

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DAY : Tuesday

DENR

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Gov't eyes local seaweed industry dev't as biodiversity-friendly enterprise

BY MADELAINE B. MYRAFLOR

The government is now working towards the development of local seaweed industry as part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) effort to list down biodiversity-friendly enterprises as alternative source of income for communities near environmentally critical areas.

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez said the agency has started looking for ways to boost the local production of seaweed, which is an alternative source of income for coastal communities and could help counter the effects of climate change.

According to her, the DENR has already started the process of identifying suitable sites for seaweed farming

in the country, with the help of other government agencies and concerned stakeholders.

Some of the potential seaweed farming sites that have been recently identified include Calatagan in Batangas, Tambuyong in Quezon, Badian in Cebu, and Caluya Island in Antique, which is near Semirara Island where the controversial coal mining site and power plant is located.

Lopez said the government will not only help in seaweed propagation but also in marketing its by-products.

"The seaweed revenues should affect more than one person while developing an area," Lopez said. "We can get the country out of poverty through this project."

The DENR chief noted the strong market potential of seaweed due to its

fast-growing characteristics and high market price, making it an important economic activity to alleviate poverty in the rural areas.

As such, one of the proposals is to get the fund for the seaweed projects from the Expanded National Greening Program (NGP) and the People's Survival Fund.

For next year, the DENR will get a higher budget of nearly P29 billion for next year, bulk of which will go to NGP, the government's flagship reforestation program.

NGP is a six-year massive forest rehabilitation program that aimed to cover 1.5 million hectares of denuded forestland with trees by the end of 2016.

But it was extended until 2028 through an executive order issued in

November, 2015 in a bid to rehabilitate 7.1 million hectares more.

As of November, 2016, the NGP has already created more than 3.29 million "green jobs," benefiting individuals hired as workers in producing almost 400 million seedlings.

Apart from its economic potential, seaweed is one of the natural and ef-

fective carbon sequesters that can be found in the coastal area, and some of its species can grow alongside mangroves.

"Using seaweeds for human production and consumption also helps the marine ecosystem as it reduces the organisms that are infesting other lives in the sea," the DENR said.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Ahead of Duterte infra binge, COMP hopeful of govt's renewed support for mining industry

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA @jonlmayuga

THE Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) is hopeful of the government's renewed support for the mining industry as the Duterte administration embarks on a "massive" infrastructure program.

COMP Executive Vice President Nelia Halcon said a massive infrastructure program would expectedly result an increase in the demand for mineral products and by-products.

Over the past six months since the Duterte administration took over, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), led by Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez, a staunch environmental and anti-mining advocate, launched a campaign to weed out "irresponsible" mining operations.

Safar 10 mining companies have

by Lopez. The criteria includes social, environmental and biodiversity consideration in every aspect of mining operations.

COMP, which is composed of big players in the mining industry, currently operates major gold, copper and nickel mines, expressed concern over the adverse impact of such campaign to mining investment.

With Duterte's recent pronouncement to embark on a massive infrastructure program, COMP sees a ray of hope for re-

try goes on this bold move. There will be increased demand for mineral products and by-products and we could contribute significantly to these needs," Halcon said in a news statement released on Monday.

Members of COMP took part in the Pilipinas conference initiated by the Albert del Rosario Institute and Stratbase, wherein Bases Conversion Development Authority President and CEO Vivencio Dizon presented the plans of the government to "build, build and build" starting next year to bridge provinces and islands in the country to help spur inclusive growth.

The massive infrastructure program also aims "to solve problems of traffic congestion, inadequate mass-transport facilities, air pollution and the lack of healthy, green and livable community spaces," Dizon was quoted as saying.

Dizon stressed that the infrastructures are sure to bring in investments, employment and reduce the price of commodities.

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Ahead of Duterte infra binge, COMOP hopeful of govt's renewed support for mining industry

Manila Bus Rapid Train System to ensure on time trips along Edsa; and the Mindanao Railway to help bridge people and goods across Mindanao.

On the other hand, Halcon did not discount the challenges the mining industry needs to overcome before it could realize its full potential as being an economic driver of the country.

"In June, when the President laid his 10-point economic agenda, he already stressed the need to accelerate infrastructure spending to account for 5 percent [of] GDP with public-private partnerships playing a key role. We then highlighted that the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement and the Foreign Technical Assistance Agreement are public-private partnerships

[PPP], which will help drive rural development and employment in rural areas."

