

*STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE*

04 NOV 2018

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# **DENR**

## **IN THE NEWS**

# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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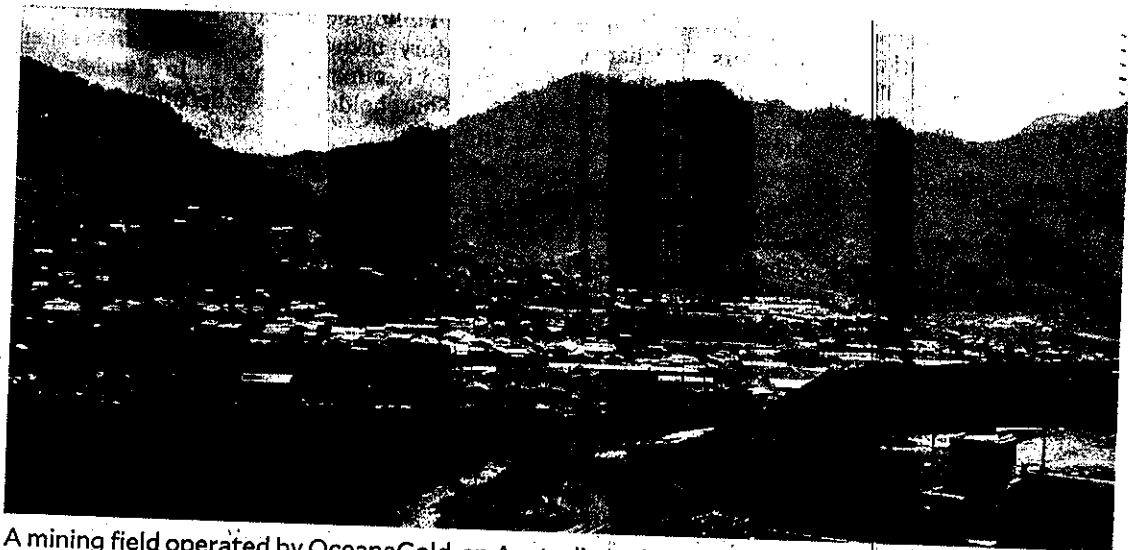
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

PHMMING PAGE 1/3

## Challenging times ahead for PH mining companies



A mining field operated by OceanaGold, an Australian mining company, in Nueva Vizcaya.  
—RICHARD BALONGLONG

By **Ronnel W Domingo**  
@ronwdomingoINQ

**P**rospects for mining over the next several years have been described as “challenging” by no less than the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) itself.

Within the industry, particularly for many, if not most of the public players (in the Philippines or bourses elsewhere), the prevailing mood is uncertainty, although there is a counterpoint of buoyancy.

The MGB’s mineral economics, information and publication division—the parent agency of which recently an-

nounced that the operations of 20 more metallic mines are recommended for suspension—observes that the audit of existing mines, along with a moratorium on new mines, is “responsible for industry prospects remaining to be challenging.”

“The suspension of another two nickel mines in Palawan is expected to further contribute to the overall sluggish performance of the metallic sector in 2016,” the MGB says.

The bureau refers to the Berong nickel project (DMCI’s Berong Nickel Corp.) and Toronto and Pulot nickel projects (ORE’s Citinickel Mines and Development Corp.).

Also failing the audit are 12 other nickel mines—all in Mindanao and most in Dinagat Islands—as well as three gold-silver mines, one copper-gold-silver mine, and two chromite mines.

“Should the recommended suspension ensue, the possible impact of the suspension is a decline in mineral production, lower taxes collected and increased number of displaced mine workers,” the MGB says.

Reckoning with 2015 production data, the expected decline in output that will result from the suspension of operations is 44 per-

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PH MINING PAGE 2/3

# CHALLENGING TIMES AHEAD FOR PH MINING COMPANIES

### FROM B5-1

cent for silver and 28 percent for copper.

This will happen mainly if the suspension of Filminera Resources and OceanaGold Philippines pushes ahead.

OceanaGold alone will represent output cutbacks of 18 percent on gold (3,809 kilos in 2015), 29 percent on silver (8,621 kilos), and 28 percent on copper (93,900 dry metric tons).

As for nickel, the combined output of the five mines already suspended before the audit began last July and the 14 mines recommended for suspension following the audit is pegged at about 57 percent of annual output.

If the 14 nickel mines do stop operation, the Philippines, which accounted for close to a quarter of global supply in 2015, will rely on only five producers — NIKL's Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp., Taganito Mining Corp., and Cagdianao Mining Corp.; FNI's Platinum Groups Metals Corp.; and Pacific Nickel Philippines Inc.

Weeks after the audit results were announced on Sept. 27, the concerned companies are still waiting to see a copy of such results.

Firms like OceanaGold, MARC's Macventures Mining

and Development Corp. (MMDC), Filminera Resources Corp. promptly assured their shareholders that they had not received an order of suspension and that the mines continued to operate.

As of this writing, a source from one of these companies asks when the audit reports will be sent out.

Leo Jasareno, who led the mine audit, said last month that the results would be sent to the concerned companies starting from the day after the announcement.

"We have not heard that other [similarly situated] firms have received their results," the source tells the Inquirer.

Meanwhile, FNI, whose unit Platinum Group Metals Corp. (nickel mine in Surigao del Norte) did not get a threat of suspension, revels in good fortune.

"Maintaining sustainability is important to our company," FNI president Dante R. Bravo says, "We believe that we have a corporate social responsibility to protect and care for the people and the environment and we are taking every step to improve the welfare and quality of life in the communities in which we operate."

"We are delighted that our efforts in environmental and social compliance are being rec-

ognized," Bravo says, "Rest assured that our programs for the betterment of the community in which we operate shall continue to grow from strength to strength."

For companies with status remaining uncertain, they expressed confidence about clearing their names, partly due to inconsistencies on the part of the DENR.

