

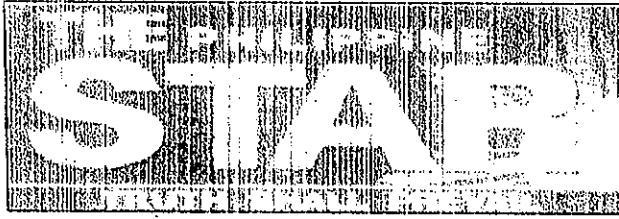
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 20 OCT 2016

DAY : Thursday

DENR

IN THE NEWS



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Miners laud Ombudsman move vs illegal mining

Mining firms have welcomed the Office of the Ombudsman's move to crack down on illegal mining operations nationwide.

Environmental Ombudsman Gerard Mosquera earlier said he was looking at investigating several local government units and closing illegal dumpsites.

The Office of the Ombudsman is set to coordinate with

the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in going after illegal miners, as well as illegal logging and fishing activities.

Chamber of Mines of the Philippines Legal and Policy VP Ronald Recidoro said: "The Chamber has always called for stricter measures in going against illegal miners as these

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

are the ones who do not contribute to the economy of the country and do the most damage to the environment."

COMP emphasized that its members are covered by a strict edict to safeguard the interests of the environment and the country.

"We will continue to adhere to the tenets of responsible

mining and support efforts of government to weed out the irresponsible miners who conduct their business without regard for the law," Recidoro said.

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez earlier ordered a stop to small-scale mining operations, halting about 60 percent of total gold production in the country.

Lopez said all small-scale mining activities operating outside the Minahang Bayan were illegal in nature and should be stopped immediately.

Minahang Bayan centralizes processing of minerals within a zone where the government will be able to monitor gold production by small-scale miners better.

It helps the government curb illegal mining and mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of indiscriminate mining operations in the country.

In April 2015, the DENR issued the revised implementing rules and regulations of the Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991 in line with the mining policy of the previous administration.

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Big miners support gov't crackdown on illegal operators

Large mine operators heaved a sigh of relief as the government's audit, which they thought focused only on those legally operating, now shifted towards illegal mining operations.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said it welcomed the pronouncement of the Office of the Ombudsman to crack down on illegal mines around the country.

Environmental Ombudsman Gerard Mosquera said the Office of the Ombudsman will coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in going after these illegal miners.

He assured that after focusing on closing illegal dumpsites, the Office of the Ombudsman is also setting its sights on moving against illegal mining, logging, and fishing activities.

"It is not enough that we are legal. We must primarily be responsible miners. The Chamber has always called for stricter measures in going against illegal miners as these are the ones

who do not contribute to the economy of the country and do the most damage to the environment," COMP Vice President for Legal and Policy Ronald Recidoro said on Wednesday.

"Members of the Chamber are covered by a strict edict to safeguard our people, the country's interests and the environment. We will continue to adhere to the tenets of responsible mining and support efforts of government to weed out the irresponsible miners who conduct their business without regard for the law," Recidoro stressed.

Meanwhile, COMP earlier hinted about pursuing legal actions against the government for its inaction on the existing Executive Order (EO) 79 amid the calls to repeal it.

In 2012, Aquino signed EO 79 on mining wherein no new mineral agreements shall be approved until a legislation rationalizing existing revenue sharing schemes and mechanisms shall have taken effect. (MBM)

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Crackdown on illegal mines cheered

By Ronnel W. Domingo
@ronwdomingoINQ

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) yesterday welcomed an anticipated crackdown by the Ombudsman on illegal mines following a move against illegal dumpsites.

"(The COMP has) always called for stricter measures in going against illegal miners as these are the ones who do not contribute to the economy of the country and do the most

damage to the environment," the group's vice president, Ronald Recidoro, said in a statement.

Recidoro was referring to a statement by Environmental Ombudsman Gerard Mosquera, who said that after focusing on closing illegal dumpsites, the Office of the Ombudsman is also setting its sights on moving against illegal mining, logging and fishing activities.

He said the mining industry remained the biggest contribu-

tor to the government's National Greening Program, under which 20 million trees were planted from 2011 to 2014.

Citing data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Recidoro said the mining industry's contribution to reforestation efforts in the country had already covered an estimated 48,000 hectares.

"Members of the (COMP) are covered by a strict edict to safeguard our people, the country's interests and the environment,"

he said. "We will continue to adhere to the tenets of responsible mining and support efforts of government to weed out the irresponsible miners who conduct their business without regard for the law."

Earlier this month, the MGB announced the nomination of 23 mine operators—including some that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' audit teams recommended for suspension—for the Presidential Mineral Indus-

try Environmental Award.

The PMIEA is given out yearly to mining companies that "showed exemplary practices in safety and health; environmental protection and rehabilitation; and community and social development and management."

Executive Order No. 399 issued in 1997 established the PMIEA "in compliance with the policy that mineral exploration and mining operation shall be pro-environment and pro-peo-

ple," the MGB said.

Among the nominees for the surface mining category were operators of mines that were recommended for suspension. These include Agata Mining Ventures Inc. (nickel in Agusan del Norte); Hinatuan Mining Corp. (nickel in Eastern Samar); Marcventures Mining and Development Corp. (nickel in Surigao del Sur); OceanaGold Philippines Inc. (copper-gold in Nueva Vizcaya); and SR Metals Inc. (nickel in Agusan del Sur). INQ

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BusinessMirror

P.1

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

COMP urges govt to focus campaign on small miners

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

AFTER focusing on illegal dumps across the country, the Office of the Ombudsman vowed to actively go after officials of local government units (LGUs) and state agencies that abetted illegal mines—or those involving small miners—a move welcomed by mining's big players belonging to the Chamber of Mines of the

Philippines (COMP).

The COMP said it supports President Duterte's marching orders to clamp down on irresponsible mining, but, at the same time, expressed dismay over the tightening of screws that targeted large-scale miners that operate legally and responsibly.

Under the watch of Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez, the Department

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RECIDORO: "Doing nothing to stop illegal mining can be considered dereliction of duty."

BusinessMirror

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

COMP urges govt to focus campaign on small miners

CONTINUED FROM A1

of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has so far suspended 11 large-scale mining operations for failing environmental standards based on audit criteria involving environmental, social and biodiversity considerations, on top of the usual technical aspects of mining.

Interviewed by the BUSINESS-MIRROR, COMP Vice President for Legal and Policy Ronald Recidoro said it is about time that the Ombudsman goes after illegal-mining operations.

He said, more important, the Ombudsman should also go after officials of the government, both at the national and local levels, for conspiring with small-scale miners.

"Doing nothing to stop illegal mining can be considered dereliction of duty. Under the law, the government is mandated to stop illegal-mining operations," Recidoro said.

The ongoing campaign of the DENR in enforcing Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, targets LGUs that fail to close open dumps in their respective jurisdictions.

Officials from more than 30 LGUs have been charged for failing to close illegal dumps, so far.

In the case of illegal mining, be it large scale or small scale, Recidoro said LGUs are liable for failing to stop illegal mining.

LGUs headed by the provincial governor sit as members of the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board, which has jurisdiction over small-scale mining activities.

He said aside from local officials, the Ombudsman should go after DENR officials who are not doing their job to stop illegal-mining operations.

The COMP had issued an official statement supporting Environmental Ombudsman Gerard Mosquera's pronouncement to go after illegal mining after the campaign against illegal dump operations.

In its statement, the COMP said

the environment," Recidoro said.

Mosquera, in a report, said the Office of the Ombudsman will coordinate with the DENR in going after these illegal miners.

Lopez said the DENR, through the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTF), will go after illegal small-scale mining activities, but, so far, none of the small-scale miners have been stopped.

There are an estimated 300,000 companies and individuals engaged in illegal small-scale mining activities, which, the COMP said, should be held accountable for the environmental destruction in many areas.

Last week the NAECTF raided illegal quarry sites in Mount Banahaw, particularly on the side of Sariaya, Quezon.

The raid resulted in the arrest of more than 30 people and seizure of at least a dozen of pay-loaders, backhoes, cargo trucks and other heavy equipment, used by at least 20 different companies engaged in the illegal quarry operations in the area.

According to the COMP, they are holding onto the promise of Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales to go after illegal mining, as she stressed the need for the government to address "environmental degradation by enterprising individuals."

"Members of the Chamber are covered by a strict edict to safeguard our people, the country's interests and the environment. We will continue to adhere to the tenets of responsible mining and support efforts of the government to weed out the irresponsible miners, who conduct their business without regard for the law," Recidoro stressed.