The pipeline mining projects that are expected to be operational during the next six to 10 years, mostly in Mindanao are enough to change the development trajectory of the island.

However, Halcon cited that with Executive Order (EO) 79, there have been lost opportunities to contribute to the country's economy.

"There remains the need to amend the EO by revoking provisions detrimental to the industry while retaining provisions that enhance the accountability and responsibility of companies developing the country's mineral resources."

“We hope to see renewed support for the mining industry as the country goes on this bold move. There will be increased demand for mineral products and by-products, and we could contribute significantly to these needs.”—HALCON

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THE MINES and Geosciences Bureau's decision on 30 metal miners at risk of non-compliance in their environmental management practices after a nationwide audit may be released by the end of January.



January target set for mining audit results

A DECISION on 30 metal miners at risk of non-compliance in their environmental management practices after a nationwide audit may be released by the end of January.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau's (MGB) Officer-in-charge, Assistant Director Danilo U. Uykieng, who is leading the final phase of the audit, said that the review of the responses of these mining firms will start today. He added that none of the miners' responses to show-cause orders that have been sent to them by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has been validated.

"Tomorrow, (Dec. 13) the technical working group will start the review... they were turned over to me, all the documents, last Friday, without any review," said Mr.

Uykieng, who was designated last month to head the review, in a Monday phone interview.

The technical working group of five sections, each with members holding positions from the various agencies of the DENR, will start assessing which mines to prioritize, with those cases deemed "less complicated" to be identified, according to Mr. Uykieng.

He added that they proposed to Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez a "doable" plan wherein the MGB will conclude the validation of eight miner's responses before the holidays, though he gave no guarantees.

The reports will be submitted directly to the Office of the Secretary which rule on the reports.

Ms. Lopez said in October that the DENR has sent out show-

cause letters along with audit findings reports to the miners, who were expected to respond in seven days after receipt.

The audit, which began July 8, was originally to be a one-month review but has seen repeated delays after revised target dates for a final determination on their compliance.

The mining industry has criticized the delays as harming the reputations of the companies involved.

Validating the reports of those who were not recommended for suspension will be the last priority, Mr. Uykieng said.

"They are not recommended for suspension. They were not given show-cause orders... We will evaluate them last," Mr. Uykieng said, referring to the 11 miners that will not be included in the scope of their review.

Asked of the possibility that these 11 miners will have nothing to answer for in the audit, Mr. Uykieng said: "As far as the audits are concerned, I think so. But if there are violations after the audit, then they are not exempt..."

These 11 metal miners were found to have committed infractions although not serious enough to merit suspensions. Mining companies not recommended for suspension are Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp., Philex Mining Corp., Philsaga Mining Corp., Techiron Resources, Inc., Cagdianao Mining Corp., Taganito Mining Corp., Platinum Group Metals Corp., Greenstone Resources Corp., Pacific Nickel Philippines, Inc., Apex Mining Co. Inc., and Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp.

— Janina C. Lim

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Visitors flock Wildlife Rescue Center

PALO, Leyte - The Regional Wildlife Rescue Center (RWRC) run by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Eastern Visayas office here has been attracting more visitors in the past months.

DENR Regional Director Leonardo Sibbaluca told reporters the center, located in the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) Leyte compound in Barangay Baras, is the rehabilitation area for

confiscated, rescued, and abandoned wildlife found in Eastern Visayas.

Sibbaluca said that while the center looks after wildlife, it also serves as a place to learn about the conservation of wildlife in the region and is open for educational tours and family trips.

It has under its care several kinds of wild cats, birds, monkeys, snakes, and assorted other animals

The animals are released into their

natural habitat in the protected areas of the region as soon as they are fit and healthy.

Sibbaluca attributed the increase in visitors to the intensive campaign of his office to conserve and protect wildlife especially those that are endangered.

He said the center was transferred to Palo from Babatngon town after it destroyed by super typhoon Yolanda in 2013. (Restituto A. Cayubit)



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Pasonanca Park gawing protected area

Pinasa ng House committee on environment ang House Bill No. 124 na nagdedeklara sa Pasonanca watershed forest reserve sa Zamboanga City bilang isang protected area o natural park.

Ang Pasonanca Natural Park ay lawak na 17,414 na hektarya at sumasaklaw sa mga barangay ng Pasonanca, Lumayang, Tolosa, Bungiao, Dulian, Baluno, Salsan, Cacao, Lunzuran, Las Paz, Lapakan at Lamisahan sa siyudad.