NIKL notes that while its Hinatuan Mining Corp. (HMC) failed the audit, its other three units were allowed to continue operations.

"We remain confident that HMC's operation [in Eastern Samar] will not be suspended as the social and environmental standards being employed (there) are of the same standards used in our other mining operations, all of which have successfully passed the DENR audit," NIKL president and chief executive Gerard H. Brimo tells the Philippine Stock Exchange.

For its part, Marcventures Mining says some of its alleged failures are due to pending matters with the DENR.

"Based on our review, the general audit findings are defensible and can be reversed," the company says in a statement. "It appears that there may have been some unintended oversight in the audit since there are matters which are yet

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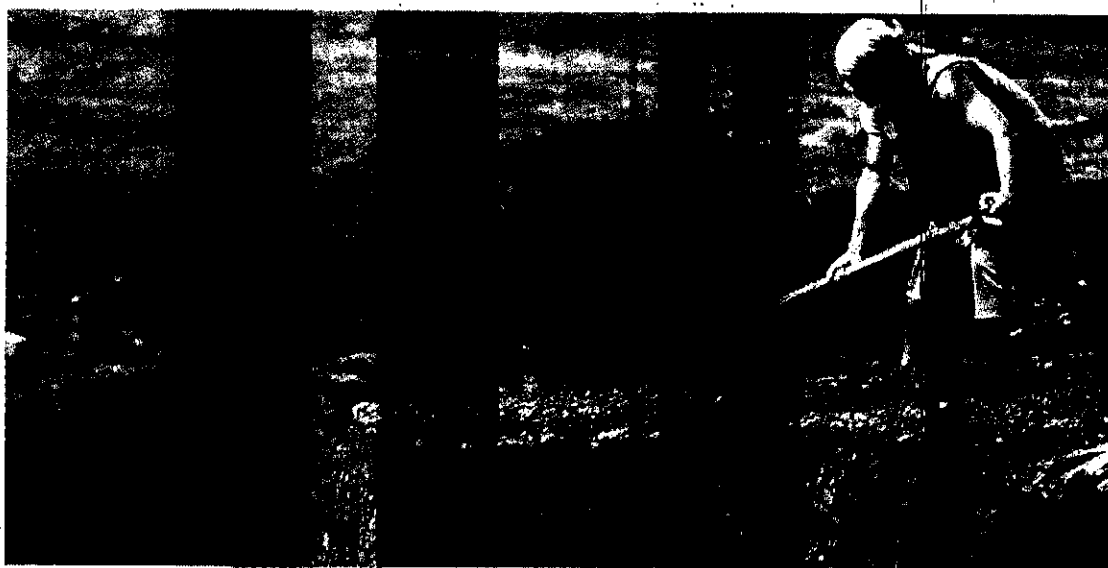
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PH MINING PAGE 3/3



A miner does spade work in an open pit at the heart of Homonhon Island, Eastern Samar. Mining companies are enjoined to be "responsible."

to be acted upon by the DENR."

Among these are MMDC's applications with DENR to be allowed to provide P30 million for the program to plant three million trees; application for discharge permits; and request for approval of the environmental protection and enhancement program and final mine rehabilitation and/or decommissioning plan.

"We are confident that a review of the documents submitted by MMDC will reverse the unwarranted findings," MMDC says.

In another show of apparent inconsistency, the MGB has

nominated some of the companies threatened with suspension for the annual Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award (PMIEA), given to mining companies that "showed exemplary practices in safety and health; environmental protection and rehabilitation; and community and social development and management."

These include Agata Mining Ventures Inc.; NIKL's HMC; Marcventures Mining; OceanaGold Philippines; and SR Metals Inc.

For the MGB, the matter is ultimately a question of getting

the "utmost" economic benefit from the mining operations; social community development empowerment; and preservation of the environment through progressive rehabilitation.

"Mining can only be responsible if the development of the country's mineral resources will be on the basis of technical feasibility, environmental sustainability, social acceptability, and financial viability," MGB director Mario Luis Jacinto tells the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

"The absence of one will not render the project responsible," Jacinto says. INQ

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

# Nickel Asia refutes DENR audit team findings on Hinatuan mine

NICKEL ASIA Corporation on Thursday insisted its subsidiary, Hinatuan Mining Corporation (HMC), has complied with environmental standards, contrary to the findings of an Environment department-led audit team that has recommended its suspension.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Nickel Asia said it received on Nov. 2 the official findings and recommendations of the audit conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on HMC's Manican mine in Guian, Eastern Samar.

HMC was identified by the DENR as one of the 20 metal mines that face suspension for various infractions under a nationwide audit that began in July.

"The DENR Audit Team cited alleged violations of two condi-

tions in HMC's Environmental Compliance Certificate," Nickel Asia said.

Nickel Asia said the audit team had recommended that HMC "limit clearing of vegetation within planned areas to be mined and conducting revegetation/ reforestation on idle lands in the site with endemic species to provide carbon sink and restore biodiversity."

In response, NickelAsia said HMC has not conducted any clearing of the vegetation outside the areas to be mined.

"In addition, (HMC) has rehabilitated 55 hectares of mined-out areas and has forested 368 hectares outside of mined-out areas that had no forest cover due to the poor soil condition. A total of 811,000 seedlings of various

species including those endemic to the island was planted. Furthermore, HMC has planted 53 hectares of mangroves in coastal areas surrounding Hinatuan island with 236,000 propagules," the listed miner said.

The DENR audit team also recommended that HMC commission an independent third party auditor to conduct an environmental and safety audit of its mine.

"This condition is recommended, not mandatory. In any event, the audits, which were part of the process for HMC to secure its ISO 14001 on Environmental Management Systems, was undertaken and HMC indeed obtained its ISO 14001 Certification in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2016. HMC is now in the process of securing

an ISO 45001 on Occupational Health and Safety Management," Nickel Asia said.

An independent third party had completed an environmental and safety audit in the third quarter of 2016, the company added.

