

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DAY : Thursday

# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Drones, high-speed boats sought to fight illegal mining, smuggling

BY MARCO CASAYON

There is an urgent need for the national government to employ a fleet of drones to monitor the destruction and smuggling of natural resources such as black sand out of the country as well as the entry of ships that could bring in raw

materials for the manufacture of shabu, Sen. Richard J. Gordon, chairman of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee, said yesterday.

High-speed boats could also be used to check the criminal activities of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in southern Philippines whose "kumpits" out- ▶9

### Drones, high-speed boats... 1

race the slow boats of the Navy or the Philippine Coast Guard, he said.

Gordon winded up his public hearing on a Senate resolution of Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson on destructive mining operations and "treacherous" excavations in Zambales province, including the alleged smuggling of soil and rocks that were used to build Chinese islands in the South China Sea.

Gordon said the drones may be used by the Department of Environ-

ment and Natural Resources (DENR) to monitor the activities of mining and logging activities throughout the country.

Black sand is being illegally mined in Cagayan and Leyte, then shipped to China, and it is possible that the ships that bring them out could also bring in raw materials for the manufacture of shabu, according to Dr. Carlo Arcilla of the University of the Philippines (UP) National Institute of Geological Sciences (NIGS).

"I had earlier said drugs come from China. They can bring in precursors for factories in Pampanga (and other sites). They can bring elements to make shabu," he said.

Gordon said the national government has been buying ships worth tens of millions of pesos but they are so slow-moving that they are outraced by fast Abu Sayyaf kumpits in piracy and kidnapping activities.

He said the government should buy small but fast boats with an powerful engines and they should have the latest communications equipment to help them catch Abu Sayyaf boats.



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# 3 dead in mining tunnel accident

By ZALDY COMANDA

CAMP DANGWA, Benguet. — Three small scale miners perished due to gas poisoning inside a mine tunnel in Itogon, Benguet on Tuesday, the Benguet Provincial Police Office reported.

Senior Superintendent Florante Camuyot, provincial police director, identified the victims as Rosalino Api-it Narciza, 54; Barry Rimando Api-it, 36, and Santiago Falikao Banganan, 32, all residents of Barangay Ucab in Itogon.

Camuyot said the incident was reported to the police during the rescue operations of other miners were the three victims trapped inside the tunnel from 11 am to 3pm on Tuesday.

It was learned that Narciza entered his abandoned mine tunnel in the morning to retrieve his equipment.

He, however, failed to surface after some time, which prompted Api-it to enter the tunnel and check on Narciza, but failed to make it out too.

Banganan later tried to rescue the duo and brought with him a blower to blow away noxious gas in the tunnel.

He too failed to make it out.

Other rescuers later brought a much bigger blower and managed to reach the location of the three miners, who, unfortunately, were already dead.

# Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

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## FNI hauls mining awards

Platinum Group Metals Corp. (PGMC), the operating arm of Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc. (FNI), received three awards during the 63rd Annual National Mine Safety and Environment Conference.

PGMC's Cagdianao Nickel Expansion Project garnered the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award (PMIEA), Titanium Achievement Award for Surface Mining Operation for its exemplary efforts in achieving environmentally and socially responsible mining operations.

PGMC, in the recent audit conducted by the Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR), was cited for being compliant with the policies, environmental laws, rules and regulations of the Philippine Mining Act and the issued Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

The PMIEA was officially established under Executive Order 399 on Feb. 3, 1997 in compliance with the government's policy to ensure that mineral exploration and mining operation shall be pro-environment and pro-people in sustaining wealth creation and improving quality of life.

PGMC's Cagdianao Nickel Expansion Project was also adjudged the winner in the Most Improved Safety Performance Category.

PGMC had the highest percentage

comparing the average combined lost-time injury frequency-severity rate of the last four fiscal years with that of the current fiscal year.

Since 2013, PGMC has not experienced any fatal incident and achieved zero lost-time accident which could be attributed to an effective workplace health and safety program.

A team of safety engineers oversee the conduct of regular occupational safety and health policy orientation and training as well as emergency response and preparedness drills.

The use of personal protective equipment for all employees is strictly mandated and the company has at its disposal a clinic with life support systems, an ambulance and a fire truck.

PGMC's Engr. Royvel Jumalo was also voted as this year's Best Surface Mine Supervisor.

His strict implementation of safety rules and regulations as the company's Safety Supervisor and his exemplary performance in overseeing the operations of company personnel and seven mining contractors made him deserving of the award.