Sinabi ni Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat, may akda sa panukala, na ang Pasonanca Natural Park ang isa sa tatlong natitirang watershed sa bansa.

Bert de Guzman

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New rule on land use to steer economic devt

THE National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Land Use Committee (NLUC) has decided to review the National Spatial Strategy after a meeting last month.

The NSS is the core strategy of the National Physical Framework Plan (NPFP) 2016-2045, which intends to guide sub-national physical and land use planning.

The NSS defines the country's desired spatial structure based on population trends, economic activities, and services.

NEDA said that, recognizing the role of cities as growth drivers, the NSS proposes a network connecting four metropolitan centers with regional centers and sub-regional centers using transport networks.

"It is important to improve the mobility of Filipinos by enhancing connectivity between urban centers and marginalized areas. With improved connectivity, linking jobs and people can be done more efficiently," Ernesto Pernia, socioeconomic planning secretary, said.

Aside from improved connectivity, the objectives of the NSS also include decongesting Metro Manila by promoting scale and agglomeration economies in regional and sub-regional centers, managing the growth of large and more environmentally-constrained metropolitan centers, and reducing vulnerability by ensuring easy access to disaster-affected areas.

The Duterte administration is positioned

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to increase public spending on infrastructure until 2022, allotting as much as 5.4 percent of next year's gross domestic product.

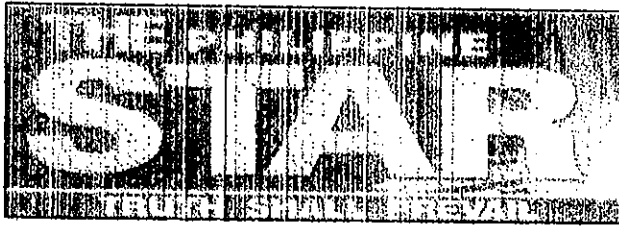
Moreover, the NLUC also discussed policy issues such as the delineation of safe and unsafe zones.

This will serve as the basis for locating rehabilitation and recovery projects, using maps produced by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

The NLUC also reviewed the revised draft Executive Order on the two-year moratorium on agricultural land conversion as proposed by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

The revised EO includes a new provision allowing the Office of the President to exempt certain government projects for energy development, socialized housing, economic zone development, tourism zone development and other necessary infrastructure projects from the moratorium.

While NEDA, in a signed position paper with the Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), has been pushing for effective land use regulation



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Migratory birds rest on a tree near a fishpond in Barangay Dulag, Binmaley, Pangasinan in this photo taken on Sunday.

CESAR RAMIREZ

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DENR hit for failure to act on petition vs entry of burn WtE

By CORY MARTINEZ

VARIOUS environmental groups have urged Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez to take the lead in promoting ecological and sustainable solutions to the country's garbage woes.

The groups made the appeal during their protest action last Dec. 5 in front of the DENR main office in Visayas Avenue, Quezon City as they lamented the flooding of thermal or burn "waste-to-energy" (WtE) technology proposals in the country, which they believed will undermine the country's effort to curb environmental degradation and pursue a low-carbon development path.

The protesters who marched to the DENR were composed of various environ-

mental watchdog groups and advocates such as Bangon Kalikasan Movement, Consumer Rights for Safe Food, EcoWaste Coalition, Greenpeace Southeast Asia, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Health Care Without Harm, Mother Earth Foundation, Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, and Piglas ng Kababaihan.

The protest action was also held in connection with the failure of the DENR to act on their petition sent last Sept. 1, 2016 to the office of Lopez.

The petition urged Lopez to repeal the National Solid Waste Management Commission Resolution No. 669, series 2016, which allows the entry and operations of burn WtE. The NSWMC is chaired by the DENR.

"We urge Secretary Lopez to take the lead in promoting ecological and sustainable solutions to the country's

garbage woes. We already have cities, municipalities and barangays that are successfully implementing safe, proven and low-cost ecological management of municipal solid waste and their experiences can be replicated across the country," said Ochie Tolentino, Zero Waste Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition.

Tolentino stressed that once the burn WtE technologies will be allowed, the people will be locked-in to years of dirty, toxic, and costly solid waste management systems.