The Mining Act of 1995 provides "mining activities must always be guided by current best practices in environmental management committed to reducing the impacts of mining while efficiently and effectively protecting the environment."

According to Recidoro, the mining industry remains to be the

Big miners welcome Ombudsman's crackdown on illegal mines

THE country's biggest mining lobby, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP), on Wednesday welcomed the Office of the Ombudsman's vow to crack down on illegal mines around the country.

"It is not enough that we are legal. We must primarily be responsible miners. The Chamber has always called for stricter measures in going against illegal miners as these are the ones who do not contribute to the economy of the country and do the most damage to the environment," COMP VP for Legal and Policy Ronald Recidoro said Wednesday.

Earlier, Environmental Ombudsman Gerard Mosquera assured that after focusing on closing illegal dumpsites, the Office of the Ombudsman is also setting its sights on moving against illegal mining, logging and fishing activities.

Mosquera said the Office of the Ombudsman will coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in going after these illegal miners.

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales also stressed the need for government to address "environmental degradation by enterprising individuals."

"Members of the Chamber are covered by a strict edict to safeguard our people, the country's interests and the environment. We will continue to adhere to the tenets of responsible mining and support efforts of government to weed out the irresponsible miners who conduct their

business without regard for the law," Recidoro stressed.

The Mining Act of 1995 provides "mining activities must always be guided by current best practices in environmental management committed to reducing the impacts of mining while efficiently and effectively protecting the environment."

The mining industry remains the biggest contributor to the National Greening Program of government with 20 million trees planted from 2011 to 2014.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) data show that the mining industry's contribution to reforestation efforts in the country has already covered an estimated 48,000 hectares.

The DENR earlier ordered the cessation of all small-scale mining operations, effectively halting 60 percent of gold production in the country.

Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez said that all small-scale mining activities operating outside the so-called Minahang Bayan are illegal in nature and should stop immediately or face the full force of the law.

To date, the DENR has yet to announce the number of small-scale mining operations that have been shut down.

All small-scale mining activities are illegal under the DENR's revised implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 7076, or the Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991.

The DENR issued the revised IRR of the Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991 in April last year. Under Department Administrative Or-

der 03-2015, the revised IRR institutionalized and implemented reforms in the Philippine mining sector, and provides policies and guidelines to ensure environmental protection and responsible mining in the utilization of mineral resources – including the declaration of a Minahang Bayan.

A Minahang Bayan centralizes processing of minerals within a zone where the government will be able to monitor gold production by small-scale miners better.

The major features of the revised IRR include provisions on additional areas that may be declared as "Minahang Bayan," confinement of engineered mineral processing activities with tailings disposal system within mineral processing zones, and the imposition of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Assessment covering each Minahang Bayan.

At present, there are only three existing Minahang Bayan nationwide with 10 new applications pending for approval by the MGB.

There are about 300,000 to 400,000 small-scale miners operating in 40 mineral-rich provinces nationwide, majority of which operates outside the Minahang Bayan.

Officials of the DENR and MGB suspect small-scale miners are selling their gold produce to the black market to avoid paying taxes to the government, which resulted in a steep drop in annual gold purchases by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) since 2011.

JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ



PILIPINO MIRROR

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

ILLEGAL MINERS HAHABULIN NG OMBUDSMAN

SUPORTADO ng Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) ang hakbang ng Office of the Ombudsman na habulin ang mga iligal na nagmimina sa bansa.

Ayon kay Atty. Ronaldo Recidoro, vice president for legal and policy ng COMP, mataagal na nilang isinusulong ang mahigpit na panuntunan sa usapin ng pagmimina para masugpo ang illegal mining.

Aniya, ang iligal na operasyon sa minahan ay

walang kontribusyon sa ekonomiya dahil hindi ito nagbabayad ng buwis.

Nauna rito, ini-hayag ni Environmental Ombudsman Gerard Mosquera na sentro ngayon ng kanilang kampanya ang iligal na nagmimina, iligal na pagtötroso at iligal na pangingsda.

Nauna nang ipinasara ng Ombudsman ang mga illegal dumpsite o basurahan para hindi makaapekto sa mga komunidad.

"It is not enough that

we are legal. We must primarily be responsible miners. The Chamber has always called for stricter measures in going against illegal miners as there are the ones who do not contribute to the economy of the country and do the most damage to the environment," ani Recidoro.

Sinabi ni Environmental Ombudsman Mosquera na makikipagkoordinasyon sila sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para papanagu-

tin ang mga illegal miner.

Ani Recidoro, ang kanilang mga miyembro ay sakop ng mahigpit na polisiya para sa responsableng pagmimina at pangangalaga sa komunidad salig sa isinasaad ng Mining Act of 1995.

Iginiit naman ni Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales ang pagtugon ng gobyerno sa nasisirang kalikasan sa pamamagitan ng pagtulong at pakikiisa ng bawat indibidwal.

MONCHET LARANO

Policy on downstream mining industries due by year's end

AN OFFICIAL recommendation on the feasibility of setting up downstream ore processing facilities in the Philippines will be drawn up by the end of the year, according to the chief of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

"We have held initial meetings... before the end of the year, we promise to have a recommendation on how we should proceed," said MGB Concurrent Director Mario Luis J. Jacinto, speaking to reporters.

The MGB is consulting industry stakeholders and other agencies to consider the country's sustainable level of ore volume and

its competitiveness in the context of ASEAN integration.

Mr. Jacinto, who is also an undersecretary of the Environment department, noted that local processing of ore adds value to the Philippine mining industry's output. "The question is what are the requirements to put it in place," he added.

One of the agencies involved in the drafting of the recommendation is the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

The DTI, which is also preparing the six-year Philippine Development Plan, has completed the road map for copper and is in the process of completing road maps

for gold and nickel as well as a long-term plan for iron.

Earlier, House Speaker Pantaleon D. Alvarez said that a bill requiring mining firms to process or semi-process their ores before these commodities can be exported will be a priority for the government.

Sen. Paolo Benigno A. Aquino filed a bill seeking to halt the export of unprocessed mineral ores, as a way to attract more investment and generate more income for the extractive industries.

Indonesia, which accounts for about 1% of global ore supply, imposed a ban on its ore exports in 2014. Top nickel importer

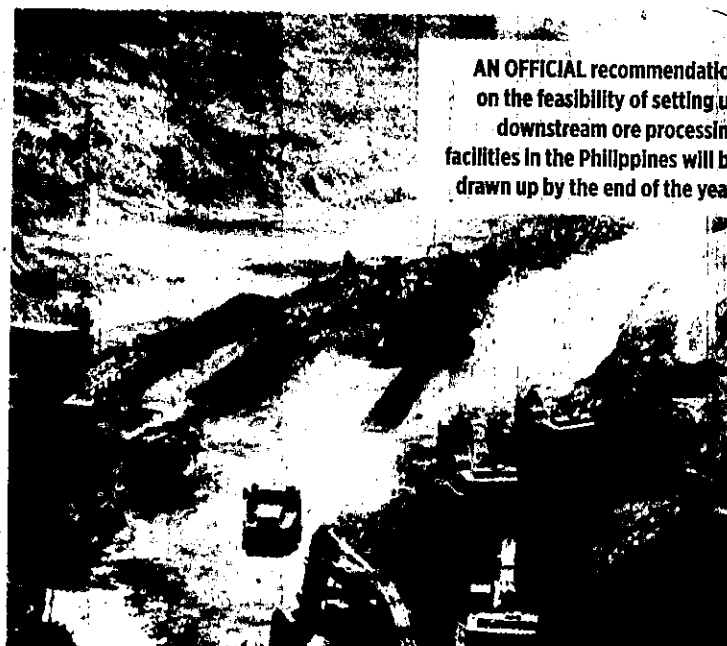
China turned to the Philippines to meet its demand.

The MGB reported that during the first half of 2016, the total value of metal mine production fell 13.59% year-on-year to P48.25 billion due to the suspension of some mining operations and sluggish metal prices.

So far, the Environment Department has suspended 10 metal mines and recommended 20 others for suspension after a nationwide audit that aimed to weed out miners with poor environmental management practices.

The suspended mines made up 55.5% of the country's total nickel output last year. — Janina C. Lim

EDITOR TIMOTHY ROY MEDINA



AN OFFICIAL recommendation on the feasibility of setting up downstream ore processing facilities in the Philippines will be drawn up by the end of the year.