"We are delighted that our efforts in responsible mining are being recognized. In keeping with the theme of this year's conference, we at FNI remain committed to moving forward by doing it right," said Dante Bravo,



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Lopez not on Rody's reappointment list

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez was mum about her reported exclusion from President Duterte's reappointments submitted to the Commission on Appointments (CA) for confirmation.

Lopez reported for work yesterday as the department's Public Information Office (PIO) said she did not have any statement on the issue and continued to attend to matters requiring her attention.

The PIO said Lopez had

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN  
meetings scheduled.

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III, who is CA majority leader, said Lopez's absence in the list of 15 Cabinet members resubmitted to the body "means that she was not reappointed."

"The President can still issue her a new appointment, but that will be a regular and not an ad interim appointment, since Congress is already in session. That means that she

cannot assume office until the CA confirms her," Albano said.

Lopez has launched a crusade against destructive mining operations in the country and has ordered the closure of some firms for alleged violations of law.

Lopez was among 15 Cabinet officials bypassed by the CA last month, which happens when Congress adjourns session or goes on recess without the CA approving the appointments.

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# HATAW!

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## PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

### **DENR ARANGKADA SA PROGRAMA**

TODO-ARANGKADA mga 'igan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa kanilang mga proyekto at programang pangkapaligiran at pangkalikasan. Pinangunahan nina DENR-National Capital Region (NCR) Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services Sofio B. Quintana, Ph.D. CESO IV at DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) Regional Director Vizmindia A. Osorio ang kanilang proyekto at programa para sa kapakinabangan at kaligtasan ng mamamayang Filipino. Naging katuwang din ng DENR ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC), sa pangunguna ni PRRC OIC Executive Director Merliza S. Bonga.

Una nang isinagawa ng DENR-EMB-NCR ang Clean-Up Activity sa mga Adopted Estero-Water Body, sa iba't ibang barangay partikular sa Maynila. Inaasahan ang aktibong partisipasyon ng mga punong barangay (PB) upang maging matagumpay ang pagpapatupad ng mga proyekto at programa. Nakiisa rito sina PB. 175 Fernando R. Lopez at PB. 176 Gilbert Sugay ng Estero De Sunog Apog. Nakipagtulungan din sina PB. 223 Carmen S. De Jesus at PB. 219 Patrick S. Ang. At hindi rin matatawaran at pahuhuli ang Clean and Beautification Project nitong si Mabuhay Homes 2000 Homeowner Association President at Barangay Kagawad Hima L. Acosta sa kanyang nasasakupang Barangay Salawag. Mag-ing susi at daan nawa kayo tungo sa isang malinis, maayos, payapa at ligtas na pamumuhay ng sambayanang Filipino. Good Luck!

More projects and programs to come...

# THE STANDARD

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## QC dads approve Payatas facility

By Rio N. Araja

WITH the closure of the Payatas landfill in 2019, the 38-member Quezon City has given Mayor Herbert Bautista the green light to put up a multimillion-peso waste-to-energy facility in Barangay Payatas.

The city council passed a resolution to pursue the establishment of an integrated waste-to-energy facility to give way for the closure of the Payatas dump, handle 2,000 tons to 3,000 tons of wastes a day, and generate 30 to 35 megawatts of power.

City administrator Aldrin Cuffa, however, clarified despite the project was originally proposed by business tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan of the Metro Pacific Investments Corp., the city government will still invite other infrastructure companies through open competitive bidding procedures.

"We will publicize the bid and invite other parties. There will be a Swiss challenge," he told the **Manila Standard**.

Under the resolution, the city government shall ensure that the project configuration of the proposed waste-to-energy facility is compliant with the laws and regulations, "including but not limited to the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, Clean Air Act, Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Act, Renewable Energy Act of 2008, and guidelines governing the es-

## 'Paris agreement passes first stress test at COP22'

**T**HE head of the World Wildlife Fund's office of Climate and Energy Practice was upbeat about the results of the 22nd Conference of Parties (COP22) talks here, saying that the follow-up negotiations to last December's landmark climate talks in Paris "put substance" behind the global pact to reduce harmful emissions.

"The UN climate talks continue to be filled with twists and turns, but they have delivered what they needed to this week - putting substance behind the promise of the Paris Agreement, so it can be fully implemented. The Marrakech work has not been the most glamorous, but it's a key step in the chain reaction needed to roll out the agreement," WWF International's Manuel Pulgar-Vidal said in a statement.

"Countries' commitment to the Paris Agreement also passed

its first stress test this week with the US election results. Unequivocally, they restated that they are in this for the long haul," he added.

"The reality is that the world is moving ahead on this issue. This irreversible momentum will only build as market signals and commitments across all sectors of society continue pouring in.