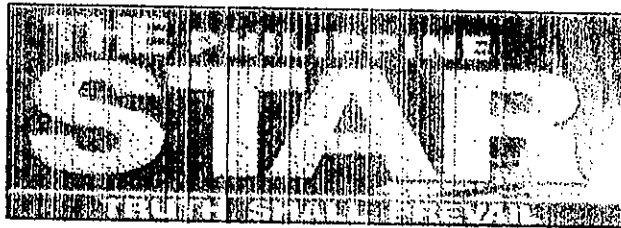
"Burn WtE facilities emit greenhouse gases and toxic fly ash and bottom ash. Allowing these facilities will sabotage our country's efforts to clean our air and implement the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act," said Tolentino.

According to the groups, burn WtE technologies are rebranded garbage-burning

facilities and incinerators used by waste industries and vendors to hide the technology's dirty image and dupe unaware buyers and clients, particularly from developing countries like the Philippines.

"It is lamentable that government agencies are still pining for costly magic bullets to solve our waste problems, when proven, safe and sustainable solutions are already enshrined in our existing policies," said Von Hernandez, 2003 Goldman Environmental Prize recipient.

"The real question is whether our officials have the political will and the creativity to move our society away from dirty and polluting waste management systems towards material recovery options that generate jobs for our communities. This is the unfulfilled promise of the 15 year old Ecological Solid Waste Management law, whose implementation remains hostage to government ineptitude and vested interests," he said.



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Santa Claus listens to a reindeer at the Rooftop Landing Reindeer Farm in Clare, Michigan. The reindeer have become a Christmas icon, associated with pulling the sleigh of Santa to help him deliver Christmas gifts. REUTERS

Global warming stunting reindeer

PARIS — If Santa is recruiting helpers to haul Christmas presents around the world this year, he had better take a few extra, said researchers yesterday as they warned that reindeer are shrinking.

Over the past 16 years, the weight of adult reindeer in Svalbard in the Norwegian Arctic has dropped by 12 percent, likely due to global warming, said study findings presented to a meeting at the British Ecological Society (BES)

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in Liverpool.

By the time they reached adulthood, reindeer born in 2010 weighed just over 48 kilograms, compared to 55 kg for those born in 1994.

"Twelve percent may not sound very much, but given how important body weight is to reproduction and survival, it's potentially huge," study leader Steve Albon of the James Hutton Institute in Scotland, told AFP.

Previous research had shown that when the average adult weight in April is less than 50 kg, the population as a whole declines, he added.

Albon and his fellow researchers blame climate change for the shrinking reindeer.

Scientists say land surface temperatures in the Arctic were about 2.8 degrees Celsius higher last year than when records began a century earlier.

Warmer winters mean more rain, which falls on snow and freezes the

to the lichen which comprises the bulk of their winter diet and for which they usually forage in the snow.

Lichen are complex organisms comprised of a fungus living in symbiosis with an algae or bacterium.

"The reindeer starve, aborting their calves or giving birth to much lighter young," said the BES.

Reindeer numbers have increased over the past two decades, said the research team, so greater competition for food likely also contributed to their smaller size.

This meant there could be more but smaller reindeer in the Arctic in the decades to come, "possibly at risk of catastrophic die-offs because of increased ice on the ground."

The team has tracked Arctic reindeer since 1994, catching, marking and measuring 10-month-old calves every winter and returning the following year to recapture and note the animals' size and weight.

A study earlier this year

To sustain both the ocean and people

Policy interventions to improve the environmental sustainability of the fisheries trade need to be matched by a commitment to improve the conditions of the most marginalized players.

The trade in fishery products provides maritime countries like the Philippines with profound human welfare opportunities. In addition to generating more than P200 billion worth of economic activity annually, it makes significant contributions to the livelihoods and food security of millions of Filipinos. Yet, sustaining this vital trade faces immense challenges. Overfishing is rampant, leading to declining fish stocks and falling production levels. Fishers at the extractive ends of the trade obtain limited benefits, with little power to change their status.

How to improve the ways in which the fisheries trade is conducted—more profitably and more equitably—needs to be an urgent priority for Philippine policymakers.

Stakeholders from the government, civil society, academe, and private sector are implementing many interventions to improve the environmental sustainability of the fisheries trade. Fishery improvement projects and certification processes are being rolled out, connecting Philippine companies to overseas retailers and consumers who wish to purchase sustainably caught seafood. Such initiatives rely on better catch documentation and traceability, following the entire value chain from the

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harvesters to consumers. Amendments to the national Fisheries Code, driven by the requirements of export markets in Europe and the United States, aim to reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Closed seasons, such as for the multibillion-peso sardine fishery in Zamboanga Peninsula, and other management tools such as stock enhancement, size limits, and marine protected areas all aim to ensure the biological basis for the fisheries trade into the future.