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MGB weighs if PH mineral resources merit processing

Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) wants to see if the Philippines has enough mineral resources to go downstream, a factor that would be largely considered as the agency drafts policy recommendations that would possibly push for the development of more mineral processing plants in the country.

Senator Cynthia Villar earlier said that more mineral processing plants should be built in the Philippines so that miners could extract more value from the country's natural resources at the same time generate more jobs.

But according to MGB Director Mario Luis Jacinto, this move to develop the metals and mining downstream industry should be backed by policy recommendations and a clear framework.

"Before the end of the year, we promise to have a recommendation on how we should proceed with it. At least we should be able to come up with a framework or a roadmap on how to proceed with it," Jacinto said in an interview.

"We will consolidate studies and then slowly come up with our policy recommendation," he added.

Jacinto said that while developing the downstream industry for metals and minerals sounds good, the question is if the country has enough volume to sustain it.

He said that MGB is now consulting with all stakeholders of the industry as well as with other government agencies for the said move.

Mercedita Sombilla, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Director of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environment Staff, earlier said that a government-led roadmap is indeed needed to see if more mineral processing plants should really be built in order for the mining sector to prove its existence



CYNTHIA VILLAR

in the country.

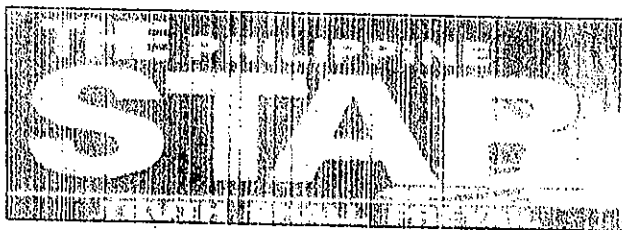
According to her, despite the sector's economic potential, mining industry's contribution to the Philippine economy remained very low.

One possible reason for the sector's failure was its inability to add value to their products.

"We also have low number of processing plants. We currently have four now — two gold processing plants and two nickel processing plants," Sombilla said. "On the economic front, the challenge here is the limited value-addition of minerals."

She also said the development of more processing plants will eventually make the mining sector's growth more inclusive because they will create more jobs.

"We really need a roadmap. It is really necessary because as of now, it is not yet clear and there's no direction. What is clear on my part is that the total closure of mining sector will have a clear impact on gross domestic product [GDP]. That is one of the risk factors," Sombilla said before. (MRM)



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'Phl lacks dioxin monitors for incinerators'

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

An environmental scientist warned that the country lacks capability to monitor dioxin releases from incinerators.

Jorge Emmanuel said that "the Philippines is not in a position to continuously, not even routinely, monitor dioxins," which are some of the most toxic chemicals known to science.

A balik-scientist from the US and now adjunct professor at Silliman University, Emmanuel said national government agencies (NGAs) such as the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, Health and Science and Technology do not have laboratories that can detect dioxins, requiring samples to be sent abroad to

undergo expensive tests.

"Pollution control devices to scrub and filter out dioxins from the exhaust gases are very expensive and costly to operate. To cut down on costs, some vendors may under-design or underutilize or even eliminate pollution control devices," Emmanuel said at a recent forum in Quezon City organized by Stop WtE (waste to energy) Coalition.

He said it is essential to test for dioxins to independently validate the claims of vendors or manufacturers.

If the NGAs are incapable of independently validating technology vendor claims and

monitoring dioxin emissions, the same is true with local government units (LGUs), many of which do not even have approved 10-year solid waste management plans and materials recovery facilities as required by law, he noted.

Dioxins, byproducts of waste combustion, are toxic at extremely small concentrations, clog up the food chain, stay in the environment for a long time, and can travel long distances from the source of emission.

"Dioxins are toxic at very low levels and are known to cause cancers, specifically chronic lymphocytic leukemia, soft tissue sarcoma,

non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, as well as cancers of the lungs, larynx and trachea," Emmanuel said.

Dioxins also cause birth defects, alter the reproductive systems of fetuses, impact the IQ of children, suppress the immune system, decrease fertility, cause ovarian dysfunction, and reduce the size of male genitalia.

"They are highly persistent in the environment, so any dioxins produced today will remain for up to 150 years if on top of the soil, more than 500 years if in bodies of water, and up to 1,000 years if the dioxins are covered by a few centimeters of soil surface," Emmanuel said.



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Chemical companies help to improve air quality

It might seem surprising to find the world's chemical companies on the front lines of preventing climate change, fighting to disrupt their own industries.

But in a sweeping accord reached on Saturday in Kigali, Rwanda, companies including Honeywell and DuPont were among the most active backers of a move away from a profitable chemical that has long been the foundation for the fast-growing air-conditioning and refrigeration business.

The companies were driven less by idealism than by intense competition, and a bet that they could create more environmentally friendly alternatives.

Still, some environmentalists say the aggressive move away from hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, provides a template for other industries to follow.

"They learned that without a rule change, their new products couldn't compete," said David Doniger, director of the Climate and Clean Air Program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, based in Washington. "They woke up and said, 'The science is real.'"

"We wanted them restricted for purely environmental reasons. The companies wanted them restricted for many other reasons," including profit, Doniger said. "But the point is that they had a certain common interest with the international community."

The chemical industry's response stands in stark contrast to the foot-dragging, and in many cases the outright obstruction of climate regulations, by the big oil companies.

Enron, Chevron and others have been criticized for lobbying against rules to curb greenhouse gases for decades, even though their own researchers have warned of the risks of

And there are concerns that many producers in countries will not profit as quickly, consolidating the power of the world's biggest companies. Much of the resistance to the agreement came from China and India, which feared that some of their chemical manufacturers would be shut out, or that their consumers would face higher prices.

"Although we welcome the outcome and there is progress, it's being dictated by the industry," said Paula Tejón Carbajal, the global business strategist for Greenpeace in Amsterdam.

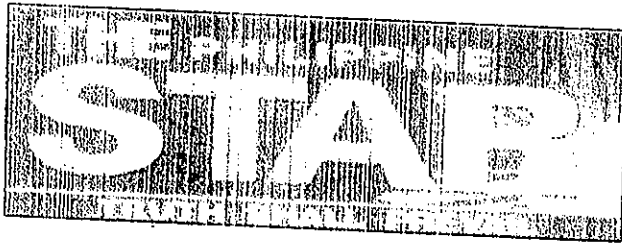
The Kigali deal is the latest chapter in what has been at times an environmentally disastrous role played by the air-conditioning and refrigeration industry.

For decades, a class of chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs, were used widely in air-conditioners and refrigerators, as well as in aerosol sprays and cleaning products. But scientists warned that CFCs deplete the ozone layer, which protects the earth from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Chemical companies first resisted, saying that alternatives were not economically viable. "They were awful, just like the coal industry," Doniger said.

But consumer concern about the chemicals led to slumping sales, and a handful of countries banned CFCs. In 1987, the Montreal Protocol agreement was created to completely phase out those chemicals.

The alternatives available at the time, HFCs, were greenhouse gases with 1,000 times the heat-trapping potency of carbon dioxide. Concerns over those chemicals spurred campaigns by environmentalists to phase out HFCs as well.

This time, chemical producers raced to get ahead of any new round of regulations.



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Villar alarmed by compromise deal on Manila Bay reclamation

Sen. Cynthia Villar has expressed alarm over the reported compromise agreement between Cyberbay Corp. and the government on a reclamation project involving a protected area along Manila Bay. Cyberbay earlier reported its wholly-owned subsidiary, Central Bay Reclamation and Development Corp., has entered into a compromise agreement with the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) which includes the transfer of a portion of PRA's reclaimed land to Central Bay's "qualified assignee." In a letter to PRA general manager Peter Anthony Abaya, Villar said she is "deeply alarmed with this development considering, among

others, that the joint venture agreement between PRA and Cyberbay Corp. was already nullified by the Supreme Court, and that the transfer may have included and/or may adversely affect the survival of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area (LP-PCHEA)."

"How can you give away a protected area for a reclamation project? We are mandated by domestic laws as well as international convention to protect this critical habitat," Villar pointed out.

The chairperson of the Senate committee on environment and natural resources also asked Abaya to furnish her a copy of the com-

promise agreement PRA entered into with Cyberbay and/or its subsidiary.

"As the transfer is clearly a matter of public interest, there is a need for the public to know the propriety and legal basis of the transfer of a government-owned property to a private entity in order to address apprehensions that the transfer is against public interest and grossly disadvantageous to the government," Villar said.

