

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 22 NOV 2016

DAY : Tuesday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

EMB slaps P24M fine vs Benguet Corp

THE Environmental Management Bureau (EMB)-Cordillera has recommended that Benguet Corporation (BC) in Itogon, Benguet must pay a fine of P24 million for polluting the rivers of Liang, Ambalanga and Agno.

The EMB-Cordillera said that on October 27 and 28, it was reported that pressure from the accumulated water at the open pit caused outbursts that released at least 50,000 metric tons of silt into the Liang River that converges at the river of Ambalanga before flowing into the Agno river.

The P24 million covers the penalties only from October 27 to November 15.

"The BC will continue to be fined on a daily basis until they finish removing the mine tailings that spilled to the rivers due to a breach at the old Antamok open pit," EMB Cordillera Director Reynaldo Digamo said.

The recommendation will be forwarded to the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB), which will ultimately decide on BC's penalties, and where the BC can also make an appeal.

Digamo explained that the job of the EMB is to find probable cause and forward their findings and recommendations to the PAB, which will evaluate and decide on the case.

"The fine is computed according to the provisions of the Clean Water Act, which provides that the erring company be charged P200,000 per day," he said.

EMB officials explained that if a company violates the Clean Air Act on three counts, the fine would be tripled.

On Monday, the water level at the old mine tunnels was at a standstill as the volume of water going out is equivalent to the water coming in.

Digamo said the company is yet to find where the water is coming from and that the source of the accumulated water at the old mine site must be removed before the breach could be plugged.

BC officials said they have already hired a consultancy firm to locate the source of the water flooding the old mine site and that it has started building a drainage canal direct to the penstock to increase water discharge.

On November 7, the tailings spilling into the river were already contained but there was still

The Manila Times

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Semirara Mining starts Panian pit final rehab

INTEGRATED energy company Semirara Mining and Power Corporation (SMPC) said Monday it is working to restore the ecological balance of its Panian pit, which was recently closed following the depletion of its mineable coal reserves.

The depletion was certified by the Department of Energy (DOE) after department personnel visited Semirara Island last September 20 to 21.

"Our goal is to restore the topography of Panian and promote flora and fauna growth in the area," SMPC president and COO Victor A. Consunji said in a disclosure to the stock exchange.

Prior to pre-mine operation,

the Panian area was characterized by rolling hills of open grasslands and numerous gullies with shrubs and trees.

To restore the ecological balance, SMPC has begun filling Panian pit with overburden materials from the Molave and Narra Mines, its two operating pits.

Initial progressive rehabilitation was also started in 2005 near Casay Lake at the western part of Panian. To date, over 250 hectares of the area have been planted with nearly 2 million trees.

Once the Panian mine pit becomes a stable landform, SMPC will cover the area with humic

acid, compost and other materials to add nutrients to the soil. This will be followed by a massive reforestation program that involves endemic and suitable plant species.

"The in-pit of Panian Mine would no longer look like a depleted mine since the final elevation would be around -10 meters at the northern side and +30 meters at the central barricade and +10 meters at the southern side," Consunji said.

The +10 meter elevation is planned to be a fresh water reservoir while the -10 meter elevation is being eyed as a possible beach resort, grazing land, pearl farm

or marine sanctuary that will be turned over to the local government unit for possible development into an ecotourism spot.

"We are still consulting with DOE and host LGU [local government unit] as to the final land use plan. We want to turn over something that will continue to benefit the government and host community. Island sustainability is our main concern," added Consunji.

SMPC is the only power producer in the Philippines that generates its own fuel. It produces over 800 megawatts of baseload power for the Luzon grid.

VOLTAIRE PALAÑA

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Duterte to declare Panatag Shoal a 'no-fish zone'

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte is set to unilaterally declare Scarborough Shoal as a "no-fish zone" or marine sanctuary for both Filipino and Chinese fishermen, national security adviser Hermogenes Espron Jr. said Sunday.

Espron, in a media interview in Peru, said the President is set to sign an executive order that would cover the marine sanctuary.

Espron said Duterte already mentioned

the "unilateral declaration" to Chinese President Xi Jinping when they met at the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting in Peru last Saturday.

Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said Xi expressed hope that the move would be favorable to the Philippines and China.

The Scarborough Shoal, also known as

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DUTERTE

Panatag Shoal in Manila, is a traditional fishing ground for Filipino fishermen and had been off-limits local fishermen due to harassment from the Chinese Coast Guard in 2012.

Filipino fishermen, however, were able to fish again after the President went on a state visit to China and met with Xi.

Xi reiterated that Filipinos would continue to have access to their traditional fishing grounds without facing harassment from Chinese authorities.

Espron said the declaration aims to eventually ensure the continued supply and protection of marine resources.

He said fishermen would be allowed to continue fishing outside the sanctuary.

Espron and Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said the Philip-

pines and China are looking at maritime arrangements that call for a "coast guard-to-coast guard relations in areas like Scarborough and, of course, in other areas of the South China Sea, West Philippine Sea."

"That simply means that there is a degree of demilitarization in the area. Demilitarization, because coast guard is a civilian. We call that the white ships going there, compared to gray ships going to Scarborough," Lopez said.

Espron clarified that the arrangements do not mean that the Philippines is turning its back on the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration that China's historical claim on the South China Sea has no bearing.

He said the President will stay in the four corners of the Tribunal's decision.

"While we may at this time set aside the negotiations or the issue on territorial ownership of Scarborough because Scarborough is entitled to 12 nautical miles as per Tribunal ruling. We do not set that aside but we consciously think of it. However, we go into more productive activities like fishing and more maritime cooperation," he said.

He and Lopez said the Philippines is also looking at improving trade relations with China.

Lopez said China has reaffirmed its commitment to buy up to \$100 million worth of fruits from the Philippines, mostly bananas; to continue developing the infrastructure programs with the Philippines; including a \$3-billion project to be financed by the Bank of China; and to lift the travel ban on Chinese tourists from visiting the Philippines.

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PH to declare Panatag Shoal a protected marine sanctuary

LIMA, Peru – The Philippines will unilaterally declare the fish spawning grounds of Panatag Shoal (Scarborough Shoal) a protected marine sanctuary where fishing is banned inside the triangular lagoon.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said President Duterte informed Chinese President

Xi Jinping of his intention to undertake this unilateral declaration to protect this marine sanctuary during their bilateral meeting here at the sidelines of the 24th Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting.

Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said the Chinese president responded to Duterte's statement ►16

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with "We will mobilize government forces to promote our agreements, step up guidance."

Esperon said that the Cabinet Security Cluster will meet next week and submit the papers.

The fishing ban only covers the lagoon area of the Panatag Shoal. Fishing is allowed outside or within the perimeter of the Panatag Shoal.

The lagoon, which is a big as Quezon City, is rich in coral formations that serve as spawning grounds for different fish species that replenish

depleted stocks in waters adjacent to the Philippines.

Esperon added that the declaration might also include the Ayungin Shoal where Filipino fishermen have long been freely fishing without any interference from the Chinese.

While the Philippine government's move was unilateral in nature, Esperon said that protection of this fish spawning area is something that is of common interest to both China and the Philippines.

"If they don't want to fish in there,

that's what we also like, so it will come out naturally," he said.

Esperon also emphasized that this does not mean giving up the country's win at the UN Tribunal Court.

"No, no, no, President Duterte has always said he will not get out of the four corners of the Tribunal," he pointed.

According to Esperon, a move for a "win-win" solution for both parties is a very effective strategy rather than a "win-lose" solution.

Following President Duterte's visit to China, Filipino fishermen are now back in their traditional fishing grounds without being driven away by members

of the Chinese Coast Guard.

Esperon also said that it is not right to say that "China has allowed us to go fishing at disputed territories because we are not asking them to allow us. That should be clear to us. We are not asking them to allow us, we are ... out of sheer courage of the fishermen and dire need to go into economic activities, they go fishing in there, and they are not driven away."

Duterte's recent visit to China to rekindle strained relations due to territorial dispute over the South China Sea has paved the way for the return of Filipino fishermen to their traditional

Esperon, however, stressed that the Scarborough Shoal is not the sum total of the Philippines' relations with China noting that the Joint Committee on South China Sea is just one of the six joint committees, including trade, agriculture established by both countries.

The Chinese president has also invited Duterte to attend two major events in China next year — the BRICS Dialogue in September as the ASEAN Chair and the Belt and Road Forum in May.

Andanar also said that President Xi has emphasized during the bilateral meeting that "we are off to a very good

Duterte declares Panatag lagoon a marine sanctuary

LIMA, Peru: President Rodrigo Duterte has decided to declare the lagoon in Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal a marine sanctuary where neither Filipino nor Chinese will be allowed to fish, a Cabinet official said on Monday.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon said Duterte informed Chinese President Xi Jinping of his plan during their bilateral meeting on Saturday at the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit here.

"The President has decided to declare that as a sanctuary. That is a unilateral action from government," Esperon told reporters. The lagoon, which he said was "as big as Quezon City, is a spawning area for fish and needs to be protected.