"Already, 111 countries have ratified the Agreement - underscoring its historic importance. Nations also began submitting their long-term roadmaps for

decarbonization.

"But there's still work to do. The emissions gap continues to grow between what science tells us is needed to protect the planet from the worst impacts of climate change and the goals governments set in Paris. Urgently reducing emissions and preparing for the climate change impacts that are already affecting us is essential for the world's future prosperity, safety and security," the statement continued.

Pulgar-Vidal explained that under the current plan, nations that have ratified the agreement further agreed to assess progress in two years and develop "more ambitious" emission reduction targets before 2020.

"While parties work to finalize the Paris Agreement "fine print" by the next major political moment in 2018, more needs to be done in the next few years to clarify consistency of national targets. In addition, there are still

gaps in finance and adaptation, despite some announcements here on financing for adaptation and capacity building. We expect to see developed countries up their game significantly on finance and other support beyond current projections, and are very encouraged to see China and other countries stepping up their south-south cooperation," Pulgar-Vidal said.

"This work was bolstered by the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a group of around 50 countries that committed to reviewing and improving their current emissions-cutting goals in 2018 and shifting to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050 or before," he added.

Pulgar-Vidal concluded that WWF expects to see a trend of falling costs for renewable energy, and a corresponding acceleration in the adoption of low carbon technology.

**BEN KRITZ / WWF**



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# CCC assures industries on climate deal commitment

Local industries have nothing to fear on the government's commitment to reduce by 2030 the emission level of greenhouse gas by 70 percent under the Paris Agreement, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) said.

CCC commissioner Frances Victorio said the country's commitment could still be amended as needed even if it ratifies the Paris Agreement.

"First of all, we're currently reviewing the commitment to see if it's in line with our own development goals. We have until 2019 to come up with our goals. We want to make it as good a study and really consult everyone so I don't think there's

any reason for fear," Victorio said in an interview on the sidelines of the Business Summit on Climate Change yesterday.

The 70 percent reduction commitment by 2030 was made under the Aquino administration.

"So even if you ratify, you can change it after the ratification because the 70 percent contribution, it's not even in the agreement itself. It's something you just commit to give after the Paris Agreement. That 70 percent is something we determined on our own and is not a requirement from the Paris Agreement," Victorio said.

While supporting a govern-

By RICHMOND MERCURIO

ment initiative to cut carbon emissions and promote business resiliency and environmental sustainability, business organizations such as the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and the Federation of Philippine Industries said the proposed 70 percent carbon cut is too high for industries and counterproductive to the economy.

The PCCI said if the interventions to reach a 70 percent reduction would be capital-intensive, enterprises and industries would be under pressure to incur higher operational costs which would result in consumers paying higher for

goods and services.

The group said the country's target annual economic growth of 6.5 percent within the next few years would also be compromised with the implementation of capital-intensive interventions to achieve 70 percent.

"You can always hit several goals at the same time—our concerns for climate change and economic concern. We're trying to go for our goals that are in line with sustainable development and poverty eradication," Victorio said.

"The industries can grow. We are allowed to peak and we will have time to still transition to a greener economy," she added.



**BUSINESS SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE:** The Climate Change Commission, in partnership with its Low Emission Capacity Building Philippine project, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Philippine Business for the Environment (PBE), held Wednesday the 4th Business Summit on Climate Change with the theme 'Business Strategies for Low-Carbon Economy.' In photo are (from left) AC Infra managing director Jose Rene Almendras, Land Bank of the Philippines EVP Cecilia Borromeo, CCC commissioner Frances Veronica Victorio, AECOM country manager Alma Madrazo, Mondelez Philippines plant manager Jose Villanueva III and CEMEX Philippines president Pedro Palomino following the panel discussion.

MIKE AMOROSO

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Trump rethinks climate stance

NEW YORK—US President-elect Donald Trump said on Tuesday he was keeping an open mind on whether to pull out of a landmark international accord to fight climate change, in a softening of his stance toward global warming.

Trump told The New York Times in an interview that he thought there was "some connectivity" between human activity and global warming, despite previously describing climate change as a hoax.

A source on Trump's transition team told Reuters earlier this month that the New York businessman was seeking quick

ways to withdraw the United States from the 2015 Paris Agreement to combat climate change.

But asked on Tuesday whether the United States would withdraw from the accord, the Republican said: "I'm looking at it very closely. I have an open mind to it."

A US withdrawal from the pact, agreed to by almost 200 countries, would set back international efforts to limit rising temperatures that have been linked to the extinctions of animals and plants, heat waves, floods and rising sea levels.