LP-PCHEA is a protected area by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 1412, series of 2007. It was recognized as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Compromise pact on Manila Bay reclamation project alarms Villar

SEN. Cynthia A. Villar expressed alarm over the reported compromise agreement between Cyberbay Corp. and the government on a reclamation project involving a protected area (PA) along Manila Bay.

In a newspaper report, Cyberbay said its wholly owned subsidiary, the Central Bay Reclamation and Development Corp., has entered into a compromise agreement with the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), and the settlement includes the transfer of a portion of PRA's reclaimed land to Central Bay's "qualified assignee."

In a two-page letter dated October 18 addressed to PRA General Manager Peter Anthony Abaya, Villar said she is "deeply alarmed with this development, considering, among others, that the joint-venture agreement between PRA and Cyberbay Corp. was already nullified by the Supreme Court, as the news article itself says, and that the transfer may have included and/or may adversely affect the survival of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area [LPPCHEA]."

"How can you give away a protected area for a reclamation project? We are mandated by domestic laws, as well as international convention to protect this critical habitat," Villar pointed out.

The chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources also asked Abaya to furnish her a copy of the compromise agreement PRA entered into with Cyberbay Corp. and/or its subsidiary.

"As the transfer is clearly a matter of public interest, there is a need for the public to know the propriety and legal basis of the transfer of a government-owned property to a private entity in order to address apprehensions that the transfer is against public interest and grossly disadvantageous to the government," Villar further said in the letter. LPPCHEA is a PA by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 1412, Series of 2007. It was recognized as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention.

Dubbed as Metro Manila's last coastal frontier, LPPCHEA shelters a 36-hectare mangrove forest, which is the thickest and most diverse mangrove forest along the Manila Bay area and serves as a significant spawning ground, nursery, feeding and temporary shelter of different fish species and other forms of wildlife, as well as protects the communities of Las Piñas and Parañaque cities against storm surges and high tides.

STRATEG



INITIATIVES SERVICE

Living and loving green at RWM

RESORTS World Manila's (RWM) employees are walking the environmental talk through the company's Live and Love Green program, which has already helped recover over 11 tons of recyclable materials for 2016. Now on its third year, RWM has collected over 65 tons of recyclables, such as cartons, used paper, aluminum cans, PET bottles, tarpaulins and old tires.

The collected recyclables, which would otherwise have just been discarded in a landfill, are donated to the Tzu Chi Foundation Philippines. There, the materials are processed and made into useful items, such as shirts and blankets to be used in disaster relief drives.

"RWM is an environmentally sustainable organization that values the importance of conserving resources, preserving nature for the next generations and reaching out to victims of calamities" says Owen Cammayo, RWM director for corporate communications.

"We recognize that true corporate environmental advocacy can only be achieved with an interested and involved workforce. Through programs like Live and Love Green, we are able to help instill genuine advocacy in our employees by encouraging them to be eco-aware, both at work and at home."

Apart from its recycling day efforts, RWM also recently participated in eco-awareness activities at the La Mesa Nature Reserve in Quezon City in cooperation with ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation Inc.'s Bantay Kalikasan program.



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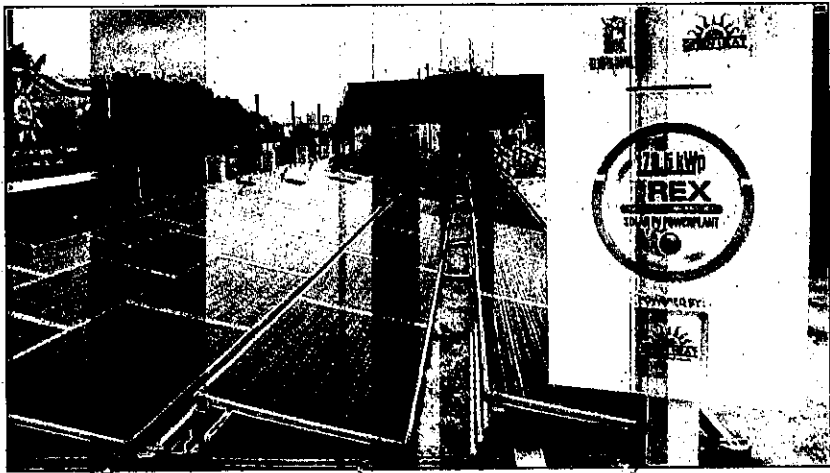
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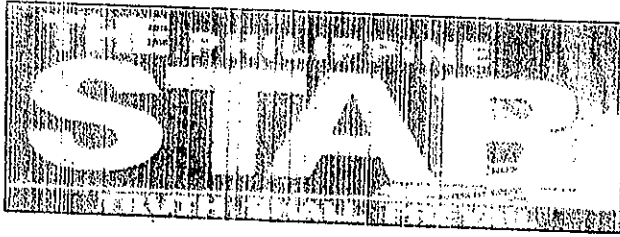
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Officials of Rex Group of Companies including its flagship Rex Book Store Inc., one of the country's leading educational publishing outfits, along with officials from solar power energy provider Greenheat Corp. recently switched on the 178.5-kilowatt peak solar rooftop during launching ceremonies at its offices in Quezon City. Rex Printing is the first printing company to utilize solar energy for its operations.





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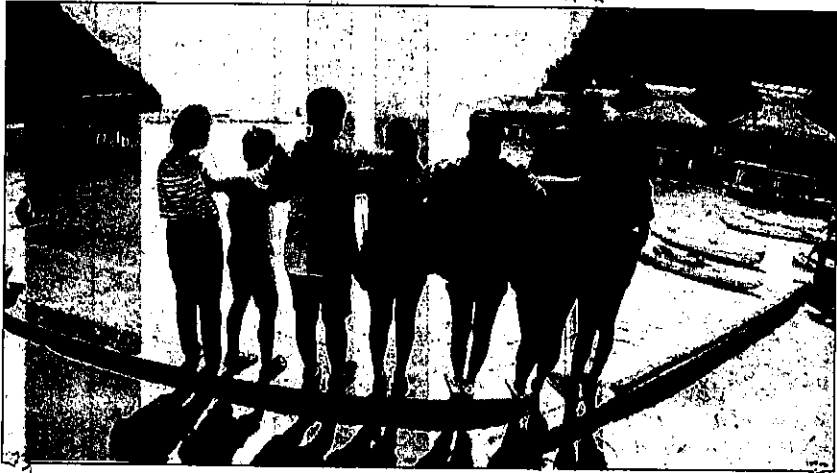
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

El Nido Resorts' eco discovery resort, Miniloc Island gathers together young adventurous campers 11-16 years old to participate in the 'BE GREEN Youth Camp,' now on its second year. The camp focuses on discovering the island's wildlife while leading the campers in gaining a deeper understanding of one's role in the protection and preservation of the environment.



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PH complies with Montreal Protocol

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

The Philippines has complied with a 29-year-old global agreement to protect the ozone layer, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

"The Philippines has so far been successful in complying with the agreement having phased out all ODS [use of ozone-depleting substances], except for hydrofluorocarbons [HFCs], in 2010," DENR Undersecretary for Legal Services and Attached Agencies Analiza Rebuelta Teh said.

Called Montreal Protocol, the agreement was finalized in 1987 and legally enforces the phase-out of the production and ODS or chemicals often used in refrigeration, air-conditioning, foam manufacturing, aerosol production, and fire extinguishing.

Teh, who is the national coordinator for ODS program, said the country also began reducing the production and use of HFCs by 10 percent last year until the total ban of the last remaining ODS by 2040.

The Philippines signed the Montreal Protocol on Substances

that Deplete the Ozone Layer on Sept. 14, 1988 and ratified it on March 21, 1991.

As a party to one of the most successful and effective environmental treaties ever, the country agreed to the gradual phase-out of ODS, particularly chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs).

The Philippines imposed a ban on the importation of CFCs and HCFCs in 2010 and 2013, respectively.

In 1994, the Philippine Ozone Desk (POD) was created to facilitate and coordinate ODS phase-out projects and policies for the overall implementation of the country's obligations under the Montreal Protocol. The POD is under the Environmental Management Bureau, an attached agency of the DENR.

Since ODS are not produced in the Philippines, the focus of its regulation was on the import, processing, sale, and disposal of such chemicals.

Over the years, the government has developed, implemented, and updated policies and regulations to regulate, restrict or prohibit the importation, manufacture, processing, sale, distribution, use and disposal of ODS.