"No fishing there. In fact, as far as I know, there had even been seasons when they would close it. To us that's good but what is important now is we are coming up with an instrument in the form of a marine protected

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PANATAG

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■ LAGOON FROM A1

Duterte declares Panatag lagoon a marine sanctuary

area declaration," he said.

Esperon said the President plans to issue an executive order unilaterally declaring the lagoon a marine sanctuary.

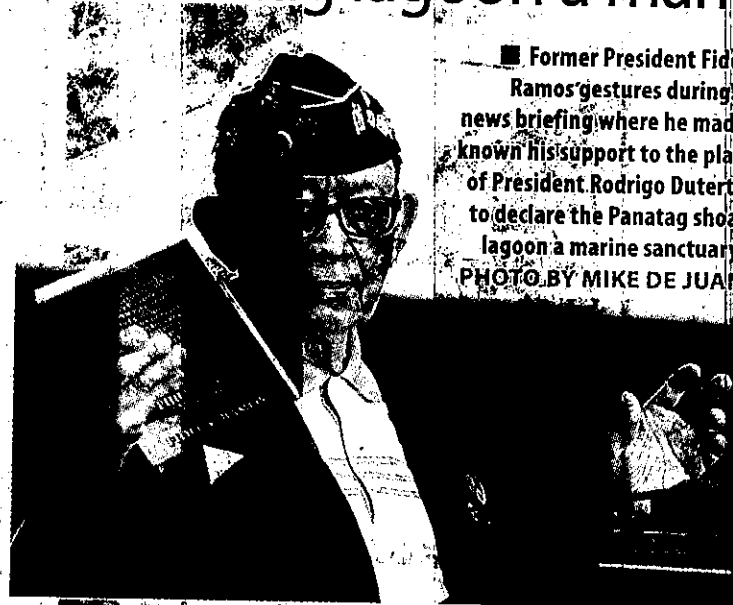
Esperon said Duterte and Xi also discussed "maritime arrangements" including joint Coast Guard patrols in Panatag shoal, which will lead to "demilitarization" of the area.

"The implication and the effect of this is that there will be more coast guard-to-coast guard relations in areas like Scarborough and, of course, in other areas of the South China Sea, West Philippine Sea," the official said.

Asked about how Xi responded to Duterte's statement, Esperon said the Chinese leader's reply was along the lines of "an agreement that is not part of an agreement."

"It was a very oriental response," he said. "What is very clear now is there is an expression of appreciation from the President of his satisfaction in knowing that our fishermen can fish in Scarborough as is naturally done or traditionally done."

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar, who was also at the meeting, said Xi's reply to Duterte's proposal was: "We will mobilize government forces to promote our agreements, step up guidance to create a favorable environment."



■ Former President Fidel Ramos gestures during a news briefing where he made known his support to the plan of President Rodrigo Duterte to declare the Panatag shoal lagoon a marine sanctuary. PHOTO BY MIKE DE JUAN

"That was what he said after President Duterte talked about his unilateral declaration to turn the Scarborough lagoon into a marine sanctuary," Andanar said.

FVR agrees

Former president Fidel Ramos backed Duterte's plan to declare the Panatag lagoon a marine sanctuary.

Ramos, who was the administration's special envoy to China, said restricting fishing activities at the area was one of their "first options."

"[Declaring Panatag as marine sanctuary] is the highest form of aquaculture preservation, a sanctuary, where the mother fish spawn

and that it would therefore be protected perpetually. But the fishing can be made outside the limits of the shoal itself," Ramos told reporters in a news conference.

"There are other

a seasonal fishing area but the sanctuary is the highest form of protected environmental asset in the definition of the United Nations," he added.

Maritime experts, however, said the Philippines should consult China as well as other countries who also have the right to fish there before imposing any arrangement.

They pointed out that a ruling from the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, The Netherlands stated that Panatag was a traditional fishing ground not only of Filipino and Chinese fishermen, but also of other Asian countries.

"In the world, it is recognized that both the Philippines and China and other countries have traditional fishing rights in the Scarborough and these traditional fishing rights has to be respected by other parties so, if any party enforced actions that are not in conformity with the UNCLOS, then it would be in violation of international law," Dr. Pham Lan Dung, director of Foreign Service Training

tion Convention on the Law of the Sea, an international agreement that defines the rights and responsibilities of nations with respect to their use of the world's oceans.

Professor Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, said a multilateral approach is the right way to handle the fishing issue at Panatag.

"In order to regulate fishermen from various nationalities, you need arrangements where each one of those countries can benefit from," Batongbacal said.

No opposition

Fishermen in Bataan are not opposed to the President's plan to declare the lagoon off limits to them.

"Kung pagbabawalan sa lagoon ng triangle, OK lang, basta payagang lamang kami na mangisda sa paligid (If we are not allowed inside the triangle, that's okay, as long as we can fish outside the lagoon)," F/B Kim Eurich captain Diogenes Corceles said.

Corceles and his men were the first who went fishing in the shoal after Duterte's state visit to China. He said there were six boats from the Chinese Coastguard in the shoal but they were not shooed away.

Flordeliza Salota, president of the 500-strong Sisiman Fishing Operators Association, also sees no problem if Panatag shoal was declared a marine sanctuary.

"We trust the President. He knows what is good for Filipino fishermen," she said.

Salota said their bigger problem are the Vietnamese fishermen who use nets and catch even the small fish.

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Rody to declare lagoon in Panatag 'no-fishing' zone

By EFREN MONTANO

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Roa Duterte is set to declare the lagoon in Panatag Shoal a marine sanctuary area.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, Jr. disclosed that the President will sign an executive order declaring a lagoon in the Panatag Shoal, internationally known as Scarborough Shoal, a "no-fishing zone" for both Filipino and Chinese fishermen.

This "unilateral declaration" has been relayed to Chinese President Xi Jinping during the two leaders' bilateral meeting held at the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting, according to Cabinet officials present during the APEC Media Press Conference with the Philippine media delegation.

Presidential Communi-

cations Office Secretary Martin Andanar said that President Xi hopes to create something favorable out of this.

"We will mobilize government forces to promote our agreements, step up guidance to create a favorable environment. Yun ang sinabi niya (President Xi) pagkatapos mabanggit ni Presidente Duterte yung kanyang unilateral declaration na gawing marine sanctuary," Andanar said quoting the Chinese leader.

The Panatag Shoal is a traditional fishing ground for Filipino fishermen. It was virtually off-limits to local fishermen as they complain of incidents of harassment they received from the Chinese Coast Guard.

The situation soon changed after President Duterte brought the sorry plight of Filipino fishermen to his Chinese counterpart

during his successful state visit to China last month.

Filipino fishermen can now access and fish at Panatag Shoal without experiencing harassment or being shooed away.

The two Asian leaders seem to hit it off well resulting in renewed friendship between the Philippines and China, Secretary Ramon Lopez explained.

Meanwhile, President Duterte held his first bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin where the latter praised the former for his "firm" character.

Secretary Lopez added, "Na-appreciate niya (Putin) yung stance, yung pagiging firm leader ni President Duterte. Parang, in a way, parang pinuri niya, na may respect, may dignity."

Philippines and Russia trade relations are expected to increase especially with the forthcoming visit of the President to Russia.

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FORMAL nang inilunsad ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang isang three-year program na naganap na mapalakas ang kapasidad ng mga katutubo upang pamahalaan ang kani-kanilang mga lupain na deklarang mga protected area. Alinsunod ito sa kagustuhan ni Pangulong Rodrigo R. Duterte na mangangat ang antas ng buhay at mabigyang proteksyon ang Indigenous peoples.

Pangungunahan ng Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) ang programang "Strengthening National Systems to Improve Governance and Management of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Conserved Areas and Territories" o ang Philippine ICCA Project.

Ang proyekto ay tumanggap ng technical and financial assistance mula sa Global Environment Facility (GEF) at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Kabahagirin ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ng Department of Agriculture (DA) at mga lokal na pamahalaan

kung saan ito ipatutupad.

May sampung project sites kabilang ang Mt. Tau-ngay (Tinglayan, Kalinga); Mt. Polis (Hungduan, Ifugao); Mt. Imugan (Santa Fe, Nueva Vizcaya); Egongot (Maria, Aurora, Aurora); Kawanawan (Morong, Bataan); Balabac (Palawan); Mt. Kimangkil (Impasug-ong, Bukidnon); Mt. Apo (Magpet, North Cotabato); Mt. Diwatain (Esperanza, Agusan del Sur); at Dinarawan (Jabonga, Agusan del Norte).

Paliwanag ni BMB Director Theresa Mundita Lim, ang proyekto ay pagkilala sa kakayahan ng mga katutubo na mapangalagaan ang kani-kanilang ninunong lupain, "dahil iyan sa kani-kanilang mataas na antas ng tradisyon at kaisipan na may pagsasaalang-alang sa kalikasan at sa konserbasyon nito."

Inaasahang nasa loob ng tatlong taong implemtasyon ng Philippine ICCA Project, may mga mabubuong karagdagan at mga bagong polisiya hinggil sa environment conservation.