Trump, who takes office on Jan. 20, also said he was thinking

about climate change and American competitiveness and "how much it will cost our companies," he said, according to a tweet by a Times reporter in the interview.

Two people advising Trump's transition team on energy and environment issues said they were caught off guard by his remarks.

A shift on global warming is the latest sign Trump might be backing away from some of his campaign rhetoric as life in the Oval Office approaches.

Trump has said he might have to build a fence, rather than a wall, in some areas of the US-Mexican border to stop illegal

immigration, tweaking one of his signature campaign promises.

Trump, a real estate developer who has never held public office, brushed off fears over conflicts of interest between his job as president and his family's businesses.

"The law's totally on my side, the president can't have a conflict of interest," he told The New York Times. My company's so unimportant to me relative to what I'm doing," Trump said.

Conflict-of-interest rules for executive branch employees do not apply to the president, but Trump will be bound by bribery laws, disclosure requirements

and a section of the US Constitution that prohibits elected officials from taking gifts from foreign governments, according to Republican and Democratic ethics lawyers.

"There may be specific laws that don't apply to the president, but the president is not above the law," said Richard Painter, a former associate counsel to Republican President George W. Bush.

"Do we really want to run our government where you have the president, the leader of the United States and the free world, saying: 'I'm going to do the bare minimum to squeak by?'" asked Nor-

man Eisen, a former top ethics lawyer in Obama's White House.

Trump's businesswoman daughter Ivanka joined her father's telephone call with Argentine President Mauricio Macri earlier this month and attended a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, raising questions of possible conflicts of interest.

When asked whether House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan and other Republicans in Congress would consider his trillion-dollar infrastructure plan, Trump boasted he was popular with the party's leaders on Capitol Hill. —REUTERS

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Coal entrenches poverty, drives climate change – UN report

**UNITED NATIONS, New York:** Coal power does more to harm the world's poor than to help them, even before the devastating impacts of climate change are taken into account, according to a recent report published by 12 international development organizations.

Yet despite commitments made under the Paris Climate Change agreement the world could go over the threshold of two degrees warming if just one third of currently planned coal power stations were built, the report found, adding that "if the world exceeds this, the results will be disastrous for the global fight against poverty."

"Beyond Coal: Scaling up clean energy to fight poverty," was published by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), CAFOD, Christian Aid and nine other organizations ahead of the 22nd Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention (COP22) in Marrakesh, Morocco, which concluded on November 18.

Ilmi Granoff, co-author of the report, told IPS that coal "entrenches poverty," contrary to arguments from the coal sector that the fossil fuel contributes to economic growth.

Granoff, a research associate at ODI, acknowledged that closures of coal power plants have caused localized economic hardship, but said that their research found that overall renewable energy is "more employment intensive

"The World Coal Association's own estimates indicate that the coal industry employs 7 million people globally," said Granoff, less than the 9.4 million people already employed in renewable energy supply chain.

"It's important to acknowledge that there is an employment (impact) with the phase down of coal globally because there are specific locations where people rely on the coal industry and those need to have a just transition," he added. "But in terms of the prospects for future employment the renewable energy sector provides better opportunities: more jobs and higher quality jobs globally."

Arguments that coal can help the world's poorest people to access energy also don't make sense said Granoff.

The report's authors found that renewable energy can already meet "the specific needs of fighting extreme poverty and energy poverty," he said.

In addition, noted Granoff, coal entrenches poverty by causing health problems from asthma to heart attacks.

"A single one gigawatt plant in Indonesia was estimated to cause 26,000 premature deaths over the plant's lifetime," he said.

Granoff also noted the importance of recognizing the long term negative impact that coal will have – particularly on poorer people and poorer

The impacts of climate change on developing countries, and the world's poorest people, have been central to UN climate discussions.

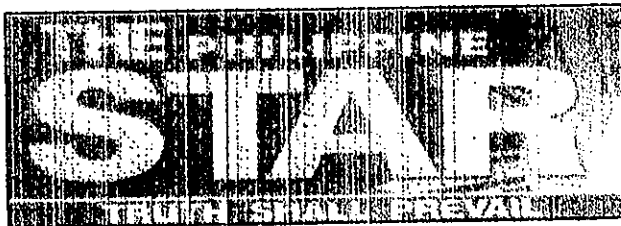
Developing countries argue that richer countries have a responsibility to limit the impacts of climate change on poorer countries, which will be disproportionately affected by increasingly unpredictable and severe weather patterns, despite having contributed far less to global carbon emissions.

This is an important reason why rich countries should be phasing out coal power stations, noted Granoff.