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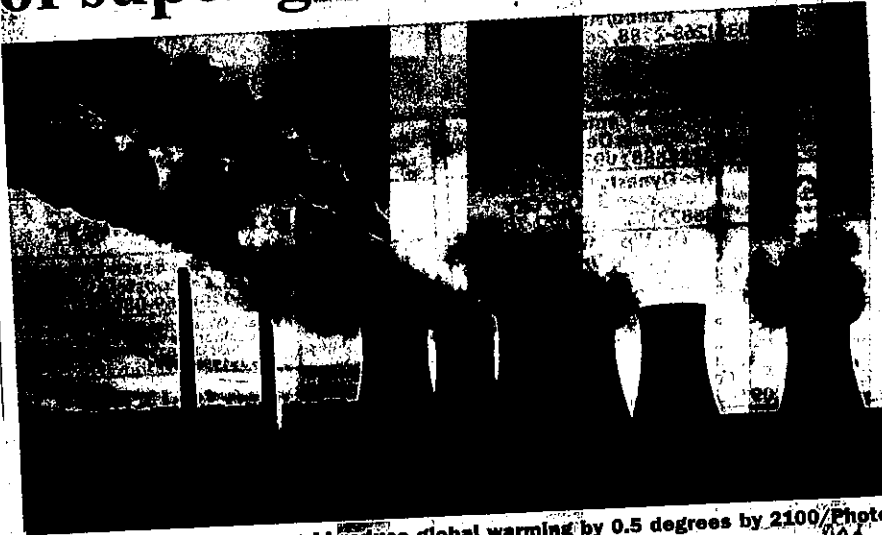
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Nations agree on phase-out of super greenhouse gases



The elimination of HFCs could reduce global warming by 0.5 degrees by 2100. Photo courtesy of newsx.com

KIGALI, Rwanda (AFP) — World envoys reached an agreement on a timetable for the phase-out of potent greenhouse gases used in refrigerators and air conditioners, a major step in curbing global warming.

The amendment to the 1987 Montreal Protocol on protecting the ozone layer was greeted by applause from exhausted envoys who had worked through the night in the Rwandan capital Kigali to put the final touches on the deal to phase out production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

"Last year in Paris, we promised to keep the world safe from the worst effects of climate change. Today, we are following through on that promise," said UN Environment Program chief Erik Solheim.

The US Environmental Protection Agency said, "this day will unquestionably be remembered as one of the most

important in our effort to save the one planet we have."

Last year's Paris climate agreement aimed to keep global warming below two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit), compared with pre-industrial levels.

The elimination of HFCs could reduce global warming by 0.5 degrees by 2100, according to a 2015 study by the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development.

Tough negotiations at the talks — attended by representatives of nearly 200 countries including US Secretary of State John Kerry — had seen major developing nations such as India put up a fight over the timeline to phase out the use of HFCs and the financing of the transition.

Could be costly

Under a timetable released on the website of the Montreal Protocol, rich will have to take action sooner than

poorer nations.

HFCs were introduced in the 1990s to replace chemicals that had been found to erode the ozone layer, but turned out to be catastrophic for global warming.

However, swapping HFCs for alternatives such as ammonia, water or gases called hydrofluoroolefins could prove costly for developing countries with sweltering summer temperatures such as India.

"There are issues of cost, there are issues of technology, there are issues of finances," said Ajay Narayan Jha of India's environment and climate change ministry before the deal was announced.

"We would like to emphasize that any agreement will have to be flexible from all sides concerned. It can't be flexible from one side and not from the other."

HFCs' predecessors, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), were discontinued under the Montreal Protocol when scientists realized they were destroying the ozone layer.

This blanket of gas in the upper stratosphere protects Earth from the Sun's dangerous ultraviolet rays.

But it emerged that HFCs, while safe for the now-healing ozone, are thousands of times worse for trapping heat than carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas.

Legally binding agreement

According to the Berkeley National Laboratory, air conditioning is the cause of the largest growth in HFCs — and the world is likely to have another 700 million air conditioners by 2030.

HFCs — though they are greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide — are not dealt with under the Paris Agreement but under the Montreal Protocol.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rich countries 'confident' of meeting climate finance pledge

Rich countries, which have pledged \$100 billion (€91 billion) every year from 2020 for poor countries to deal with climate change, said they were "confident" of meeting the target.

Pledges made in 2015 alone would boost public finance from \$41 billion in 2013-14 to \$67 billion in 2020, they said in a report entitled "Roadmap to \$100 billion".

This was based on calculations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and relate to funds from governments and multinational development banks, not private contributions.

"It should be considered a conservative, indicative aggregation of public climate finance levels in 2020, rather than a firm prediction," the countries said.

The report, signed by 38 developed nations and the European Commission, was released in Marrakesh at a meeting to prepare for the annual round of UN climate talks to be hosted by Morocco in November.

Last year's round, in France, yielded the so-called Paris Agreement to curb global warming to under two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-Industrial Revolution levels.

The \$100 billion pledge was made at the 2009 talks in Copenhagen, where it was a major sticking point in negotiations.

The hard-fought Paris Agreement, seeks to limit climate change by curbing planet-warming gases emitted by mankind's burning of coal, oil, and gas for energy and heating.

The dollar amount was finally not enshrined in the binding agreement itself, but in an attached non-binding "decision" document, which commit-

ted developed countries to "set a new collective quantified goal from a floor of \$100 billion per year" - meaning it can only go up.

"We are confident we will meet the \$100 billion goal from a variety of sources, and reaffirm our commitment to doing so..." the countries said.

The sourcing of the money had been one of the main points of contention, with poor nations insisting most of it should come from governments rather than loans, companies, multilateral agencies or development aid.

The money is meant to ease the shift from cheap and abundant coal to renewable energy sources, and for shoring up defenses against climate change impacts such as freak storms, drought and sea-level rise.

In the "Roadmap", the donor countries committed themselves to "use public finance and policy interventions to effectively mobilize private finance."

Observers welcomed the report but said there was still a need for donors to show exactly how they will make up the remaining difference.

"We know that the national climate plans in the Paris Agreement will take trillions of dollars to implement," said Alison Doig, climate change adviser for Christian Aid, which defends the interests of climate change victims.

"The public finance outlined today will help, but is not enough."

Meanwhile EU environment ministers launched talks in Luxembourg on how to divide among the 28 member states the overall target of cutting greenhouse gases by 2030, in line with the Paris deal.

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Davao fishers taught marine conservation

By F. Pearl A. Gajunera

DAVAO CITY—Fisherfolk here will be trained in marine environmental protection in observance of the 53rd Fish Conservation Week from October 17-21.

The trainees will be taught conservation and fishery laws to protect their source of livelihood and improve their income.

Mary Moratin, head of the Davao City Agriculture Office's Fishery Resource Management Services Division, said the 36,000 members of the Federation of Fisherfolks Associations of Davao City from 24 coastal villages will be instilled with a "sense of volunteerism among fisherfolks and develop them as potential partners in the implementation of coastal environment conservation programs."

Tirso Avila, chairman of the Tibungco Fisherfolks Association, said that after the fisherfolk were organized it became easier for them to make a living, improve and gain more knowledge of fishing techniques, gain support from concerned agencies and most importantly attain security in the coastal communities with the discontinuation of dynamite fishing.

"Fish yields in the past declined because of dynamite fishing and enforcing the explosives ban has placed our lives and our families in danger because of threats," said the 63-year-old Avila.

He thanked the city government for its help and the national government for giving them fishing boats. Members of his group have volunteered to be sea watchers or "Bantay Laot."

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900

MANILA BULLETIN

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

• 1M bamboos

DAVAO CITY - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is planning to plant one million bamboo trees in the next six years to mitigate the effects of climate change and provide livelihood to poor families across the country. In an interview during the environmental forum at the Ateneo de Davao University on Tuesday, Henry A. Adorado, DENR's Chief for Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB), said that it was the first time that the department launched a massive planting of bamboos as part of the agency's National Greening Program (NGP). He said bamboo was three times better in the sequestration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere than the forest trees. He added that they were planning to plant the bamboos within the 143 critical watershed areas spanning across 900,000 hectares to address the looming water crisis in one year. (Antonio Colina, IV)

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

TRIBESMEN ASSAIL MILITARIZATION, LAND-GRABBING

By MARVYN N. BENANING | *Correspondent*

TTRIBESMEN, organized under the Sandugo alliance, on Wednesday sought the help of lawmakers to stop military abuses and the land grabbing of their ancestral areas.