"We further wish to state that the environmental standards of HMC is at par with Nickel Asia Corporation's (NIKL) other operations, namely Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation (RTN), Taganito Mining Corporation (TMC), and Cagdianao Mining Corporation. The audit reports for NIKL's largest operations, RTN and TMC, have also been received and are positive," Nickel Asia said.

Shares in Nickel Asia rose 0.44% to P6.88 apiece on Thursday. — J.C. Lim



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Mining excise taxes decline 11% in July

By PRINZ MAGTULIS

Excise taxes from mining and mineral products decreased 11.23 percent to P321.46 million in July, data from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) showed.

The amount was the highest since the same period last year, while the drop slowed from 15.85 percent in June and 12.44 percent in May.

It was also considerably slower than the decreases of 33.6 percent in April, 30.08 percent in March, 42.8 percent in February and 39.58 percent in January.

"To avoid suspension, some big companies may have complied (and paid their dues)," said Emilio Neri Jr., lead economist at Bank of the Philippine Islands.

Five miners were suspended by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in July when anti-mining advocate Secretary Gina Lopez took over.

They were Benguet Corp. Nickel Mines Inc., Zambales Diversified Metals Corp., LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc., Eramen Minerals Inc. and Nickel Asia's Manicani mine.

The latter, however, was already non-operational upon suspension and only exported existing stockpiles.

While there was indeed a crackdown, Neri said the current administration tended to be more accommodating of mining than the previous one, probably driving more "underground" firms to pay more.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez earlier said he would not pursue plans to amend the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 to give more revenues to the National Government.

"(There) maybe less stringent administrative rules under new administration, hence, more are going back from underground economy. (Former Finance secretary Cesar) Purisima and (BIR commissioner Kim) Henares made mining taxes too restrictive," Neri said.

From January to July, excise taxes from the industry totaled P1.1 billion, still down 26.54 percent from P1.5 billion last year, BIR data showed.

By proportion of total BIR revenues for the period, mining excise levies only accounted for 0.12 percent of total haul of P903.58 billion as of July.

The agency's July collection was down one percent from previous year, data showed.

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CLIMATE PAGE 1/2

## LAWMAKERS URGE DUTERTE TO RATIFY PARIS ACCORD ON CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE DEAL

### RATIFY PARIS CLIMATE PACT, DU30 URGED

By DJ Yap  
and Tarra Quismundo  
@Team\_Inquirer

Lawmakers are pressing President Duterte to change his mind and ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which comes into force today.

Ako Bicol Rep. Rodel Batocabe vowed to talk to Mr. Duterte about the benefits of adopting the deal.

The President will change his stance once he comes to know that coal-fired power plants can still be put up, said Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay.

Sen. Loren Legarda urged the Climate Change Commission and the Department of Foreign Affairs to work together for the accord's ratification.

Under the deal, 197 countries committed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to keep global warming in check. The Aquino administration had pledged a 70-percent cut in emissions by 2030. After his election, Mr. Duterte aired misgivings about it. **A21**

FROM A1

By DJ Yap  
and Tarra Quismundo  
@Team\_Inquirer

Lawmakers have joined the chorus of voices asking President Duterte to honor the Philippine commitment in the Paris climate change pact to lower the country's carbon emissions by 2030.

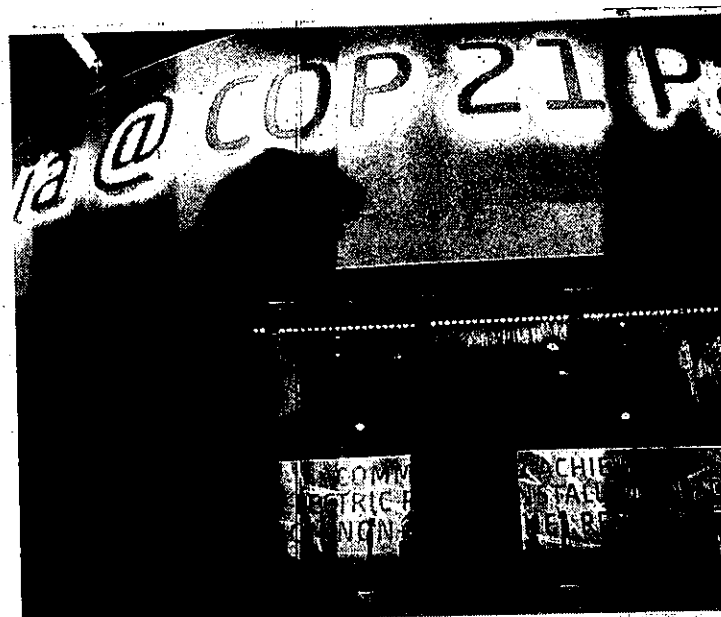
Members of the House special committee on climate change said they would try to convince the President to change his mind and to ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which comes into force on Friday and which Mr. Duterte earlier dismissed as absurd.

At a recent hearing before the congressional break, the committee chair, Ako Bicol Rep. Rodel Batocabe, said his panel would communicate with the President the benefits of adopting the Paris deal after listening to climate change advocates and officials.

"I think we know that the President is reasonable. If we can explain properly to him that we will be allowed to put up coal-fired power plants, then I'm sure that he will change his stance," said Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr.

#### Senate concurrence

Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the Senate committee on climate change, urged the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) "to work together



PARIS MEET COP21, the United Nations Climate Change Conference, was held on Dec. 7, 2015, in Paris to seek a solution among countries to climate change. —AP

the Senate's concurrence once it was signed by the President.

"We understand that government is in transition, but we expect that the CCC and DFA have already met with the agencies and have explained the importance of this agreement in our pursuit of sustainable development and climate and disaster resilience," she said in a statement yesterday.

Under the Paris agreement, 197 countries committed to significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to keep global warming to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius.

The Philippines, under then President Benigno Aquino III, pledged a 70-percent cut in emissions by 2030.

But after his election in

that he would not honor it.