Tuturuan din ang mga nabanggit na komunidad sa pagbubuo ng sustainable conservation plans kabilang ang business and investments plans na akma at tugma sa kani-kanilang

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

PHILIPPINE ICCA PROJECT

ninunong lupain.

Kabilang sa mga nagpakita ng suporta sa paglunsad ng proyekto sina Ifugao representative Teodoro Baguilat, Jr., na isa ring katutubo, UNDP representative Ola Almgren, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Commissioner Basilio Wandag (Cordillera Autonomous and Ilocos Regions), mga kinatawan ng mga katutubong grupo at mula sa Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation.

Si Congressman Baguilat ay may isinusulong na panukala sa House of Representatives, ang HB No. 115 na kumikilala sa ICCA at sa kanilang mahalagang gampanin sa biodiversity conservation.

Ika nga niya, "With the ICCA, we are recognizing not only area conservation, but the fact that in conser-

vation, sometimes, the community and indigenous peoples ways are more effective."

Hinihikayat niya ang mga kapwa kongresista na talakayin na ito sa plenary at ganap nang isabatas upang makatulong sa konserbasyon at proteksyon ng ating kalikasan gamit ang pamamaraan at sariling pamama-lakad ng mga katutubo na nasa sinapupunan ng kalikasan.

TANGKILIKIN ang programang "HEALTH & Travel @ SERBISYO PUBLIKO, sa DWBL 1242 kHz (8:00-9:00 a.m.) Monday to Friday at DWSS 1494 kHz (9:00 - 10:00 a.m.), Saturday & Sunday. Mababasa ang kanyang mga article sa Dr. Hilda Ong FB Fan Page.

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Watershed projects need investors

By TARA YAP

ILOILO CITY — There's a need to invest in preserving the river basins of Western Visayas, the top environmental official in the region said.

"We're seeking investors both from the government and private sectors," said Jim Sampulna, regional director of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-6).

In particular, DENR is pushing for better management of watersheds.

"If the river basins will not be protected, we cannot attain sustainability of water supply," said DENR Undersecretary Isabelo Montejo during the River Basin Investment Summit in Iloilo City last November 18.

Among the investment opportunities mentioned are bamboo plantations and planting trees and crops to stabilize the watersheds.

Sampulna said DENR is pushing for the preservation and management of three major river basins in Panay Island. These are the Jalaur River in Iloilo province, the Panay River in Capiz province and the Iloilo-Batiano River that runs through Iloilo City and neighboring Oton town.

The DENR is pushing for an Integrated Watershed Management Plan patterned after that adopted by the city and province of Iloilo.

"It is a prerequisite. It will determine what type of investment is appropriate for a particular area," Montejo said of such a plan.

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Climate change awareness focus of weeklong celebrations

Press

TACLOBAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources office for Eastern Visayas (DENR-8) will lead this week in the celebration of National Climate Change Consciousness Week in the region.

DENR Regional Executive Director Leonardo Sibbaluca said the event that lasts until November 25 is alongside the National Clean Air Month and Environmental Awareness Month this month.

Its theme is "Green Schools...Build Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Communities."

The celebrations kicked off with a "bike and plant for clean air" activity where participants from government

agencies and organizations rode from Robinson's Place through the major streets of the city to the National Greening program (NGP) site in Barangay Utap.

Sibbaluca said there will be a photo contest and exhibit at Robinson's Place from November 21 to 25, featuring Climate Change, Clean Air, and Eco-Schools Champions in Eastern Visayas.

Sibbaluca said the activities lined up shall ensure that advocacies for a better environment are instilled in every individual.

"The state of our environment depends so much on the impacts of our daily activities. These environmental celebrations remind us to do our share for the environment and get our act

together for one cause," he said.

As part of the DENR's information, education, and communication campaign, a series of media blitz and interactions will be conducted throughout the region, Sibbaluca said.

He said Proclamation 1109 issued in 1997 declared November as Clean Air Month through National Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Consciousness to create awareness among motorists on the importance and benefits of vehicle maintenance.

Republic Act 9512 or the National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008, also declared November as Environmental Awareness Month.

Sibbaluca said that the law calls for the integration of environmental education in school curricula.

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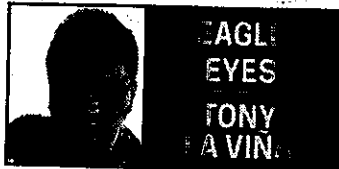
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CLIMATE CHANGE

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From Marrakech, hope for climate change

LAST Friday, November 18, the 22nd session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change closed in Marrakech, Morocco. Two weeks of intense negotiations produced credible outcomes that bring hope for addressing climate change. Marrakech built on the goodwill from COP 21 last December 2015 when 195 countries adopted the Paris Agreement. That agreement came into force last November 3 on the eve of COP 22.

In the second week of Marrakech, during the high-level segment, the Philippines was represented by Environment Secretary Gina Lopez who delivered a powerful speech that called for urgent and ambitious action. Lopez explained passionately why climate change is high on our agenda:

"The Philippines is a country of 7,000 islands which has the highest endemicity per unit area in the planet. This means that 70 percent of the biodiversity found in the Philippines can only be found in our country. We have more than 3,000 species of marine life, some of which includes a snail—the venom of which has been found by a Nobel laureate to be better than morphine in addressing pain without the side effects. Our sponges and shells are effective in addressing cancer, and we are barely scratching the surface of what there is. This is not just the wealth of the Philippines—it is the wealth of all of us together.

Should the planet escalate to more than 1.5 degrees [increase in temperature], we lose all of that. The planet simply cannot afford an indecisive ambiguity about what needs to be done. The situation is clear—anything more than 1.5 degrees will destroy possibilities for quality of life. We do not need to give up economic growth—from clean energy, to sustainable transportation, to all facets of life. We need to have the courage to change the way we do things. We cannot and must not build an econo-

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my based on suffering."

The Philippine statement echoed the stand of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), of which the Philippines is a member (we chaired the CVF up to earlier this year when we passed the baton to Ethiopia). Assistant Secretary Evelyn Cruzada, of the Office of the Cabinet Secretary, delivered a strong statement on our behalf during the CVF High Level Meeting held last week. According to the Marrakech Vision of the CVF: "The response to climate change is climate justice and social justice in action... This requires limiting to the maximum the increase in warming below if not well below 1.5 degrees Celsius, a peaking of global emissions by 2020 at the latest, and the achievement of net carbon neutrality by the 2050s in realization of the Paris Agreement."

CVF countries, including the Philippines, will "strive to meet 100-percent domestic renewable energy production as rapidly as possible, while working to end energy poverty and protect water and food security, taking into consideration national circumstances." They promised "to help each other with our respective transition plans to transform our energy, transport and other sectors, and together ensure support is made available in terms of capacity building, financing and technology."

The CVF emphasized the importance of people being effectively informed about climate change and equipped

as communicators of climate risks and actions. It promoted a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach in pursuit of sustainable development and the convergence of all key stakeholders, both private and government and civil society.

Finally, the heads of state and government delegations attending COP 22 issued the "Marrakech Action Proclamation for our Climate and Sustainable Development" to signal a shift towards a new era of implementation and action on climate and sustainable development. According to them: "The Marrakech Conference marks an important inflection point in our commitment to bring together the whole international community to tackle one of the greatest challenges of our time. As we now turn towards implementation and action, we reiterate our resolve to inspire solidarity, hope and opportunity for current and future generations."

Governments reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement, noting its rapid entry into force, its ambitious goals, its inclusiveness and reflectiveness of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. They acknowledged that there is extraordinary and irreversible momentum on climate change worldwide that is "driven not only by governments, but by science, business and global action of all types at all levels."

The Marrakech Proclamation calls for the highest political commitment to combat climate change and strong solidarity with those countries most vulnerable to the impact of climate

change, including supporting efforts that enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability. It calls for urgently raising ambition and strengthening cooperation among countries to close the gap between current emissions trajectories and the pathway needed to meet the Paris Agreement's long-term temperature goals.

The Proclamation also calls for increased support: among others an increase in the volume, flow and access to finance for climate projects, alongside improved capacity and technology, including from developed to developing countries. More specifically, governments committed to strengthen and support efforts to eradicate poverty, ensure food security and to take stringent action to deal with climate change challenges in agriculture.

The Philippine delegation was influential in Marrakech. I was there the first week and continued to observe their work, through the delegation's Viber exchanges, in the second week. The competence and dedication of the delegation—our leaders, diplomats, technical officials from various departments, and colleagues from civil society organizations and academe—is truly impressive. As I mentioned in my previous column, the backstopping work of our diplomats and the lawyers of the Climate Change Commission was exemplary.

With the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, solidarity with other developing countries is essential. China is now the undis-

puted global leader on climate change and we must reinvigorate our long-time alliance on this issue with our big neighbor. While continuing our membership in the Climate Vulnerable Forum, I would urge President Duterte and our decision makers to position the Philippines to rejoin the Like Minded Developing Countries, an aggragation of developing countries that we co-founded in 2011 during the Durban climate conference and which we left in the 2014 Lima conference. There were good reasons for the pivot we made that year; but with the recent developments, domestic and global, rejoining the LMDC is imperative for a stronger negotiating position in the climate process.