The leaders include Bai Bibyaon Ligkayan Bigkay, a Matigsalog woman leader; the only woman datu in Mindanao, Datu Cho Monico; Jerome Aba of Suara Bangsamoro; Minda Dalinan of the Kahugpungan ng mga Lumad sa Halayong Habagatang Mindanao; and Nenita Condez of the Salabukan Nok G' Taw Subanen.

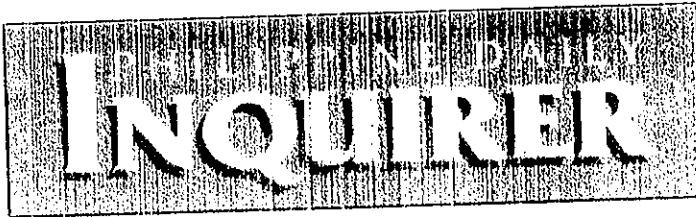
These tribal leaders are among the participants of the ongoing "Lakbayan ng Pambansang Minorya para sa Sariling Pagpapasya at Makatarungang Kapayapaan" who motored to Manila from across the nation to denounce the alleged continued militarization of ancestral lands.

The tribesmen blamed the implementation of the counterinsurgency Internal Peace and Security Plan Bayanihan for the alleged militarization of tribal areas.

"Even with the ongoing peace efforts of the Duterte administration, troops under Bayanihan continue to terrorize tribal communities," Party-list Rep. Sarah Elago of Kabataan said during a news briefing at the House of Representatives.

The tribal leaders also called on Congress to support the proposed two-year ban on land-use conversion, saying that land-use conversion has also affected ancestral lands, which are being turned into agro-industrial plantations, especially in Mindanao.

"Even the national minorities attest to the fact that land-use conversion of agricultural lands is a monster that must be reined in. In this light, we urge Congress to support the two-year land-use conversion moratorium of agricultural lands, which addresses the long-standing ploy of unscrupulous land owners and real-estate developers to convert prime agricultural lands for industrial, residential



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Du30 should stand firm on land conversion

I am no fan of President Duterte. I did not vote for him. Before the election, I was already turned off by his cussing during rallies and sorties, careless and foul remarks on women, and lack of concrete programs to address the economic and social issues of Philippine society, save for crime and illegal drugs.

I became more displeased after his inauguration. Contrary to his promise to metamorphose once he is installed as the 16th president of the Philippines, he continues to use profane and offensive language directed at local and international institutions and individuals. One day he makes a derogatory remark; the next day he or an aide either apologizes or says it's a joke!

The President seems oblivious to contradicting himself. He says one thing but does another. He maintains he is against oligarchy and corruption, yet he favors the Marcos family by consenting to Ferdinand Marcos' burial at the Libingan ng mga Bayani despite the latter's record of massive human rights abuses and corruption during martial law. He claims that he is on the side of the weak and the oppressed, yet his administration's war on drugs has resulted in the killing mostly of poor people without due process, while the drug lords are largely left untouched.

His administration certified transparency with the issuance of an executive order on freedom of information, yet the request in August of the Philippine Center for Investiga-

COMMENTARY

GEMMA RITA R. MARIN

tive Journalism and the Free Legal Assistance Group for data on the war on drugs from the interior and justice departments has yet to be acted on. Finally, he says he respects women, yet he catcalled a female reporter in one press conference and unleashed personal, vicious attacks on a female senator.

I can acknowledge some positive moves of the President in his first months of office, such as his simple lifestyle and his directives to return the coconut levy funds to the farmers and to disallow demolition of informal-settler communities without relocation.

Most significant for me is the moratorium on land conversion. Last September, the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council headed by Mr. Duterte himself approved a resolution to impose a 2-year moratorium on land use conversion, mindful of the state policy to preserve agricultural lands for food security. The Department of Agrarian Reform then drafted an EO to stop the "processing and approval of applications for all land-use conversion of agricultural lands for nonagricultural use." The approval of this EO would indeed be a milestone for advocates of the proposed National Land Use Act.

A national land use policy will harmonize conflicting claims emanating from previous

land laws passed, as it provides the framework on the appropriate use of land in a given area. But the continuing absence of guidelines has allowed irrational and uncoordinated use of land, many times resulting in conversion. Rice lands are reclassified for residential or agro-industrial use. Food production areas in lowlands and ancestral lands are declared as mining sites. Housing projects or malls are built on premier agricultural lands. These developments have not only threatened our food security but also claimed lives and properties, particularly of the poor and marginalized groups.

As expected, this proposed policy of land conversion has drawn opposition from business groups who claim that it could setback national development. They argue that preventing the conversion of idle land may hamper industrialization or the creation of economic zones for industries, acceleration of infrastructure projects, and decongestion of urban areas. But land use advocates recognize the potential of using certain portions of land for industrial purposes. Thus, the bill repeatedly filed in past Congresses proposes the nonconversion and protection of prime agricultural lands.

Having observed the President's unpredictable ways, I hope he stands firm on this issue of land conversion despite the opposing clamor of highly influential sectors.

Gemma Rita R. Marin is the executive director of John J. Corroll Institute on Church and Social Issues.

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Agusan Sur mayor, 6 others charged over land deal

BY REINA C. TOLENTINO

THE Office of the Ombudsman has found basis to file graft and technical malversation cases before the Sandiganbayan against Mayor Johnmark Billanes of Trento town in Agusan del Sur over alleged irregularities in a P1-million land deal brokered with his brother in 2012.

Also facing indictment for alleged graft are former Vice Mayor Victoria Plaza; Sangguniang Bayan members Edwin Demegillo, Pedro Mordeno and Leona Magno; incumbent Sangguniang Bayan member Ludy Andale; and the mayor's brother Romeo Billanes Jr., owner

of the 7,775-square-meter property located along the national highway of Poblacion in Trento.

The Ombudsman's ruling is subject to a motion for reconsideration.

A statement issued by the Ombudsman on Wednesday said the accused officials allegedly gave

unwarranted benefits, advantage or preference to Romeo supposedly through manifest partiality or evident bad faith because his property was allegedly identified for acquisition prior to the appraisal of the land.

The Ombudsman further alleged in its resolution that no ordinance was passed by the Sangguniang Bayan to realign the P1-million fund and the land acquisition was for a different purpose from the original appropriation.

To facilitate payment, the Sangguniang Bayan allegedly passed a resolution supposedly to borrow P1 million from the 2012 appropriations for the rehabilitation of the farm-to-market road to finance

acquisition of lot for the proposed rice processing center.

The Ombudsman also found Billanes, Demegillo, Plaza, Andale, Mordeno and Magno administratively liable for grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service and ordered their dismissal.

The accused also face cancellation of eligibility, forfeiture of retirement benefits and perpetual disqualification from reemployment in the government service.

In its decision, the Ombudsman directed the Department of the Interior and Local Government to implement the dismissal order, which is convertible to a fine in case the respondents are no longer in the service.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Prepare for the worst

'Lawin' now a super typhoon; signal No. 5 hoisted for the first time over 6 areas

By ELLALYN B. DELA CRUZ
and FRANCIS T. WAKELING

Disaster officials yesterday warned residents of Northern Luzon, especially in Cagayan and Isabela where super-typhoon 'Lawin' may make landfall, to brace for the worst as it was expected to unleash

its fury late last night or early today.

From a mere tropical cyclone, Lawin (international name "Haima") has intensified into a super typhoon as it inched closer to the country yesterday, posing serious threat to Northern and Central Luzon areas.

Lawin's strength reached maximum sustained winds of up to 225 kilometers per

hour (kph) and gustiness of up to 315 kph, prompting the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) to raise the highest tropical cyclone warning signal No. 5 over Cagayan, Isabela, Kalinga, Apayao, Ilocos Norte, and Northern Abra last night, the first time it was hoisted since its introduction in 2015. These areas may

experience winds of more than 220 kph within 12 hours, and heavy to widespread damage is most likely.

Signal No. 4 is now up the rest of Abra, Ilocos Sur, Mountain Province, Ifugao, and Calayan group of islands. These areas may experience 171-220 kph of winds within 12 hours.

Areas under signal No. 3 are La Union,

Benguet, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, and northern Aurora. These areas may experience 121-170 kph in 18 hours.

Areas placed under signal No. 2 are Batanes group of islands, Pangasinan, rest of Aurora, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, northern Zambales, and northern Quezon including Polillo Island. These areas may experience 61-120 kph within 24

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Prepare for the...

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hours.

The rest of Zambales, Bulacan, Bataan, Pampanga, Rizal, rest of Quezon, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Albay, and Metro Manila were placed under signal No. 1. About 30-60 kph of winds is expected within 36 hours.