He said it was unfair that the country's economic progress might be impeded by cutting its carbon emission even though it was not a major contributor to global warming at all.

#### Criticisms

His pronouncement stirred criticisms, including from former President Fidel Ramos, who wrote in his column that this "is obvious wrong, and full of S... T!!!"

Mr. Duterte has since softened his stance on the subject saying he will follow the recommendations of his advisers.

The CCC vice chair, Emmanuel de Guzman, said the Paris deal was the product

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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### IN THE KNOW: Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 C.

It also aims to strengthen the ability of vulnerable countries to deal with the impact of climate change through appropriate financial flows, a new technology framework and an enhanced capacity building framework. Parties are required to report regularly on their emissions and on their implementation efforts.

On Dec. 12, 2015, 197 parties to

the convention adopted the Paris Agreement during the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris. Ninety-four parties have ratified the agreement to date.

The Philippines, last year's chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum comprising 43 developing countries, has yet to ratify the accord.

The agreement enters into force today. The first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Agreement (CMA 1) will be convened in Marrakech, Morocco, on Nov. 7-18. —**INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ**

Source: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

ture and undertaken by each party to contribute solutions based on its capacity," he said.

De Guzman clarified that the Philippine participation to reduce carbon emissions by 2030 was "purely voluntary and only under the condition that mitigation efforts will be pursued if developed countries will invest on it."

Moreover, the entire contribution target may also be modified into a final submission called the "nationally determined contribution" through multistakeholder consultations, he said.

### Climate justice

De Guzman noted that the Philippines had championed the limiting of the global temperature rise to 1.5 C, the enshrining of climate justice and human rights and ensuring

ecosystem integrity.

"The agreement defines climate justice as giving greater burden on developed countries—as likewise articulated by the President—to do more and to act swiftly in reducing carbon emissions, since they are the ones heavily contributing to the temperature rise," De Guzman said.

The committee had met to discuss House Resolution No. 103 filed by Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate, who shared the President's reluctance to ratify the Paris agreement.

Zarate had said it should be industrialized countries like China, the United States and Japan that should bear the greatest burden "to cut down on their emissions drastically and not demand this from

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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### OPINION

## Our Paris commitment matters

**T**oday, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change enters into force, 30 days after the date when at least 55 signatories accounting for at least 55 percent of estimated total global greenhouse gas emissions ratified it, which was achieved on Oct. 5.

Our country played a prominent and influential role leading to that agreement, hailed as a victory for the planet and the future of humanity. It was the Philippines that chaired the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), composed of countries most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. We likewise chaired the V20 ("Vulnerable 20") group of finance ministers representing 20 of the most vulnerable nations in the world. These forums provided the conscience in the long and difficult negotiations that culminated in the Paris Agreement. Reeling from the loss of thousands of lives and untold damage to property wrought by Super typhoon "Yolanda" that captured the world's attention, we effectively led "the much-needed emotional plea for a decarbonized world," as renewable energy advocate and practitioner Federico "Piki" Lopez described it in a recent speech. He went on: "The power of that voice grows only if we show the will and a credible pathway toward decarbonizing our own economy. Conversely, that power dies when our actions are not consistent with that voice.... We have to start walking that talk if we want the rest of the world to heed those urgent calls."

It is in this light that former president Fidel V. Ramos has given President Duterte his latest advice—for us to ratify rather than rebuke the Paris Agreement, which the



### NO FREE LUNCH

CIELITO F. HABITO

latter had earlier described as "stupid" and "absurd." It is sad that we who had stuck our neck out to fight for the agreement could not even sit at the table of the Conference of Parties as the pact now enters into force. Rather than be among the first to ratify it, as would have been logical given the way we championed it, and as most in the CVF did, we are now declaring that we will not honor the agreement we signed, with the President conveniently disowning the signature. It's not only sad but also embarrassingly cavalier of us as a nation to say so.

This posture reeks of the worst that we lament of ourselves as Filipinos, that we create rules of behavior via laws and regulations, and then take them to be mere "suggestions." I'm reminded of an incident on All Saints Day, when we tried to park behind a couple of cars on the roadside near the cemetery, only to be accosted by a cop who said it was a no-parking zone. Puzzled, I asked why they let the other two cars park there. "Oh, those belong

to policemen," he said nonchalantly. As for the Paris pact, we didn't only sign it; we also fought hard for it—only to now declare loudly that we will not honor it.

Yes, it is true that our contribution to carbon emissions is tiny, compared to those coming out of the United States, China and Europe. And so, critics ask, why bother to curb our own emissions and, consequently, our ability to grow our economy? But this cannot be a valid argument, for at least two reasons. One, many experts believe that even if all the Paris emission targets are met, we're still headed for a world up to 3 degrees Centigrade warmer, beyond the 2-degree target cap. This implies that much more still needs to be done, and every little bit counts. Two, being responsible for our energy future need not imply sacrificing growth and development. There's a win-win possible here, if we only get out of traditional mindsets that paint our energy path to be a simple choice between cheap black (coal) and costly white (clean and renewable energy).

In truth, cheap black vs costly white is not the choice we face. The cost lines are already crossing, and under certain circumstances, white could be no costlier than black. There is also a gray zone (that includes natural gas, hydro and geothermal power) that provides other viable options we can take. I've examined the options and associated numbers, and am now convinced that we can uphold our Paris commitment without having to sacrifice future growth and development.

cielito.habito@gmail.com



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### *Paris climate deal takes effect today*

By MARVIN SY

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change takes effect today, even if the Philippines has not validated its joining the international treaty after President Duterte expressed disapproval.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has announced that the Paris Agreement signed by world leaders last April will enter into force on Nov. 4, as enough countries have signed the accord.

"What once seemed unthinkable, is now unstoppable," Ban said. "Strong international support for the Paris Agreement entering into force

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is a testament to the urgency for action and reflects the consensus of governments that robust global cooperation, grounded in national action, is essential to meet the climate challenge."