Coming back from Marrakech, the Philippines must now ratify the Paris Agreement. Hopefully, the President will endorse the Agreement soon to the Senate for its concurrence, a constitutional requirement. But unfortunately, the Department of Energy is not yet on board and ratification is on hold as a result.

I understand where Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi is coming from, given DOE's mandate to ensure energy security for the country. But, as I will propose in a later column, the resistance might be coming from the wrong premises. In fact, if implemented properly, the Paris Agreement will lead us to a more energy secure future.

Marrakech was good. Let us move forward now to ratify and implement the Paris Agreement.

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Pitfalls in trade liberalization

STRATE



Cecilio T. Arillo

DATABASE

ATIVES SERVICE

A NEW study conducted by a team of scientists of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) shared to Database has discovered that global warming could create substantial economic damage in agriculture worldwide, as climate change threatens agricultural productivity, forcing up food prices.

"While financial gains and losses differ between consumers and producers across the regions, the bottom line is that consumers, in general, will likely have to pay more for the same basket of food," the PIK study said. Researchers at PIK said additional expenditure for consumers outweighs producers' gains, and increasing net economic losses will occur in the agriculture and food sector toward the end of the century. However, economic losses could be limited to 0.3 percent of global GDP—depending on agricultural trade policies, they said.

"Agriculture is very sensitive to climate change—even a small increase of global mean temperatures can have significant effects on regional crop yields, affecting both the profitability of agricultural production and the share of income spent on food," PIK lead author-researcher Miodrag Stevanović said.

"Our study quantifies economic impacts and analyzes the role of international trade as an adaptation measure. We find that economic losses in agriculture could add up to the annual amount of roughly 0.8 percent of global GDP at the end of the century with a very restricted trade regime," Stevanovic pointed out. He said although this percentage sounds small, it actually translates to losses of \$2.5 trillion and is comparably higher for regions with limited agricultural resources with respect to growing agricultural demand, for example, the Middle East, Africa and India.

"In contrast, further trade liberalization in agricultural commodities could reduce financial damage globally by 65 percent, to 0.3 percent of global GDP," the expert said.

"Both global warming and free trade favor northern regions like Europe and the US, since producers' gains increase as trade patterns shift

"Agriculture is very sensitive to climate change—even a small increase of global mean temperatures can have significant effects on regional crop yields, affecting both the profitability of agricultural production and the share of income spent on food," PIK lead author-researcher Miodrag Stevanović said.

same time, intensifying production or expanding cultivated land into previously untouched areas may come at a risk: it could lead to additional greenhouse-gas emissions through tropical deforestation or increased fertilizer use. This could then further enhance climate-change pressure on agriculture."

The researchers combined 19 different climate projections with simulations of crop growth to assess economic impacts of climate change in the agricultural sector. While the magnitude of damage varies with different assumptions on crop-productivity response to climate change, CO₂ plant fertilization affect socio-economic projection. The PIK study highlighted the important role of trade as a key measure to partly reduce climate-change impacts.

If food prices increase due to climate-change impacts, households will not only have to spend more on their food consumption, but could also face risks of insufficient access to food and malnutrition.

"The best way to avoid these risks is to limit climate change. However, for impacts that cannot be avoided, an open and diversified trade system can be an important adaptation option. It can account for changes in global patterns of agricultural productivity and, thus, allow for reducing production costs and enhancing food security," said Hermann Lotze-Campen, chairman of PIK's research domain Climate Impacts and Vulnerability.

Mine industry leaders push bill creating new dep't

Move to resolve conflict from laws allowing MGB, LGUs to issue permits

BAGUIO CITY—Mine industry leaders discussed a proposal for a new mining code that would create a Department of Mines and enforce a provision stipulating that all mineral lands, including those covered by ancestral domains, are inalienable and owned by the state.

The proposal came on the heels of a perceived threat from the anti-mine stance of a Cabinet official that was expressed in several papers presented at this year's national mine safety and environment conference held here last week.

Mining executives interacted with mine engineer Graciano Calanog Jr., who proposed the revival of an industry-backed mine code "to ensure that government policy on mining and the environment is properly balanced and not tilted in favor of the environment."

Many measures have been sponsored in Congress to replace Republic Act No. 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

Calanog said the industry is seeking a lawmaker to sponsor the draft mining code, which would make a mine department the sole authority in regulating all mining activities in the country.

By creating a single mine regulator, Calanog said it would resolve the conflict created by laws that allow the De-



Ore mined from the tunnels of Benguet province are transported through a conveyor to a production area where workers extract gold and copper. —EV ESPIRITU

partment of Environment and Natural Resources' Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and local governments to issue mining permits.

The proposal also seeks to require the new agency to be run by "officials with mining credentials," he said. "These days, anybody can be appointed director [of the MGB]," he added.

The proposed code may become controversial, however, because it would no longer honor the ancestral domain titles issued to indigenous peoples if their lands are classified as mineral lands.

The constitutionality of Republic Act No. 8371 (Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997) was questioned in the Supreme

Court, owing to its ancestral land provisions that supposedly deprive the state of its ownership over minerals and other natural resources.

The petition, however, was dismissed in 2000.

The proposed code needs to assert "that mineral lands are inalienably and owned by the state and not by the indigenous peoples nor by local governments," Calanog said.

Former Science Undersecretary Graciano Yumul said the mining industry should exert more effort "in giving facts and details about the industry to disabuse the public about the imagined perils of mining."

"We hear the secretary of environment saying climate is changing and we are in a geo-

hazardous area so we should limit mining if not totally eradicate mining. That is a wrong notion," said Yumul, now executive vice president for geology, exploration and operations and executive director of Apex Mining Corp.

"We are dealing with poor mining communities, mining makes people poor and we know that is wrong," he added.

In his keynote address at the symposium, Eulalio Austin, president and chief executive officer of Philex Mining Corp., said the idea of responsible mining "might not be grasped or understood by the general public." "We go to town proclaiming ourselves as responsible miners, and yet its meaning is lost to the public we wish to affirm or convert," he said.

"The Philippines is known to be a country with world class gold deposits. But it does not mean anything because unless these resources are mined, it would not contribute to the wealth of the country. We should be able to communicate that the mining industry can also help generate wealth for this country," he said.

"The legacy of the mining industry rest on the leaders of the industry now. We have to communicate, relate, convey... Unless we communicate our message, this industry may not survive," Austin said. —VINCENT CABREZA INQ



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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Rody to ban fishing in Panatag lagoon

By ALEXIS ROMERO

LIMA — Filipinos can again fish at Panatag (Scarborough), but President Duterte will soon keep them out of the shoal's lagoon when he declares it a marine protected area.

Filipinos will still be allowed to fish outside the lagoon in the shoal,

which a UN-backed arbitral court has declared as a common fishing ground.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. told reporters here that the draft executive order may be submitted during the

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Rody to ban

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next Cabinet security cluster meeting.

"We will meet next week and submit the papers," Esperon said. "What is important now is we are coming up with an instrument in the form of a marine protected area declaration."

Esperon said Duterte's plan to declare the 150-square-kilometer-lagoon as a marine sanctuary was mentioned during his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping last Saturday on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

Asked how Xi, whose country is also claiming ownership of the shoal, responded to the plan, Communications Secretary Martin Andanar quoted the Chinese leader: "We will mobilize government forces to promote our agreements, step up guidance to create a favorable environment."

Esperon believes that China would also ban fishing in the protected area.

"If they don't want fishing activities there and if we also do not want that, it will come out naturally," he said.

Esperon said Chinese fishermen in the shoal are not harvesting fish inside the lagoon.

"Both Filipino and Chinese fishermen are prohibited (from fishing in the lagoon)," he said. "They (China) have been imposing that. We will also impose that."

"The implication and the effect of this

the area" because coast guard vessels are civilian.

"There is an expression of appreciation from the President of his satisfaction in knowing that our fishermen can fish in Scarborough as is naturally done or traditionally done," he said.

"While we may at this time set aside the negotiations or the issue on territorial ownership of Scarborough because Scarborough is entitled to 12 nautical miles as per tribunal ruling. We do not set that aside but we consciously think of it."

Esperon said the Philippines will for now engage in more productive activities like fishing, maritime cooperation and trade. Other areas in the South China Sea may also be declared a protected area, he added.

Meanwhile, Coast Guard commandant Rear Adm. William Melad said Duterte's plan to turn Panatag Shoal into a marine sanctuary will preserve the corals and a spawning area for fish.

He intends to coordinate with other concerned agencies like the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) before implementing anything, he added.

Melad said a section of the shoal could be declared a marine sanctuary because it is a spawning ground for fish and corals are found in the area.

"We will implement it," he said.

"But we will wait for more definitive guidance from the concerned agencies. We

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DUTERTE TO DECLARE PANATAG A MARINE SANCTUARY

By DJ Yap
@deejayapINQ

LIMA, PERU—President Duterte plans to issue an executive order unilaterally declaring the lagoon of the disputed Panatag Shoal a marine sanctuary, where neither Filipinos nor Chinese may be allowed to fish.