However while the phasing out of coal is a general trend in many richer countries, coal has continued to linger in countries such as Australia and the United States. In the U.S. President-elect Donald Trump ran his campaign on several pro-coal policies, arguing that President Barack Obama's "radical environmental agenda" was killing jobs and hurting the economy.

However, while many of the planned coal power stations are in Asia, particularly in energy-hungry China and India, both climate change and air pollution are making these countries have to reassess their reliance on coal as an energy source.

"China is very seized of the impacts of coal both on climate change and air pollution," said Granoff, noting that the Chinese government



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## Real eco-tourism can benefit Laguna Lake, says expert

"Real eco-tourism, like the Bohol model in Loboc River, can actually be good for Laguna Lake," says Dr. Maria Victoria O. Espaldon, professor of the School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

She emphasized the "real" eco-tourism as one which preserves the naturalness of the landscape or the seascape. It is not about construction of dikes or buildings.

"The idea of developing Laguna Lake, with eco-tourism as a platform, could actually help bring in more jobs because old boats can engaged in tours, people can produce food and handicrafts," she says.

Currently, there are studies undertaken by the UPLB that shows that water quality in the lake, in terms of biological, physical and chemical parameters, is bad. But Espaldon is hopeful that there are many ways to improve the water quality.

"All that's needed is a concerted action and strong leadership in terms of improving the water quality of the lake," she says.

There should be an integrated management of the Laguna de Bay, wherein all sectors should be engaged and responsible. Some studies that are already published show the presence of pollutants, such as pesti-

cides residue in the tributaries of the lake and these can eventually find its way into the lake. Once the people become responsible and accountable, pollution can be reduced.

The good aspect of the lake, however, is the water quality. It is fresh water, so if it is of good quality it can really be a good source for the domestic and agricultural needs.

"Mas maganda nga gawin syang water supply. Kasi kung alam ng taong doon galing inumin nila, hindi na sila tatae dun. Ang water supply talagang ipo-process bago ilabas. Pag ginamit yang water supply, meron yang value formation na driven by economics, kasi alam mo ng may value ang tubig na 'yan, bakit mo pababayaan? (It is better to make it a source of water supply because if people know that it is the source water that they drink, they will not defecate in it. Water supply normally undergoes treatment process before it comes out. When the lake is used as water supply source, there will be a value formation that's economically driven. People know that it's valuable to them, so why would they neglect it?)" Espaldon explains.

She suggests that the local governments should be more empowered in managing their rivers to help improve the water that goes to the lake.





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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Laguna Lake ecotourism program can follow Loboc River model

The showcase ecological tourism being done in Loboc River in Bohol province can be a model for a similar ecotourism program for Laguna Lake, a University of the Philippines-Los Baños researcher-scientist said.

"Real ecotourism, like the Bohol model in Loboc River, can actually be good for Laguna Lake," says Maria Victoria Espaldon, professor of the School of Environmental Science and Management and 2016 Outstanding Researcher of UPLB.

Espaldon stressed that "real" ecotourism was a tourism activity featuring an ecological site which preserves the naturalness of the landscape or seascape, and did not involve the construction of dikes or buildings.

"The idea of developing Laguna Lake, with ecotourism as a platform, could actually help bring in more jobs because old boats can engage in tours, people can produce food and handicrafts," Espaldon said.

UPLB is currently undertaking a number of studies that show the poor water quality in Laguna Lake, in terms of biological, physical and chemical parameters.

But Espaldon is hopeful that there are ways to improve water quality.

"All that's needed is a concerted action and strong leadership in terms of improving the water quality of the lake," she said.

Espaldon said that there should be an integrated management of Laguna de Bay, wherein all sectors should be engaged and responsible.

Some published studies show the presence of pollutants, such as pesticides residue in tributaries that can eventually find their way into the lake. Once the people become responsible and accountable, pollution can be reduced.

Espaldon, however, remains upbeat on the lake's water quality. It is fresh water, she said, so if it is of good quality it can be a source for domestic

and agricultural needs.

"It is better to make it a source of water supply because if people know that it is the source water that they drink, they will not defecate in it. Water supply normally undergoes treatment process before it comes out. When the lake is used as water supply source, there will be a value formation that's economically driven. People know that it's valuable to them so why would they neglect it," Espaldon explained.

She suggests that the local governments should be more empowered in managing their rivers to help improve the water that goes to the lake.

Espaldon's research on an ecotourism project on Laguna Lake was one of the issues the Department of Science and Technology - National Research Council of the Philippines (DOST-NRCP) tackled in its Science and Policy Forum for Sustainable Laguna Lake Management on Nov. 22 to 23 in Summit Ridge Hotel, Tagaytay City. - Rainier Allan Ronda