But he cautioned that the work of implementing the agreement still lies ahead.

"Now we must move from words to deeds and put Paris into action," he said. "We need all hands on deck—every part of society must

be mobilized to reduce emissions and help communities adapt to inevitable climate impacts."

On the home front, Sen. Loren Legarda called on Duterte yesterday to finally agree to the treaty, as the Philippines has everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Legarda urged the President to sign the Paris Agreement on Climate Change so it could be

ratify the treaty as one of its signatories in New York last April 22.

Legarda, the United Nations Global Champion for Resilience, renewed her call to concerned agencies of government, led by the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), to work together for the Philippines' ratification of the treaty.

"I call on all government agencies concerned to submit their respective certificates of concurrence (COC) in the Paris Agreement to the CCC and the DFA," Legarda said. "We understand that the government is in

transition, but we expect that the CCC and the DFA have already met with the agencies and have explained the importance of this agreement in our pursuit of sustainable development and climate and disaster resilience," said Legarda.

By ratifying the treaty, Legarda said the Philippines would be able to gain access to funds that would help the country adapt to climate change impacts.

The CCC is in the process of gathering all



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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Paris From Page 1

COCs from the member agencies of the Climate Change Commission Advisory Board and the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation.

Of the 33 member agencies of the Advisory Board and the Cabinet Cluster, Legarda noted that 10 agencies have submitted their COCs so far.

Once complete, Legarda said the DFA would endorse all COCs and the instrument of ratification to the President for signing.

Legarda vowed to shepherd the Senate's concurrence to the treaty once it receives the document from Malacañang.

"The Paris Agreement is very important for the Philippines, being one of the most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change," Legarda said. "We need to ratify the agreement so that we can access the Green Climate Fund."

She stressed: "This is what we have been waiting for – for developed countries that are the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases to aid vulnerable, low-emitting nations like the Philippines. The Paris Agreement addresses the issue of climate justice, which is the President's concern."

Legarda said there is no reason for the Philippines not to ratify the treaty because it has nothing to lose from it.

"There is no provision in the Paris Agreement that would prevent our industrialization," she pointed out.

"We have nothing to lose, but everything to gain with it."

Under the Paris Agreement, developed nations are asked to decarbonize economy-wide. They must raise \$100 billion every year to help vulnerable nations like the Philippines in mitigation and adaptation, and to transfer technology.

On the other hand, the agreement acknowledges that developing nations like the Philippines will take time to decarbonize and will be able to do so with external support.

The Philippines was instrumental in the crafting of the Paris Agreement, which seeks to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius, and possibly not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

### House members for treaty

Noting the Philippines' vulnerability to natural disasters, congressmen of different party affiliations called on the President yesterday to reconsider his decision not to join the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Militant lawmakers like Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Carlos Zarate joined the call of Ako Bicol Rep. Rodel Batocabe to acknowledge the benefits the treaty holds for developing nations.

Batocabe is chairman of the House special committee on climate change.

The two legislators got the support of Rep. Emmi de Jesus of women's advocate Gabriela party-list and Reps. Prospero Pichay of Surigao del Sur, Gil Acosta of Palawan and Estrellita Suansing of Nueva Ecija.

The Bicol region, which Batocabe represents, is always a victim of natural disasters, thus susceptible to the harmful effects of climate change.

Batocabe said his region needs measures to soften nature's blows.

Members of Batocabe's committee are willing to sit down with Duterte and present the treaty's benefits to the country.

The President is reportedly now keeping an open mind, following former president Fidel Ramos' unsolicited advice to agree to the treaty.

Zarate said an independent foreign

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

### Business group wants to meet Duterte on Paris climate deal

By Roy Stephen C. Canivel *Reporter*

AS PRESIDENT Rodrigo R. Duterte and his Cabinet tackle the Paris climate change pact in its meeting Thursday night, the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) on Thursday said it wants to meet with Mr. Duterte regarding the agreement, citing the need to reach a "balanced" discussion after the President on Tuesday expressed openness toward the agreement if his advisers find it favorable.

Mr. Duterte had been critical of the 2015 Paris Agreement, prompting some in his own circle to say they will endeavor to convince him otherwise. Former President Fidel V. Ramos, in turn, criticized Mr. Duterte's stand in a strongly worded op-ed piece on Saturday, Oct. 29.

FPI has reiterated its stance against the historic deal, citing the unfair burden imposed on developing nations as opposed to developed countries.

As of this reporting, "Briefing on the Paris Agreement and the Philippine climate policy" was listed among the items in the agenda of Thursday night's Cabinet meeting, according to Communications Secretary Martin M. Andanar. "We are requesting the good President to give us a day, also, in court, so to speak. *Bigyan din kami ng pagkakataon na marinig kami* (Give us the opportunity to be heard). If he listens to his advisers and his NGOs, *siguro naman, para balanced lang* (perhaps, for balance), we are requesting the President to give the manufacturing [sector] a chance also," FPI Chairman Jesus Lim Arranza said in a phone interview on Thursday. **with Ian Nicolas P. Cigaral**

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



### Echoes From

Johnny Dayang

## UNEP: Mangroves, world's answer to Climate Change

**T**HE United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), in a recent report, has urged wealthy nations to make "essential payments" to developing countries where 90 percent of the world's mangrove forests are found. Why? Because these mangrove forests can deter the further degradation of the world's critical ecosystem. Mangroves absorb much more carbon pollutants than terrestrial forests.

The UNEP report may yet drastically alter the investment policies and biases of wealthy countries vis-a-vis the third world. Admittedly, developed countries are largely responsible for the world's climate change crisis. It urges wealthy and developing countries to cooperatively work together to protect and expand the world's remaining mangrove forests, instead of just concentration on their REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) strategies.