Mr. Duterte told Chinese President Xi Jinping about his plan during their bilateral meeting on Saturday on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum here, according to National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr., who was present at the meeting.

"The President has decided to declare that a sanctuary. That is a unilateral action from the government," he said, referring to the triangular lagoon "as big as Quezon City" and known to be a spawning ground for fish.

Panatag Shoal, internationally known as Scarborough Shoal, is a traditional fishing ground for Filipinos.

China seized the shoal after a two-month standoff with the Philippines in 2012 but recently loosened its grip to allow Filipinos to fish again in the area following friendly overtures from Mr. Duterte.

If Mr. Duterte's plan proceeds, Filipino, Chinese and other fishermen would only be allowed to fish in the deeper waters just outside Panatag.

Mr. Duterte's plan is delicate because it may imply Philippine territorial control over the shoal, whose ownership the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague did not resolve when it ruled in favor of the Philippines in the maritime dispute in July.

Esperon said Mr. Duterte

"clearly talked about maritime arrangements" with Xi, including the prospect of cooperation between the coast guards of the two countries.

"The implication and the effect of this is that there will be more coast guard-to-coast guard relations in areas like Scarborough and, of course, in other areas of the South China Sea, West Philippine Sea," he told reporters in a briefing.

Cooperation between the two coast guards "simply means that there is a degree of demilitarization in the area," he said, stressing that coast guards are generally civilian forces.

"We call that the white ships going there, compared to gray ships going to Scarborough," Esperon said.

Gray ships are naval war vessels.

Esperon said it was the

Philippine position that there should be no more fishing in the Panatag lagoon, where Filipinos are currently not allowed to fish by the Chinese coast guards in the area.

He said the Philippines was aware that the Chinese were also not fishing in the lagoon, based on satellite monitoring.

Esperon said the "desired arrangement" by the Philippine side was to have both Filipino and Chinese fishermen fishing outside the triangle.

Xi's reply

Asked about how Xi responded to Mr. Duterte's statement, Esperon said the Chinese leader's reply was along the lines of "an agreement that is not part of an agreement."

"It was a very oriental response," he said. —WITH A REPORT FROM AP INQ

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Villar pushes devt of vital wetland into alternative urban destination

SEN. Cynthia A. Villar pushed for the development of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Eco-Tourism Area (LPPCHEA) as an alternative destination for urban dwellers and tourists.

"LPPCHEA can be developed as a destination that could rival shopping malls and other air-conditioned structures around the metropolis. This way, we can raise awareness on the value of LPPCHEA to flora and fauna and the surrounding communities," Villar said, in news statement released on Monday.

LPPCHEA, a 175-hectare mangrove forest and marine habitat in Manila Bay serves as a sanctuary for 84 bird species, including migratory birds from as far as Siberia. It is also a home for the globally threatened Philippine duck and Chinese egret. It also provides a spawning habitat for fishes. Its 36-hectare mangrove forest has 11 mangrove species.

The chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources was in China recently upon the invitation of the Chinese Embassy. Villar had the opportunity to visit similar areas in China, which were developed and are now preferred destinations that offer recreation and education activities, as well as venue for annual festivals.

The 8-hectare Hong Kong Wetland Park in Central Hong Kong

was described as "an oasis of green in an urban setting." It has an aviary, a greenhouse, fountains, lily ponds, playgrounds, restaurant and a marriage registry. It also houses the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware and the Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre. It has an all-year-round program for students.

Opened in May 1991 and built at a cost of \$398 million, the park houses 80 species of birds, as well as a butterfly garden, fishpond hide, mudflat hide, mangrove boardwalk, riverside hide, succession walk, stream walk, wetland reserve, viewing pavilion, discovery center, auditorium and a souvenir shop. The walk takes two to three hours to enjoy.

In promoting LPPCHEA, Villar said its status as a Wetland of International Importance as designated by the Ramsar Convention and a protected area as declared by Presidential Proclamation 1412, should be highlighted.

On March 15, 2013, the Ramsar Convention, which was signed by 90 member countries recognized LPPCHEA's global importance to biodiversity and the need to give it special protection from various threat, particularly, reclamation.

Aside from LPPCHEA, the other Philippines sites in the Ramsar list are: the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park in Palawan; the Tubbataha Reefs National Marine Park in Sulu; the Agusan Marsh

Wildlife Sanctuary; the Naujan Lake National Park in Oriental Mindoro; and the Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Cebu.

"The public, especially the youth, has to know that we have a place in Metro Manila where they can commune with nature and at the same time take part in activities, such as cleanups, tree-planting, bird-watching, while appreciating the wonders of this site," Villar said.

The 1,150-hectare Xixi National Wetland Park in Hangzhou, China, is also an urban wetland. Family activities, such as kayaking, water cycling, water pedal boat, dragon boat, silkworm feeding and fish catching were offered in this park.

Annual tourism festivals were held in this wetland, such as Plum Appreciating Festival, Grand Occasion of Dragon Boats, Red Persimmon Festival, Reed Watching Festival and Flower Festival.

"I urge our government agencies to really work for the development of LPPCHEA, to provide facilities for visitors and make this area an urban destination. We need this place to supplement the learnings of our students on wetland biodiversity, as well as raise support from tourists for wetland conservation," Villar said.

At the Senate, Villar authored Senate Bill 148, which seeks to promote and institutionalize the protection, preservation and management of LPPCHEA as a wetland.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PH to turn Scarborough into a 'no-fishing zone'

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte will soon issue an executive order making the lagoon portion of Scarborough Shoal a "marine sanctuary and no-fishing zone," which is now being guarded by Chinese Coast Guard ships, officials said Monday.

Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said Chinese President Xi Jinping appeared receptive to Duterte's idea of turning the shoal into a sanctuary, which would have the effect of banning all fishing inside the shoal but not around it during their second bilateral meeting during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Lima.

"We will mobilize government forces to promote our agreements, step up guidance to create a favorable environment," Andanar said quoting Xi.

But a maritime expert on Monday said the planned executive order declaring Scarborough Shoal a marine sanctuary would only benefit China, the country claiming almost all of the disputed South China Sea.

Maritime expert and University of the Philippines professor Jay Batongbacal said Duterte's plan would be "counterproductive" as it will prevent Filipino fishermen from fishing in the Shoal.

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"If the effect of the EO is to keep our fishermen from fishing on the shoal, it will be counterproductive," Batongbacal said.

"Even if it's supposed to be an exercise of sovereignty, the practical effect is to stop the actual use of our presence in the area. That only benefits China and ties our hands to stop our own people from going there."

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said that while the President "will issue an executive order" to effect the changes, the changes as of the time being were "unilateral."

Xi was quoted by state news agency Xinhua promising Duterte that fishermen would continue to have access to the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the West Philippine Sea.

"The Chinese leader [vowed] that the fishermen will continue to have free access to their traditional fishing grounds, apart from offering them training such as in fish culture to sustain their livelihood and families," the statement said.

Xi likewise stressed to Duterte

and commit to friendly cooperation, proper management of their differences and common development."

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon said turning the shoal into a sanctuary was an effective way of diffusing the territorial dispute with China.

Xi said China and the Philippines were faced with a new situation. Xi called on both sides to boost exchanges at all levels, discuss major issues of common concern quickly and restore bilateral mechanisms in various fields in order to enhance mutual trust and cooperation.

China in early 2012 seized control of the Scarborough Shoal and deployed navy and coastguard vessels to prevent Philippine fishermen from working in the rich fishing grounds nearby.

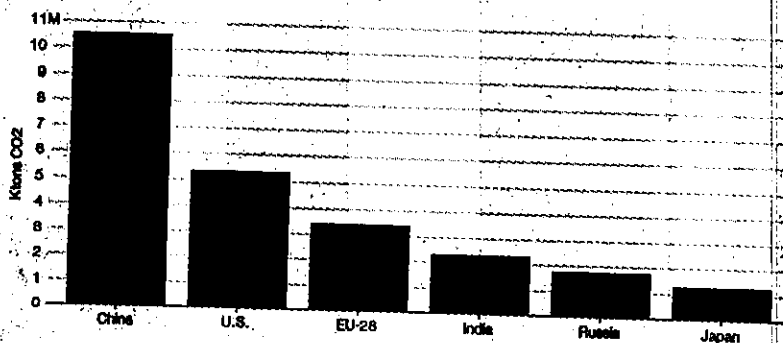
However, following Duterte's state visit to China last month, the Chinese coastguard vessels left the vicinity, allowing the fishermen to return.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on July 12 ruled that China, which claims virtually the entire South China Sea, had "violated the Philippines' sovereign rights in its exclusive economic

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Global 'Trumpism' seen harming efforts to reduce climate pollution

Biggest Emitters of CO2 in 2014



Source: Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR). Country-specific CO2 emission totals of fossil fuel use and industrial processes.

Bloomberg

POPULISM is drawing momentum from environmentalism in the US and Europe, threatening the world's effort to rein in climate change.

Donald Trump's election in the US, the UK Independence Party (Ukip) and Marine Le Pen's ascent in France all represent a break with political leaders who made the environment a priority.

