whenever disasters like heavy flooding cause black-outs, which become common whenever Hagonoy and Calumpit towns are hit by storms.

He said some parishes in the diocese are already in the process of installing similar solar-powered systems.

Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Heritage Homes, Marilao, Bulacan and San Isidro Labrador Parish in Liciada, Bustos,

Bulacan, are two parishes in the diocese following the lead by the national shrine.

Balagtas said the Praxis Fides Mutual Benefit Association Inc., which has been promoting financial stewardship among church workers and catechists since 1987, could help church institutions for the procurement of these systems.

**Mia Billones**