This UN report underscores the value of mangroves in the Philippines, such as the 250-hectare plantations in Kalibo, Aklan and the 2,800-hectare mangrove forests in Albay. The Kalibo project was initiated in 1989 by former Kalibo mayor and Aklan congressman Allen Salas Quimpo, now a university president. The project

environmental degradation, typhoons and tsunamis by creating a natural barrier and providing a reservoir for biodiversity.

The impressive 2,800-hectare Albay mangrove forests was expanded to its present size from its original 700-hectare area in 2009, by former Albay Governor, now Congressman Joey Salceda. The mangrove forest helped earned Albay its recent designation by UNESCO as a World Biosphere Reserve where sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, and rational use of natural resources are reconciled.

In Aklan, the Kalibo mangrove plantation substantially helps regenerate marine life, and serves as a major source of income for local farmers and fishermen with their daily catch of fish, crabs and shells. It is also a big attraction for tourists flocking to nearby world-famous Boracay Island Paradise. Its further expansion, financed by international and national organizations and business firms also generates employment opportunities for local rural folks.

The Kalibo project has received several recognitions and awards, including a 2005 United Nations commendation. Environmentalists and scientific researchers from all over the world frequently visit it and appreciate how it has

# The Manila Times

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## PH far from ratifying Paris climate pact

SENATOR Loren Legarda on Thursday renewed calls for the government to ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as a group warned that the country will lose its moral ascendancy if it rejects the global pact that came into force early this month.

Only 10 out of 33 the government agencies have submitted their certificate of concurrence (COC) to the pact, a requirement for the country to ratify the agreement.

The Philippines is one of the 175 countries that signed the pact that aims to keep global temperature rise this century well below two degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The agreement, which was signed in April this year, takes effect on November 4, 2016 after 55 parties, representing at least 55 percent of global emissions, ratified the agreement.

The Philippines' failure to ratify the agreement before it came into effect made the country appear "not serious" in addressing its vulnerability to natural disasters, said Ian Rivera, national coordinator of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ).

"We will lose our moral ascendancy [in its] leadership in the climate-vulnerable forum. Many countries will see us as if we're not serious that we are very vulnerable," he told reporters.

Rivera said the government

He said the failure to ratify the agreement has also reduced the Philippine delegation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), of which the agreement is a part, to the role of observers instead of participants.

Legarda, who chairs the Senate Committee on Climate Change, called on the pertinent government agencies, led by the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), to work for the immediate ratification of the treaty.

The senator said the Philippines needs to ratify the agreement to gain access to funds that will help the country adapt to climate change impacts.

"We understand that government is in transition, but we expect that the CCC and DFA have already met with the agencies and have explained the importance of this Agreement in our pursuit of sustainable development and climate and disaster resilience," she said.

"We need to ratify the Agreement so that we can access the Green Climate Fund. This is what we have been waiting for—for developed countries that are the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases (GHG) to aid vulnerable, low-emitting nations like the Philippines," she said.

Under the agreement, industrialized and developed nations are required to provide technical and financial assistance to climate-vulnerable countries like the

Developed countries must also raise \$100 billion annually for a Green Climate fund to be given to developing countries, including the Philippines.

In August, President Rodrigo Duterte admitted to having some misgivings about the Paris Agreement because of its supposed "unfairness" to developing countries.

He said developing countries were being asked to reduce their carbon emissions at a time when they are expanding their economies while the same was not being demanded of the developed nations.

But the President on Wednesday expressed willingness to approve the agreement if his advisers believe that it is beneficial for the country.

Legarda said that so far only the education, health, interior and local governments, national defense, agriculture, agrarian reform, and social welfare departments, with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, National Security Council, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, and the National Economic and Development Authority have submitted their COCs.

JEFFERSON ANTIPORDA AND  
ANGELICA BALLESTEROS

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**Paris Pact, tablado  
ni Digong**

\*\*\*  
PARA maisulong ang kapritso ng mga amo sa West, muling inupakan ni Ramos si Duterte sa pagtanggap nitong kilalanin ang Paris Agreement on Climate Change na magiging epektibo na ngayong Biyernes, November 4, 2016. Giliit ni FVR, makakasama raw sa bansa kung hindi ipatupad ni Digong ang kasunduan sa United Nations' Climate Change Conference sa Paris, France noong 2015 na dinaluhan ng 195 bansa. Matatandaang ikinomit sa naturang summit ni dating Pangulong Noy noy Aquino ang 70 percent reduction ng greenhouse gases (GHG) emission ng Pilipinas hanggang 2030. Ito'y kahit na negative .03 percent (.03%) lang ang ibinubugang carbon dioxide ng bansa na kulang pa kung tutuusin sa pangangailangan ng mga puno't halaman sa buong kapuluan. At kahit pa mangahulugan ito ng hindi pagpapaandar ng mga makinarya at planta na lubhang kailangan ng Pinas sa pagpapanlad ng ekonomiya, itinaya ito ng rehimeng Aquino.

Nauna ang yabang ni NoyP!  
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PUNCHLINE

# Gross National Happiness for PH; FVR still needed – Malacañang



By FRED LOBO

**T**he Duterte administration will create a local Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index to measure the level of satisfaction of Filipinos in everyday living.

Now we'll measure your degree of happiness, the Palace says.

\*\*\*

The baseline study and special survey will be conducted next year using a questionnaire and metrics, said the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

We need to know not only our GNP but also our GNH. Getting nicer and happy?

\*\*\*

The government said that like other countries, the local GNH Index will measure the contentment of the population based on several socioeconomic pillars such as economy, good governance and environment.

So happiness index won't be based on "shabu, alak, at sabong."

\*\*\*

NEDA Deputy Director General Rosemarie Edillon said the socio-economic domains of the Filipino-style happiness index will be anchored on the Ambisyon Natin report, the country's long-term vision on the improvement of the standard of living, finances, security and ease of transacting with the government.

The initial 2015 Ambisyon survey showed most Filipinos desire to attain a family-centric life "free from worry and hardship."

\*\*\*

The Filipinos, Edillon added, also want to have: A car, a medium-sized home, the ability to send all their children to college, taking occasional trips around the country, and having the time to relax with family and friends.