All three are skeptical climate change is happening and are resistant to international projects, like the United Nations' global warming talks. Envoys from more than 190 countries gathered by the UN made progress this weekend in their work to contain fossil-fuel emissions and keep a lid on temperature increases.

Two weeks of discussions in Marrakech, Morocco, were overshadowed by the election of Trump, who has called climate change a hoax. Many delegates left the city concerned about the forces working against them.

"If climate change is labeled as an elitist global project, it will be rejected."

the Paris Agreement negotiated through the UN. That's a sharp contrast to outgoing President Barack Obama, who spent six years concentrating on the issue, resulting in a historic agreement with China in 2015 to work together on lowering emissions, prompting dozens of developing economies to follow suit. Trump's stance is echoed by right-wing movements in Europe.

Le Pen's National Front doubts global warming is linked to human activity and has promoted a "New Ecology movement" emphasizing on national programs on the environment over global rules like the ones coming from the UN talks.

Ukip leader Nigel Farage called the fight against climate change "one of the biggest and stupidest collective misunderstandings in history," saying the science isn't settled and technologies to defeat the problem, like renewable energy, are damaging to the economy.

Ukip's push to leave the European Union was endorsed by British voters on June 23, leaving Farage more influential in shaping government policy.

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Global 'Trumpism' seen harming efforts to reduce climate change

set out a work plan for reviewing progress on emissions.

A last-minute dispute involving India and Bolivia kept negotiators working into early on Saturday, hours past their deadline to finish and underscoring the tensions that remain between rich nations and poor ones on how quickly to act.

India and Bolivia held out for more comprehensive discussions on a list of pre-2020 actions, including for when the most-polluting nations would curb emissions. They were concerned that negotiators were allowing other issues to slip down the agenda, such as long-term finance for climate projects. In the end, the envoys agreed to discuss the issues next year.

China, which for years acted as a spoiler at the UN talks, has flipped its role and now is lecturing the US and Europe on the importance of the issue. Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin ripped into Trump's claim that China invented the climate issue and reminded Western envoys of the need to act.

"The European Union has been a leading player in the climate change negotiations in the past 20 years," Liu said in Marrakech. "We hope the European Union will continue to play its role. A continuation of the support of the climate change

convention, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Paris Agreement would be the responsibility of the US, it would be the liability of the US to continue to support this process."

Brazil, which was caught up in the 11th-hour spat with India and Bolivia, reminded envoys how delicate the talks are, noting careful diplomacy is needed to keep building on the goals set out in Paris.

"The Paris Agreement as it is, is not implementable," said Antonio Marcondes, Brazil's lead negotiator at the talks. "We agreed on Paris, but now we have to go down to minute issues that are very important, which is a very laborious task."

Next round

AS if to emphasize international attention seeping away from the issue, the UN had trouble finding a host for next year's talks. The annual UN climate jamboree drew more than 22,500 diplomats, media and environmentalists to Marrakech.

In recent years, it was held in glittering resorts from Cancun, Mexico, to Durban in South Africa and Bali, Indonesia. And as recently as 2011, Asian nations, including South Korea and Qatar, competed for rights to host. *Bloomberg News*

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

More land set aside for Cordillera coffee

BAGUIO CITY—An additional 3,000 hectares will be added under an extension of the National Greening Program specifically for planting coffee, benefiting thousands of Cordillera farmers who could profit from the booming market of the commodity.

This is apart from the existing 7,781 hectares already allocated under the NGP and could boost production and revitalize the coffee industry in the region, said Imelda Cawisan, regional NGP focal person.

The program previously implemented coffee planting but could not sustain it owing to the remote location of NGP areas and their distance from the communities.

While technology is making its way into Cordillera's hinterlands through interventions of the Department of Trade and Industry, increasing coffee production must be given more attention.

DTI Director Myrna Pablo, the national cluster manager for the coffee industry, admitted the sector is still struggling, saying that since 2013, no significant improvement has happened to this business.

Industry stakeholders could address that and other issues at the 2nd Philippine Coffee Conference on November 23 and 25 in Baguio City.

The conference will look

back and revisit the wider scope of coffee industry development in the country, organizers said in a statement. The conference will also update participants on the Philippine Coffee Roadmap so they could look forward and aim for a bigger niche in the world's coffee industry.

About 700 stakeholders, including the top coffee producers around the globe, are expected to attend the conference.

In the 1800s, the Philippines was the fourth-largest exporter of coffee in the world, but the coffee rust plague and pests slowed its production halted.

Data as of 2012 indicates the biggest coffee-producing areas in the region are Benguet, Mountain Province, Kalinga and Ifugao, with a total production of 5,673.21 metric tons.

Robusta accounts for 88.4 percent of the Cordilleras' coffee production, while Arabica variants account for 9.8 percent.

While the demand of coffee worldwide is increasing, local farmers are shifting to other cash crops like corn to sustain their daily needs, and the wait before harvest time for corn is shorter compared to coffee.

Coffee farmers in the region said the farm-buying price of coffee beans must also be addressed to entice more farmers into planting the crop. **Dexter A. See**

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FINDING ANSWERS

Climate pact: Changing perspectives



DUTERTE'S POLICY
Formulation

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte's declared intention to approve the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and pave the way for its ratification by the Senate is certainly good news for many reasons.

For one, it changes the perspective of some people on Duterte who once described as "stupid and absurd" the pact to combat man-made climate change. With Duterte's decision to heed the call of his Cabinet who voted in favor of honoring the Philippine commitment to the historic Paris pact, many now view the President as a reasonable man after all.

"Because it's a Cabinet decision, I'll go along with it and sign it," Duterte said in a speech in Malacanang on Nov. 7 during the oath-taking rites for new officers of the National Press Club of the Philippines.

"As I have promised you, I will not solve this problem alone. I will give it, place it on the table, give the Cabinet members, the whole of the Cabinet to vote," Duterte said, even as he still expressed some concern over the agreement. "Hindi talaga ako kampanante (I'm not really confident)."

The willingness of the President to give way to the collective wisdom of the members of his Cabinet is a clear manifestation of a healthy and vibrant democracy working within the highest echelons of power. It somehow debunks the notion of some people that the tough-talking leader has a strong inclination to be dictatorial or authoritarian.

Under the Paris Agreement, 197 countries committed to significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to keep the rise in global mean

the country's industrial growth, saying it was unfair that the Philippines' economic progress could be impeded by lowering its carbon emissions even though it was not a major contributor to global warming that leads to climate change.

"When I said that I was not into it, I was only expressing my expression. I do not lose the freedom of expression just because I am the President," Duterte said. "I am not barred from giving my own opinion just because I am the President."

Duterte's change of heart also changes the perspective that some nations might have of us with the impression the Philippines was flip-flopping on a pact that could benefit us greatly considering our country's vulnerability to the disastrous effects of climate change.

It would indeed seem absurd and ironic to be now construed as backing off from the historic climate pact when such was made possible partly due to the Philippines' leadership role as chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum that focused the attention of last year's 21st Conference of Parties meeting in Paris on the plight of the poor and most vulnerable.

While Duterte may have a valid point that developing countries like ours should not be hampered on its growth sooner than the developed countries that had already enjoyed the economic progress brought about by carbon-spewing industrialization, support for the climate pact does not necessarily impose emission reductions on the Philippines.

As former President Ramos explained, the Paris Agreement merely asks our country to "submit its nationally determined contributions, which are essentially suc-

cessful' scenario, which the Philippines submitted to the U.N. last year as its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC). It is, however, just an indicative number and is conditioned on the provision of financial, technological, and capacity-building support."

The Philippines' support for the climate pact also boosts our view that the historic Paris Agreement, ambitious as it, is based on the compelling argument that "every country was at risk and the world was running out of time," instead of the "old argument dividing developed economies from developing ones."

The stand of the Philippines, being Asia's only predominantly Catholic nation, also adheres to the groundbreaking encyclical released last year by the Vatican urging everyone to confront and avert degradation of the environment for which Pope Francis blamed mainly on apathy, political shortsightedness, and reckless pursuit of profits.

Stressing that the Holy Bible's book of Genesis should be interpreted to mean that man's dominion over earth does not give him the right to abuse and destroy resources, but to "till" and "keep," Pope Francis explained: "'Tilling' refers to cultivating, plowing or working, while 'keeping' means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving."

Although the Pope praised achievements in technology particularly in the fields of medicine, science and engineering, he lamented that "our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience."

The Holy Father's stinging rebuke concerning "human responsibility, values and conscience" should

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Marubeni seeks more time to invest in Calaca coal-fired plant

By Victor V. Saulon Sub-Editor

JAPANESE FIRM Marubeni Corp. has sought for more time before it signs a deal to formally become the third partner in the 700-megawatt (MW) coal-fired power plant in Calaca, Batangas being jointly developed by Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) and Meralco Powergen Corp. (MGen).

"Marubeni is just waiting for clearance from the mother company," said Isidro A. Consunji, chairman and president of DMCI Holdings, Inc., the parent firm of SMPC.