PAGASA weather forecaster Aldczar Aurelio said Lawin was expected to make landfall over Cagayan or Isabela between 11 p.m. Wednesday and 2 a.m. Thursday.

After its landfall, the eye of Lawin is expected to cross Apayao and Ilocos Norte en route to China.

Aurelio said Lawin is relatively moving fast and is expected over the coast of Ilocos Sur or Ilocos Norte this morning. It will be outside the country's area of responsibility by Friday afternoon.

At around 4 p.m. Wednesday, Lawin was located at 275 km east-southeast of Tuguegarao City, moving west-northwest at 25 kph.

Gov't ready

President Duterte has assured the government is "ready for everything" in mitigating the impact of the storm.

He said concerned government agencies have been mobilized to minimize the loss of life and damage to property during the onslaught of the storm.

"We are ready for everything. All is in place, the mitigation guys, the local and the national have been alerted," Duterte said in a press conference in Beijing, China, a few hours before the expected landfall of Lawin.

"We have put in place all things necessary to mitigate whatever consequences the cyclone would bring. By that I am saying that it is really the destructions that we anticipate and the lives that will be lost. I hope there would be none but just the same we can expect some sort of a stronger typhoon this year," he said.

5-meter storm surge

PAGASA Weather Division's Marine Meteorological Services Section Chief Rene Paciente warned residents, particularly in Northern and Central Luzon to brace for a "destructive" typhoon.

"Wherever it makes landfall, people should not let their guards down because typhoon Lawin is a destructive cyclone

also be on alert for possible storm surge up to 5 meters or 16.4 feet along the coastlines of Isabela, northern Aurora, Ilocos Norte, and Cagayan including Calayan Island.

Undersecretary Ricardo B. Jalad, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) executive director and Office of Civil Defense (OCD) administrator, said in a press briefing that Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (RDRRMCs) concerned have been advised to undertake "precautionary measures" in their respective areas of responsibility for the arrival of the super typhoon.

He also advised local disaster officials to initiate pre-emptive evacuation of families in low-lying areas and mountainous areas if situation warrants.

Evacuate now

Dr. Mahar Lagmay, Project NOAH executive director, asked residents that will be directly affected by Lawin to evacuate now in order to escape danger.

During a press briefing at the NDRRMC headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Lagmay said that no amount of government warning given will be effective if people and communities will not heed their call and make any action.

"Kailangan po umakasyon ang mga tao at alamin kung saan pupunta, sundin ang mga abiso. Kapag wala po iyan, hindi po magiging epektibo ang programa ng gobyerno (Residents should act now, find out where to evacuate, and follow advices. If these are not followed, the disaster preparedness program of the government won't be effective)," he added.

From a diameter of 650 km last Tuesday, Lawin's circulation grew bigger at 800 km yesterday afternoon. Lawin's damaging wind may also cover 155 kms from the center.

PAGASA's historical storm surge data showed that during the onslaught of super typhoon Juan (Megi) in 2010, storm surge up to 6.5 meters occurred in Divilacan, Isabela, and up to 4.6 meters in Dinapigue, Isabela.

"Those along coastal areas should already evacuate to higher ground," Paciente said.

Likewise, sea travel is risky over the eastern seaboard of Southern Luzon and the northern and eastern seaboard of Samar.

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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MANILA BULLETIN

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INAL NO. 5 - With the destructive force of a super-typhoon, 'Lawin' makes its presence felt early in Tuguegarao City, dumping rain Wednesday, inundating Bagongbayan Street on Macapagal Avenue, and forcing these men to travel on a banca where there used to be roads. (All Vicoy)

Mt. Bulusan spews ash anew; danger zone extended by 2 km

BY NINO N. LUCAS

SORSOGON CITY, Sorsogon — Restive Mount Bulusan in Sorsogon spewed ash anew early yesterday morning, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

In an advisory, Phivolcs said that Mt. Bulusan exhibited a steam-driven or phreatic eruption from vents of its southeastern upper slope at around 4:58 a.m. which was recorded as an explosion-type earthquake that lasted for almost 9 minutes based on the seismic record.

Phivolcs said that visual observation of the edifice was obscured by thick cloud cover, but limited observations near the vent approximated the eruption plume to have risen 1 kilometer high that drifted to the southeast, with traces of ash spotted in some villages of Bulusan town.

The volcano's seismic monitoring network additionally recorded 28 volcanic earthquakes in the past 24 hours, sulfur dioxide emission was measured at an average 176 tons a day since October 18 while the precise leveling data showed that there is a slight inflationary change of the edifice relative to May 2016 measurement.

Sorsogon Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office chief Raden Dimaano said that Phivolcs al-

ready declared an extended permanent danger zone (PDZ) on southern side due to potential hazards.

"South East vents bring increased concern. South East pose source of eruption close to populated villages of Mapaso in Irosin town and San Roque in Bulusan. Phivolcs declared an extended danger zone on southern slopes of Bulusan Volcano stretching 2 kilometers further downslope of permanent danger zone (PDZ). Barangays Mapaso, San Roque and Patag in conjunction with PDZ are warned against volcanic hazards from phreatic eruptions during alert levels 1 and 2," Dimaano said.

Meanwhile, the provincial disaster chief said that as of press time, they are conducting an assessment for possible relocation of affected families inside the extended danger zone.

"Sa ngayon, i-a-assess muna natin kasi yung hawak nating numero ng populasyon ay since 2010 pa na galing NSO. We are also conducting information dissemination sa mga barangay na apektado para alam na nila yung gagawin in case lumala yung sitwasyon. Pero most probably kung may kamag-anak sila na pwedeng tuluyan muna, maari silang tumuloy muna doon, but we already identified the areas na pwedeng paglipatan sa kanila," he said.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Joint exploration with China backed

LEADERS of the House minority bloc on Wednesday backed a proposal for joint exploration between the Philippines and China in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) to allow the country to benefit from the area's vast oil and gas resources despite a maritime dispute.

House Minority Leader Danilo Suarez of Quezon and Jose "Lito" Atienza of Buhay party-list bared their stance following reports that the Duterte administration would ink a deal with China on joint exploration, particularly for natural gas in Recto or Reed Bank, during the President's state visit in Beijing this week.

"There's no problem with a joint venture with China. It is most welcome because that will increase our [financial] capital. This is a joint venture for exploration of oil or gas. If you don't use those resources ... in a few years, you can't use it anymore," Suarez told reporters.

Atienza saw no problem even if joint exploration would be held within the Philippines' 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

On July 12, a UN-backed arbitration tribunal invalidated China's claim to most of the South China Sea and upheld the Philippines' rights over its EEZ, which covers the Kalayaan

► **ExplorationA8**

■ **EXPLORATION FROM A1**

Joint

(Spratly) Islands, Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, Panganiban (Mischief) Reef, Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal and Recto (Reed) Bank.

The arbitration court said Filipino fishermen should enjoy fishing rights at Panatag Shoal, and that Chinese reclamation activities in the area were illegal.

Atienza however contended that "an exclusive economic zone does not mean it is yours."

"It just means you can conduct economic activities there. Working with a foreign counterpart is not necessarily bad or deplorable," said Atienza, who was secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources during the Arroyo administration.

Done by Arroyo

A joint exploration pact between the Philippines, China and Vietnam took effect in 2005, during the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

The Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) covered islands located 142,886 square kilometers west of Palawan, within the Philippines' EEZ based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (Unclos).

The JMSU lapsed in 2008 and was not renewed by the Arroyo administration after the agreement drew flak over what the critics branded as a sellout of Philippine sovereignty.

Opposition lawmakers Edcel Lagman of Albay, Tom Villarin of Akbayan and Gary Alejano of Magdalo party-list, who are not

aligned with the Suarez-led minority bloc, earlier warned that a joint venture would violate Philippine sovereignty.

"There was a similar agreement in the past, the JMSU, which was not renewed [when it lapsed in 2008] because questions of violating our sovereignty. This nagging question is still current. Whether or not President Duterte pulls out of his travel bag a copy of the arbitral decision sustaining the Philippines' sovereignty over the disputed islands in the West Philippine Sea, China must be constantly reminded of the Philippines' victory," Lagman said in a news conference.

Alejano claimed the President was undermining the government's UN victory by embracing China despite its continued aggression against Filipino fishermen and patrol ships in the West

Philippine Sea.

"We should be taking advantage of this ruling. However, the President is weakening our position. Our option is not limited to talking to China or going to war against China. We can talk to China without going to war," Alejano, a former Marine captain, stressed.