Yes, time for some degree of Digong Prosperity for impoverished Pinoys.

\*\*\*

Meanwhile, Malacañang said that former President Fidel V. Ramos, who just resigned as special envoy to China, should continue to play a role in the Duterte administration, especially in its engagement with Beijing.

Translation: Steady Eddie is still needed and has a role to play.

\*\*\*

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said the administration continues to recognize FVR's role in the thawing of relations between Beijing and Manila, before President Duterte went on a successful state visit to China.

FVR broke the ice through warm "Nihao ma!" and his signature "Kaya natin ito!" thumbs-up.

\*\*\*

"PFVR's presence is invaluable. PFVR was appointed by PRRD as special envoy precisely because of his stature, credibility as our elderly statesman and his ability to break the ice with the Chinese government," Andanar said, referring to Ramos and Duterte by their initials.

"Moreover, it is not true that the former president can no longer have

any role in our engagement with China. His stature and expertise are needed now, more than ever, to follow up and build on what President Duterte accomplished during his recent visit to China," Andanar said.

\*\*\*

Ramos tendered his resignation as special envoy to China after criticizing priorities and policies on the war on drugs, the "separation from the United States," as well as the administration's refusal to ratify the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Just take those criticisms as coming from "an older brother of the big, big, big Filipino family," FVR said.

\*\*\*

"PFVR was instrumental in the softening of ties between our government and the PROC, which led to the very successful recent state visit of PRRD in Beijing," Andanar said.

After Duterte's state visit to China last Oct. 21, Filipino fishermen were able to enter Panatag (Scarborough) shoal without being harassed by Chinese coast guards, aside from the \$24 billion in pledged loans and investments, he said.

Likewise, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano said the administration continues to value Ramos' expertise and stature in dealing with Beijing.

"The former president continues to be the guiding light of this administration and any advice that he will give in official or unofficial capacity, privately or publicly, will continue to be sought," the senator said.

Yes to a continued Duterte-FVR alliance before we all go bonkers.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# \$250-M Malaysian investment to benefit Caraga lumads

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

**B**UTUAN CITY – Five large Malaysian companies will invest \$250 million to develop 120,000 hectares of oil palm plantations, train 25,000 farmers as entrepreneurs and employ about 100,000 workers in their first year operation in the Caraga region.

Regional Director Brielgo O. Pagan of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI-Caraga Region 13) said yesterday that each of the Malaysian companies will invest US\$50 million for the construction of their oil palm milling plants, 10-megawatt bio-gas plants, and basic infrastructure for their townships.

On Monday, Nov. 7, 2016, stakeholders and partners are set to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation for the Philippine-Malaysia Public-Private-Community Partnership in developing the Philippine Integrated Oil Palm Industry Cluster (PIOPIC) at Inland Resort, Hotel and Convention Center in Butuan City.

Some of the signatories are SODECO, NOFATRISCO, Agro-Industries, Incorporated and DTI Caraga Region 13.

Director Pagan said the project will contribute in creating an environment that would reduce poverty through equitable growth, increased agricultural productivity, expanded trade of agricultural products and improvement of support industries in the oil palm pilot areas.

He said this big investment will significantly reduce poverty in the Caraga region through employment generation and livelihood opportunities.

The DTI Caraga Region 13 has been closely working on the Philippine Oil Palm Development Roadmap in coordination with a Malaysian Group to create a master development plan involving rehabilitation of existing oil palm farms and expansion of consolidated oil palm estates.

At least 600,000 lumads (natives) are seen to benefit the multi-billion dollars palm oil investments program in Caraga region.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

BN FILE PHOTO

SEMIRARA MINING  
& Power Corporation

# Coal-fired power plants up next for DENR review

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will start in January an audit of the environmental compliance certificates (ECC) issued to all coal-fired power projects, with the aim of minimizing the Philippines' heavy reliance on "dirty" energy sources.

"We are crafting guidelines for the audit. [H]ope we can be ready by January," said Environmental Management Bureau Director Gilbert C. Gonzales in a mobile message on Thursday when asked on the department's plans for the coal-fired plants.

Earlier, then Officer-in-charge Undersecretary Leo L. Jasareno said that the department intended to conduct the audit in September, at a time when the review of metal mines' environmental management practices was ongoing.

The audit will cover all coal-fired power projects — the 12 in operation, 12 under construction, 13 that have not started construction but issued ECCs, and two with pending applications.

One of more than a hundred required permits to build a coal-fired plant is to secure an ECC issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"[G]ranting so many coal ECC is getting us stuck with dirty energy for 25 years," said Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez in a text message on Thursday.

Coal-fired plants, according to the Department of Energy on its Web site,

10.3% wind, 2.3% biomass, 1.2% solar contributed 0.9%.

She claimed renewable energy is increasingly viable because the underlying technologies are "going to be much cheaper in the next three to four years and some say even now."

"If we can have cheaper energy which doesn't damage health or the environment, isn't that the better option?" added Ms. Lopez.

Meanwhile, Ian C. Rivera, the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice's (PMCI) National Coordinator, said the audit was a first step in encouraging more investment in renewable energy.

"The economic viabilities are already proven but the problem is it cannot be mainstream (and cannot) at present dislodge coal because of the power supply contracts," Mr. Rivera told reporters on Thursday on the sidelines of a briefing in Quezon City.

The PMCI, a national coalition of 130 organizations, reiterated its earlier call for the government to "immediately implement a moratorium on the issuance of permits of new coal-fired power plant applications, including coal mining and coal stockpiles."

Ms. Lopez earlier expressed plans to diversify the country's energy mix which is heavily weighted towards coal in favor of a shift to renewable energy.

"We are encouraging all. We're not biased to coal," said Energy Secretary Alfonso G. Cusi in remarks e-mailed to reporters by the Department of Energy on Thursday.