In a press briefing on Monday, Mr. Consunji said Marubeni asked for a 90-day extension, which began in October, before taking a 20% stake in St. Raphael Power Generation Corp.

St. Raphael is the wholly owned SMPC subsidiary created on Sept.

10, 2013 to engage in the power generation business. The unit is the entity for the proposed Calaca plant. SMPC and MGen will each hold 40% in the company.

DMCI officials said they chose Marubeni because the group had been their partner in Maynilad Water Services, Inc., a company where the holding firm has a stake. They also said the Japanese firm had shown "serious interest" in the project.

Funding for the St. Raphael project will be made up of 70% debt and 30% equity, Mr. Consunji said. At a cost of \$2 million per megawatt-hour, the Marubeni stake would be around \$80-\$85 million, the DMCI officials said. The project is estimated to cost \$1.4 billion.

Marubeni was originally expected to sign the partnership in October but this did not push through pending the approval of the power supply agreement being sought for approval by Ma-

nila Electric Co. (Meralco) and St. Raphael.

The supply deal was filed with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) in May and remains pending. An environmental compliance certificate had been issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the project.

Mr. Consunji also said SMPC was in talks with US company Black & Veatch as the possible engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor. He added that borrowing the funds for the project would be "easy" once a PSA approval has been obtained.

In the same briefing, he said SMPC had revived its plan to put up a retail electricity supplier (RES).

The company is awaiting ERC approval for its application, which was filed last year or even before the biggest power users entered into the contestable market.

"We might need it," said Mr. Consunji, adding that the RES affiliate would be named Sem-Calaca RES Corp.

SMPC generates revenues through the sale of sub-bituminous coal sourced from Semirara Island in Caluya, Antique. One of its seven wholly owned power subsidiary, Sem-Calaca Power Corp. (SCPC), supplies power under various bilateral contracts. Its excess generated power is sold to the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), the venue for trading electricity in the country.

SCPC owns the Calaca power plants in Batangas, on which Sem-Calaca Industrial Park Development, Inc. plans to develop certain areas into an economic zone to cater to industries that are near the plants. The company's total contracted energy in 2015 was at 491.4 MW, of which 420 MW is for Meralco.

On Monday, shares in SMPC slipped 2.62% to P130 each.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR to audit all key projects deemed threats to environment

By Janina C. Lim
Reporter

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it completed an audit of two coal-fired power plants and is about to put together national guidelines for reviewing various projects that pose critical threats to the environment.

"So far two coal plants have been audited ahead of the (national) audit guidelines... I will reveal (more) when all the plants have been audited," Environment Officer-in-Charge Undersecretary for Legal, Maria Paz G. Luna said at a briefing in Quezon City on Monday. She was referring to the review of the plants' environmental compliance certificates (ECCs), a prerequisite for their operations. She did not identify the plants.

In a separate phone interview with *Business World* also on Monday, Ms. Luna clarified that the audit of the two coal-fired plants was conducted under the regular policies of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) but the agency will add to the review the new guidelines so require. The DENR Undersecretary added that the agency may start with 25 critical projects.

It may not even be 25 it might be more," Ms. Luna said, noting that the initial review will prioritize critical projects "but will

not be as if everyone else is free from the audit so you can expect this audit to last as long as it takes."

"We will look at the submission for compliance with conditions more closely now... that's one of the objectives of the audit in the sense that we will change the standards and maybe the processes and requirements for the EIA (environmental impact assessment) system not in order to add more requirements but to streamline so they can know immediately what they're supposed to get," Ms. Luna said.

Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has criticized existing procedures on the release of ECCs, particularly where the government provides certain conditions that are "difficult" to meet but the project proponent has to execute an undertaking promising to do so prior the issuance of the certificate.

Ms. Lopez said that an ECC should not be given to any business entity in the first place if its operations are assessed to significantly pose a negative impact.

An ECC is issued by the Environment department through the EMB as part of a firm's application process for a project.

Under the DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-30 or the Implementing Rules and Regulations for the Philippine Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) System, the ECC contains specific measures and conditions

that the project proponent has to undertake before and during the operation of a project, and in some cases, during the project's abandonment phase to mitigate identified environmental impacts.

Asked on when the guidelines for the review will be complete, Ms. Luna said: "We don't expect it to take very long," adding that the draft guidelines will be subject to public consultation within the month to address the concerns of stakeholders.

She noted that the criteria for the selection of the 25 most environmentally critical projects will be based on complaints received by the agency, and whether the activity poses irreparable damage that cannot be mitigated or may be difficult to fix among other criteria.

"We should do it by this year," Ms. Lopez said during the briefing, referring to the timetable for the start of the ECC audit for 25 critical projects, adding that by year's end, the agency will announce the new policies of the EMB, which are expected to "totally transform" the Environment department.

"Any condition that will remain unfulfilled in the ECC will result in a suspension of the ECC until they comply with condition," Ms. Luna added.

Critical projects under the law include extractive industries, major infrastructure projects, and major agro-industrial operations, among other projects.

Ms. Luna said, that the agency is targeting within the year to come up with a decision on the fate of the 31 metal mines whose environmental management practices were reviewed.

"The target is within the year if we get all the documents in," she said, adding, however that the agency is due to reveal within the week its decision for Filminera Resources Corp., one of the 20 miners the audit recommended to suspend.

"I want to credit the company because they're willing to fix whatever's there. If the company is dynamic in fixing things, I think there will be a future," said Ms. Lopez.

"Filminera for now because the other bureaus have not reviewed the other mines. One for this week and then we will submit the schedule for the rest," Ms. Luna said.

The agency said that it is in the process of gathering and consolidating other documents from mining companies.

"Fairness requires that we look into all the documents and not just the compliance," said Ms. Luna referring to the ECC.

Mines that have been suspended or identified for possible suspension, make up 55.5% of last year's nickel output of the Philippines.

The country has since been the top supplier of nickel ore to China, the world's biggest consumer of the metal, after Indonesia banned raw ore exports in 2014.

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APEC leaders reaffirm... ◀1

no later than 2020, the contribution of current pathways to the realization of the FTAAP. The examination will identify specific actions that can be taken further promote regional free and open trade and investment, that would support advancement toward an eventual FTAAP.

To advance Global Value Chains (GVCs) development, Supply Chain Connectivity, and Supply Chain Resilience as building blocks to promote and integrate micro, small, and medium enterprises toward inclusive growth, the leaders recommend the completion of the APEC Trade in Value-Added (TIVA) Database by 2018.

"We welcome the Report on APEC 'Developing Economies' Better Participation in GVCs and encourage further efforts to enable better participation, greater value added, and upward mobil-

ity of developing economies and MSMEs in GVCs," the leaders aid.

"We recognize the value of using new technologies to achieve greater efficiencies, resilience, and cooperation in supply chain connectivity and encourage efforts to explore current and future initiatives toward this end as identified by ministers."

The leaders also endorsed the Phase Two of the Supply Chain Framework Action Plan (SCFAP) 2017-2020 and welcome the implementation of the plan next year to continue efforts to enhance trade facilitation and supply chain connectivity in the APEC region.

To buttress efforts to achieve strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth, the leaders reaffirmed previous commitments on monetary and exchange rate policies and to use all policy tools – monetary and fiscal.

The leaders reiterated that excess volatility and disorderly movements in exchange rates can have adverse implications for economic and financial stability.

Acknowledging that the services sector is a major contributor to productivity and growth within APEC, the leaders said improved competitiveness in services as well as growth in services trade through an open and predictable environment for access to services are key factors for APEC to boost its economic growth.

The leaders endorse the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap, an annex in the Leaders' Declaration, and instruct officials to monitor and evaluate progress in implementing the Roadmap.

For a seamless and comprehensively connected and integrated Asia-Pacific by 2025, the leaders agreed to implement the APEC Connectivity Blueprint 2015-2025 and encourage the use of policy dialogues to exchange best practices

and information on relevant topics.

The leaders also endorsed the Second-term Review of Economies' Progress towards the Bogor Goals and instruct officials to pursue work in those areas where progress has been uneven, including non-tariff measures, the slowdown in trade within APEC, and unemployment.

Since climate change is one of the major challenges in food production and food security, the leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in implementing policies to address the relationship between food security and climate change in ways that respect varying conditions in each economy. They welcomed the APEC Program on Food Security and Climate Change.

"We also commit to intensify our efforts to mitigate impacts of drought, flood, and climate-related disasters on food production and food security," they said in the Declaration. They vowed cooperation for the sustainable use

and integrated management of water resources.

The leaders reaffirmed aspirational goals to reduce aggregate energy intensity by 45 percent by 2035 and double renewable energy in the regional energy mix by 2030.

They also condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. "We recognize the serious threat that terrorism poses to our fundamental values that underpin our free and open economies. We encourage economies to continue to take actions and share best practices in the four cross-cutting areas of APEC's Consolidated Counter-Terrorism and Secure Trade Strategy," they said.

The leaders also adopted the Lima Statement on Fighting Corruption and encouraged all member economies to implement anti-corruption actions, with focus on bribery of domestic and foreign public officials. (Bernie Cahiles Magkila)

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Semirara to restore Panian mine's ecology

By Alena Mae S. Flores

Semirara Mining and Power Corp. is in talks with the Energy Department and the local government unit of Antique on the final land use plan for Panian mine.