Villarin claimed China had nothing much to offer to the Philippines anyway. "We know that China has been displaying an aggressive behavior in the West Philippine Sea, and such behavior will not change," he said.

"Our standing is the UN ruling which upholds the Unclos. China is a signatory of Unclos. This [ruling] gives us the moral high ground. We don't want to lose that moral high ground in the community of nations," Villarin said.

LLANESCA T. PANTI

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

₱3.35-trillion budget for 2017 approved

BY JEN R. ROSARIO

Voting 243 for and five against, the House of Representatives approved last night on third and final reading the 2017

General Appropriations Act, the first full budget of the Duterte administration that provides for a ₱3.35-trillion national budget to finance government operations next year. ►6

₱3.35-trillion... ◀1

Partly prepared by the Aquino administration, next year's proposed national allocation is 11.6 higher than the current budget and represents 21 percent of the project gross domestic product in 2017.

Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez said the timely House approval of the GAA help guarantee that there will be no re-enacted budget for 2017.

Alvarez also stressed that the 2017 budget measure supports the successful execution of the Duterte government's 10-point socio-economic agenda, foremost of which is the reduction of poverty and the anti-criminality drive.

The spending program allocated a higher budget of ₱860.7 for infrastructure, as against the current ₱758.4 billion.

Davao City Rep. Karlo Nograles, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, said the proposed 2017 GAA allocates 40 percent of the ₱3.35 trillion in empowering human resources with education being the top priority, followed by health care, social welfare, and other social services.

At least 27.6 percent has been allocated for economic services to fix the broken infrastructure network, boost agricultural and rural sector, and generate more jobs and livelihood; and 22 percent for general public services and defense.

In accordance with the Duterte administration the 10-point socio-economic development agenda, the budget proposal includes the following: infrastructure, ₱860.7 billion which is 13.8 percent higher than this year's budget; rule of law, ₱119.4 billion for the Philippine National Police (PNP) which is 24.6 percent higher than this year and ₱130.6 billion for the Armed

(DICT) and ₱20.8 billion for the Department of Science and Technology (DOST); education, ₱699.95 billion; health, ₱151.5 billion; social welfare and sustainable livelihood, ₱129.9 billion for the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and ₱13.5 billion for the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); energy, ₱5.6 billion for electrification; and disaster risk reduction and environmental protection, ₱37.3 billion for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRMF) and ₱29.4 billion for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Minority Leader Danilo Suarez said the lack of opposition to the budget dramatizes the legislative branch's resolve to give the Duterte government a better chance of succeeding in introducing "real change" in the manner of governance in the country.

Suarez said the opposition bloc in the Lower House want to see Duterte transform from a crime fighter into a "general manager" who can address the other ills affecting the government.

The top 10 agencies in terms of 2017 budgetary allocations are the following:

1. Department of Education - ₱567.5 billion
2. Department of Public Works and Highways - ₱458.6 billion
3. Department of the Interior and Local Government - ₱150 billion
4. Department of National Defense - ₱134.5 billion
5. Department of Social Welfare and Development - ₱129.9 billion
6. Department of Health - ₱94 billion
7. State Universities and Colleges - ₱58.8 billion
8. Department of Transportation - ₱55.4 billion

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BusinessMirror

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Be careful in dealing with China, Duterte told

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jontmayuga](#)

THE Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) on Wednesday cautioned President Duterte in dealing with the Chinese, particularly on the issue of Scarborough Shoal.

Also known as Bajo de Masinloc, the disputed Scarborough Shoal has been off limits to Filipino fishermen after China's naval forces and coast guard took over the area in 2012.

Hundreds of fishermen, particularly those from Zambales and nearby provinces, rely on Bajo de Masinloc's rich fishing grounds.

They have been denouncing the threats, harassment and intimidation perpetrated by Chinese coast guard and naval personnel who prevent them from fishing in the area.

The group issued the statement after China reportedly said that it may consider allowing Filipino fishermen to enter Scarborough Shoal, but with certain conditions.

Duterte, who is on a state visit to China, aims to forge stronger economic and military ties with China.

"This maybe a welcome development but first of all, we shouldn't be begging China to give us something that is rightfully ours. President Duterte must constructively assert our rights to the Scarborough Shoal without putting our economic and foreign policies at stake," Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya chairman said in a statement.

Pamalakaya said history should not repeat itself when former President Benigno S. Aquino III did not raise a protest when the Chinese blockaded Scarborough and barred Filipino fishermen from the area.

Aquino only protested the Chinese activities in the West Philippine Sea when China started reclaiming shoals and atolls and other land features and converted the artificial islands into military bases.

"We back President Duterte's efforts to peacefully and diplomatically resolve the dispute with China. But he should be cautious on the agreements he would enter with China not to give up our claim in the disputed West Philippine Sea and stick to his previous statements in pursuing an independent foreign policy," Hicap said.

Opposition lawmakers have warned Duterte against forging ties with China that may compromise the country's claim to the West Philippine Sea.

The Philippines won the legal battle against China

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Lake Buhi fish kill brings P178M in loss

**Typhoon 'Karen' aggravates lack of oxygen in water that killed
ands of tilapia, other fish species**

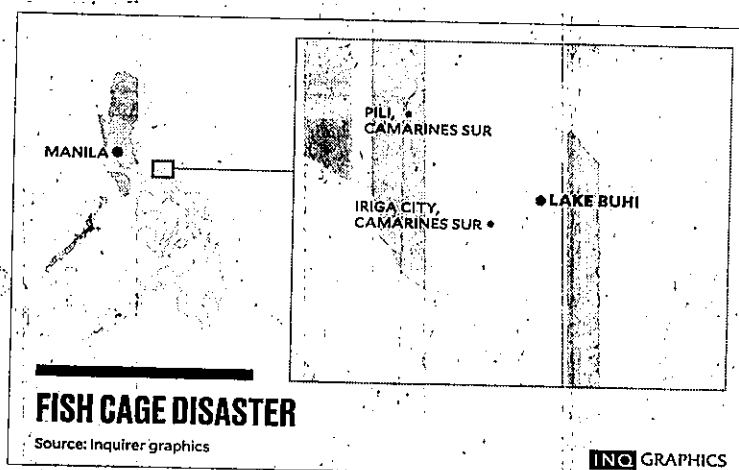
By Juan Escandor Jr.
@JuanEscandorINQ

NAGA CITY—The amount of losses from a fish kill that struck Lake Buhi in Camarines Sur province after Typhoon "Karen" slammed into the Bicol region has reached P178 million, reports from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said.

More than 50 km from this city, the 1,600-hectare Lake Buhi in Buhi town is the biggest inland body of water in Bicol where tilapia fish culture has been extensive since the 1980s. It is also the home of sinarapan (*Mistichthys luzonensis*), a goby species considered to be the smallest commercial fish in the world.

Nonie Enolva, BFAR spokesperson, said the agency's "conservative estimate" showed that each fish cage operator lost at least P1 million as a result of the fish kill.

Enolva said the fish kill, which started on Oct. 15, happened because of "compromised dissolved oxygen level," when lake water was disturbed



and its level increased due to strong wind and heavy rain whipped up by the typhoon.

Fish stress

"[Lake condition] caused extreme stress to cultured fish," she said.

Beethoven Nachor, Buhi municipal administrator, said a local government team would assess the environmental impact of the fish kill, account for the number of families affected and prepare a mitigation plan.

Nachor said the team would conduct a cleanup drive since some fish cage operators either left tilapia rotting in cages or dumped them in the lake.

He said 16 percent of Lake Buhi had been occupied by fish cages, which is 6 percent more than the size allowed for aquaculture development.

History of losses

Nachor said the price of tilapia has gone down to as low as P5 per kg from a high of P120

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Fish cage operators in Lake Buhi in Camarines Sur province harvest tilapia that survived the latest fish kill in the lake that forced the fish cage owners to sell their produce for as low as P5 per kg.

—NONIE ENOLVA/CONTRIBUTOR

per kg after the fish kill.

In 2011, Lake Buhi was also hit by a massive fish kill, with losses estimated to reach P80 million.

Dennis del Socorro, BFAR Bicol regional director, asked the Buhi government to enforce a

local law that sets the size of the lake to be devoted to aquaculture to just 10 percent to prevent another fish kill.

Del Socorro also recommended the suspension of restocking of cages until the BFAR

declares lake water to be favorable for fish culture again.

He said the local government must inventory fish cage operators and set limits on the number of cages they operate. INQ