The department's crackdown against miners has led to plans to review all ECCs including those of country's biggest power firms, with an early target being Semirara Mining & Power Corp., which belongs to both industries under scrutiny.

The Consunji-controlled firm operates a mine on Semirara Island in Antique province from which it gets coal to run the 764-megawatt plant in Calaca, Batangas that is operated by its subsidiary, SEM Calaca Power Corp.

The review particularly questioned the alleged failure of Semirara Mining's Molave Coal Mine Expansion Project to prevent the pollution of bodies of water and drainage systems.

However, the coal firm earlier disclosed to the bourse a report from the EMB in Region IV which shows that the firm is in "full compliance to environmental laws."

The DENR's audit identified 20 miners that may face suspension. Those either suspended or recommended for suspension make up nearly three-fourths of the country's 41 metal mines. The agency earlier suspended 10 mining operations before the audit in July.

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### Anti-smoke belching officer binaril

Itinumba ng dalawang nakamotorsiklong lalaki ang isang anti-smoke belching officer habang nagsasagawa ng operasyon ang kanyang grupo sa Pasay City kahapon ng umaga.

Ayon kay Chief Inspector Rolando Baula ng Pasay City Station Investigation and Detective Management Branch (SIDMB), dead-on-the-spot si Ramil Co, assistant team leader ng city police's Anti-Smoke Belching Unit (ASBU), dahil sa mga tama ng bala sa katawan.

Sinabi ni Baula na nagsasagawa ng anti-smoke belching operation si Co at ang kaniyang team sa

Barangay 76, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay, bandang 11:30 a.m. nang dumating ang mga suspek.

"Maya-maya, habang nakaupo ito at nag-re-range ng ASBU machine, biglang dumating yung mga suspek sakay ng pulang motorsiklo, tapos yung backrider bumaba at nilapitan yung biktima at pinagbabaril," sabi ni Baula.

Sinabi ng witnesses na nakarining sila ng anim na putok ng baril bago nila nakita ang mga salarin na tumatakas sakay ng motorsiklo patungong northbound lane ng Roxas Boulevard.

"Sa ngayon, nagko-conduct pa tayo ng in-depth investigation pero maaaring siya talaga ang target dahil malapitan siyang binaril eh," pahayag pa ni Baula.

Sinabi naman ni Jayson Go, driver ng isang closed van, na nakasuot ng helmet, bonnet at jacket ang bumaril sa biktima.

Nagsasagawa pa ng masusing imbestigasyon ang pulisya ngunit isang witness ang nagsabi na bago naganap ang pamamari, nakipagtalo si Co sa isang driver dahil sa anti-smoke belching operation. (Martin Sadongdo)

# Remate

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#### Nanghuhuli ng sasakyang mausok tinigok

PINAGBABARIL ng hindi pa nakikilalang armadong suspek ang isang kawani ng Pasay City Hall habang nagsasagawa ng operasyon ang grupo ng biktima laban sa mauusok na sasakyan kahapon.

Dead-on-the-spot ang biktima si Ramil Co, nasa hus-tong gulang, assistant team leader ng Anti-Smoke Belching Unit (ASBU) ng Pasay City Hall, nakatira sa #1770 F. B. Harrison St. ng naturang lungsod.

Inaalam pa ng pulisya ang pagkakakilanlan ng dalawang suspek na sakay ng walang plakang motorsiklo.

Sa imbestigasyon ng Pasay City Police, alas-11:30 kahapon ng tanghali nang maganap ang insidente sa Roxas Boulevard, Brgy. 76 ng naturang lungsod.

Bigla umanong sumulpot ang mga riding-in-tandem at bumaba ang backrider na lumapit pa kay Co bago ito binaril.

Nang bumulagta ang biktima ay agad sumampa sa motorsiklo ang gunman at humarurot sa pagtakas.

Ayon sa ilang testigo na tumanging magpabanggit ng pangalan, bago ang pamamari ay may nakasagutang driver ang biktima dahil sa kanilang isinasagawang anti-smoke belching operation.

Patuloy na inilimbestigahan ng pulisya ang motibo sa pamamari habang inaalam pa ng mga awtoridad kung nakuha-  
nan ng CCTV camera ang insidente para sa pagkakakilanlan ng mga suspek.

JAY REYES

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## Aklan ex-rebels become forest guards

By TARAYAP

ILOILO CITY — Former communist rebels in Aklan have been hired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-6) as forest guards.

Former members of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade have to look after forests and assist in arresting illegal lumber haulers at five identified mountainous areas of Ibaday town.

"They have become a force to reckon with. They have successfully augmented our surveillance and monitoring work," said DENR-6 Regional Director Jim Sampulna.

The recruitment of ex-rebels is part of the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (Pamana) program of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

Collectively known as Kapatiran para sa Progresong Panlipunan Inc. (Kapatiran-Aklan), the forest guards have also planted and raised 3,000 seedlings for almost two years.

They helped in the inventory of trees destroyed by Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan), assisted in survey of forest dwellers at the Aklan River Watershed Forest Reserve, assisted in the distribution of donated lumber, and assisted DENR-Aklan in monitoring survival rates for sites of the National Greening Program.

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## App helping protect forests

TACLOBAN CITY - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has turned to a mobile application to step up biodiversity protection.

DENR Eastern Visayas assistant regional director Carlito Tuballa said the region is implementing the Lawin Protections System as a strategy to conserve the forest and biodiversity using a cybertracker mobile app.

"Through this technology, the community and environmental law enforcers may report real-time environmental abuses from the site," Tuballa said.

The system consolidates and coordinates the efforts of patrollers, forest guards and rangers, data managers, forest technicians and geographic information system experts, resource managers or members of the protected area management boards, DENR officials, environmental law enforcers such as the army and police, and DENR and deputized enforcers.

Patrollers gather information on forest condition and threats to forest health, data managers convert forest data into reports, resource managers assess and adjust forest protection strategies for identified focus area.

(PNA)