"We want to turn over something that will continue to benefit the government and host community. Island sustainability is our main concern," Semirara president and chief operating Victor Consunji said in a statement.

Semirara said it was now working to restore the ecological balance of Panian pit, which was recently closed following the depletion of its mineable

coal reserves.

The depletion was certified by the Energy Department after its visit to Semirara Island on Sept. 20 to 21.

"Our goal is to restore the topography of Panian and promote flora and fauna growth in the area," Consunji said.

Prior to pre-mine operation, Panian area was characterized by rolling hills of open grasslands and numerous gullies

with shrubs and trees.

Semirara has begun filling Panian pit with overburden materials from Molave and Narra Mines, its two operating pits to restore the ecological balance of the area.

Initial progressive rehabilitation was also started in 2005 near Casay Lake at the western part of Panian. To date, over 250 hectares of the area have been planted with nearly 2 million trees.

Once the Panian mine pit becomes a stable landform, Semirara will cover the area with humic acid, compost and other materials to add nutrients to the soil.

Semirara said a massive

reforestation program would involve endemic and suitable plant species.

"The in-pit of Panian mine would no longer look like a depleted mine since the final elevation would be around -10 meters at the northern side and +30 meters at the central barricade and +10 meters at the southern side," said Consunji.

The over 10-meter elevation is planned to be a fresh water reservoir while the bottom part is being eyed as a possible beach resort, grazing land, pearl farm or marine sanctuary that will be turned over to the local government unit for possible development into an ecotourism spot.

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UN ship agency to press on with carbon cutting efforts after Trump win

LONDON (Reuters) - Global efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions will continue even after the election of climate change skeptic Donald Trump to the US presidency and momentum is growing to cut ship pollution, the United Nations' shipping agency chief told Reuters.

Trump has called global warming a hoax and has promised to quit the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Kitack Lim, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), said in an interview this week: "I believe the main policy of the Paris agreement will be maintained... I am rather optimistic."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Tuesday action on climate change had become "unstoppable".

Ban, at a meeting of 200 nations in Morocco to work out ways to implement the Paris agreement, expressed hopes that US president-elect Trump would drop plans to quit a global accord aimed at weaning the world off fossil fuels.

The shipping industry, like aviation, was excluded from any target cuts

under the Paris deal, which set a goal of restricting the rise in global average temperature to less than 2 degrees Celsius.

But last month, the UN's aviation agency ICAO approved an accord to curb aviation pollution which will set voluntary targets from 2021 to 2026 and become mandatory from 2027 for states with larger aviation industries.

U.N. climate chief Patricia Espinosa said it hoped IMO parties could follow ICAO's example towards transformational change.

Shipping now makes up around 2.2 percent of world emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and that share is forecast to rise dramatically if nothing is done to slow it.

The London-based IMO says shipping is more complex than aviation as there are multiple sectors within the industry, including oil tankers and container ships.

"It is not appropriate just to compare shipping and aviation - they have their own operational features," Lim said.

But he said the IMO had made

progress and adopted regulations, which came into force in 2013, where ships built after 2025 must be at least 30 percent more energy efficient. Lim said more than 1,900 vessels had already been built to meet the standards.

In October, the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee agreed that ships must record and report their fuel oil consumption, an accord that will come into force in early 2018 with data collection set to start in 2019.

The committee also set global rules to limit sulphur emissions from ships which will come in from 2020. And it established a "road map" towards the adoption of final CO2 reduction commitments in 2023.

Environmental campaigners see this approach as too slow. But Lim said the IMO's action on sulphur emissions last month showed it can deliver.

"It is not important whether we say we can make it in two or three years," Lim said. "What is more important is that we can establish a concrete plan which is not too far from now and how to implement that."

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NEWS

Panatag Shoal lagoon eyed as sanctuary area

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Roa Duterte is set to declare the lagoon in Panatag Shoal a marine sanctuary area.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Espenon, Jr. disclosed that the President will sign an executive order declaring a lagoon in the Panatag Shoal, internationally known as Scarborough Shoal, a "no-fishing zone" for both Filipino and Chinese fishermen.

This "unilateral declaration" has been relayed to Chinese President Xi Jinping during the two leaders' bilateral meeting held on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting according to Cabinet officials present during the APEC Media Press Conference with the Philippine media delegation.

Presidential Communications Office Secretary Martin Andanar said that President Xi hopes to create something favorable out of this.

"We will mobilize government forces to promote our agreements, step up guidance to create a favorable environment. Yunang

sinabi niya (President Xi) pagkatapos mabanggit ni Presidente Duterte yung kanyang unilateral declaration na gawing marine sanctuary," Andanar said quoting the Chinese leader.

The Panatag Shoal is a traditional fishing ground for Filipino fishermen. It was virtually off-limits to local fishermen who complained of harassment by the Chinese Coast Guard.

The situation soon changed after President Duterte brought the sorry plight of Filipino fishermen before his Chinese counterpart during his successful state visit to China in October.

Filipino fishermen can now access and fish at Panatag Shoal without experiencing harassment or being shooed away.

The two Asian leaders seem to hit it off well resulting in renewed friendship between the Philippines and China, Secretary Ramon Lopez explained.

"I guess on a personal level as well as at an official level, nagkalapit talaga ang ating dalawang

leaders between Philippines and China. With that renewed friendship, it really opened up a lot of opportunities. Now, we are talking of economic cooperation na dati hindi masyadong pinag-uusapan," Secretary Lopez underscored.

Meanwhile, President Duterte held his first bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin where the latter praised the former for his "firm" character.

Secretary Lopez added, "Na-appreciate niya (Putin) yung stance, yung pagiging firm leader ni President Duterte. Parang, in a way, parang pinuri niya ... na may respect, may dignity."

Philippines and Russia trade relations are expected to increase especially with the forthcoming visit of the President to Russia.

These include opening of opportunities in areas such as agriculture, energy, and infrastructure, machine engineering, hardware, modernizing industrial machineries, railways and light transport system, tourism and cultural development.

Cutting food waste saves money for French supermarkets

PARIS, France — Cutting food waste is an appealing social goal, but experiments in France found that measures to cut the amount of food being thrown out also saved supermarkets' money.

Like a number of other countries, France has recently adopted legislation that forces supermarkets to donate to charities food that is unwanted or past its sell-by date but still edible.

While retail shops and markets account for the smallest percentage of losses in the food chain, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency ADEME nevertheless found that they were responsible for the equivalent of 2.8 billion meals going to waste annually, and that there was much that could be done to reduce spoilage.

It recently teamed up with five supermarket chains — Auchan, Carrefour, E. Leclerc, Intermarché and Système U — to experiment in 10 stores.

The result: "With often simple actions that cost little it is possible to cut food waste by 22 percent in three months across the stores," said ADEME.

If adopted across the country, "the measures would save 300,000 tons of food per year and more than 700 million euros (\$745 million) per year," it said.

In the northwestern town of Boulogne-sur-Mer, Auchan hired two people to sell delicate fruit such as peaches, which often get bruised by being handled too much by



customers and staff as well as overstacked on displays.

"Over two months we made 15,000 euros in savings," said the store manager, Frederic Vaccaro, at a recent news conference presenting the results of the experiments.

By adjusting the grocery selection and selling some products, like pies, by the piece, his store made 220,000 in annual savings.

"The effort is worth the money," said Vaccaro.

'Considerable impact'

The changes made in the 10 supermarkets resulted in saving the equivalent of 160 tons of food per year, or some 320,000 meals.

"For each store, that represented a savings of 70,000 per year on average," said ADEME, adding that food waste usually costs supermarkets some 400,000 euros per year on average.

ADEME calculated that would boost a supermarket's grocery sales by an average of 0.9 percent. In a business known for razor-thin margins, this would "have a considerable impact on the net margin of stores, that is to say their profits," said the agency.

One of the major problems that ADEME identified was supply management. In certain supermarkets, it found over-ordering resulted in less than one percent of products

causing 20 percent of food waste by value.

Another was products were being damaged by being handled too much, and employees weren't being trained to focus on avoiding waste.

ADEME has put up a list of recommended measures for supermarkets to adopt, like reducing the number of products on shelves and appointing a staff member to be responsible for reducing food waste.

Alain Vallee, head of the Systeme U supermarket in the western town of Mayenne, expanded the stores practice of discounting products that are damaged or close to their sell-by date.

Fruit and vegetables that are slightly bruised are sold at discounts of up to 30 percent, and all discounted food is now in a central location. The result: 90 to 95 percent of such goods are sold, compared to 27 percent when left in their respective department.

Vallee said he cut food waste by nearly a third in his store, generating 96,000 euros in savings.

While ADEME is encouraging a bit of flexibility, food inspectors are not always on board.

"I want to offer slightly damaged products, but when there are inspections we get rapped on the knuckles," said Vallee.

ADEME intends to launch studies next into how food waste can be reduced on farms and in food processors.

AFP