Local government units in particular are ultimately responsible for many of these activities, and in many cases will need to work together to manage transboundary marine resources.

Yet, such interventions need to be balanced by an explicit commitment to social and economic conditions in the fisheries trade. Fishers involved in the trade across the Philippines are "price-takers," and poverty remains widespread in their communities. Appropriate policy interventions will also be required to improve the conditions of these most marginalized players.

"Value-adding" options can include better marketing and improved postharvest processing facilities and practices, which ultimately can lead to improved

quality standards for products desired by consumers. Better drying facilities for producers of seaweed and other dried fishery products, for example, can dramatically increase the income gained. The challenge is to use such policy interventions to increase the value gained from the fisheries trade in ways that do not further pressure already strained natural resources.

More fundamentally, fishers in much of Southeast Asia face poor labor conditions and suffer from insecure land tenure; human rights abuses have been documented by Greenpeace. Fishers need to have more of a say over the conditions and policies that shape their lives. Unless people have greater control over policy interventions for the fisheries trade, such interventions run the danger of exacerbating the strong economic inequalities already present.

This was produced by Michael Fabinyi (Uni. Of Technology Sydney), Wolfram Dressler (Uni. of Melbourne), Michael Pido (Palawan State Uni.), Antonio Abamo (Visayas State Uni.), Jo Marie Acebes (Balyena.Org), Vince Aureflor Cinches (Greenpeace), David David (WWF), Amor Diaz (BFAR), Angel Encarnacion (BFAR), Maria Rosario Aynon Gonzales (PSU), Danilo Israel (Phil. Inst. of Development Studies), Maria Mangahas (UP Diliman), Mavic Matillano (WWF), Len Garces (USAID Oceans), Rina Maria Rosales (Ecofish), Alita Roxas (Mindanao State Uni.-Iligan), Chrisma Salao (WWF), and Nerissa Salayo (Seafdec). The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent the views of their institutions.

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MAPALAD ang Pilipinas dahil sa ating kinalalagyan sa mapa ng daligid ay nabiyayaan tayo ng mayamang katubigan lalo na ng tubig-inumin. Nakakukuha tayo nito buhat sa pagbuhos ng ulan, sa surface water resources gaya ng mga ilog at lawa, at ground water resources. Pero maging ang seguridad ng tubig sa ating bansa ay nanganganib na rin.

Ayon sa tala ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), mayroong 18 major river basins at 421 sa buong bansa habang mayroon tayong 79 lawa ayon sa Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) kabilang dito ang mga tanyag na Laguna de Bay na siyang pinakamalaki at ang Lake Lanao sa Mindanao na isa sa mga binansagang ancient lakes on earth.

Sinasabi naman ng mga eksperto partikular ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) na "extensive" ang ground water reservoir natin na may sukat na 50,000 square kilometers kabilang ang Northeast Luzon, Central Luzon, Laguna Lake basin, Cavite-Batangas-Laguna basin, Southeast Luzon, Mindoro Islands, Negros island, Northeast Leyte, Ormoc - Kananga basin, Agusan - Davao basin,

Occidental Misamis basin, at Lanao-Bukidnon-Misamis basin.

Sa kabuuan, ayon sa pag-aaral ng Greenpeace Philippines, ang kabuuang freshwater resources ng bansa ay umaabot sa 145,900 MCM/year kung saan ay mas saganang mga lugar na nasa Northern Mindanao, Southern Mindanao at Western Visayas. Kokonti lamang ang sa Ilocos, Bicol at Central Visayas.

Ayon sa parehong pag-aaral, sa taong 2025, makakaranas ng kakulangan sa malinis na tubig ang mga lugar na nasa Pampanga at Agno Rivers, Pasig - Laguna, Cagayan Valley, at sa isla ng Cebu. Kaya ngayon pa lamang ay dapat nang kumilos ang mga lokal na pamahalaan upang maiwasan ito.

Ayon kay Executive Director Sevillo D. David, Jr. ng NWRB, "Isa sa mga dapat pagtuunan ng pansin ay ang domestikong paggamit ng tubig sa ating mga tahanan gaya ng paglalaba, paliligo, paglilinis at pagluluto.

Dahil sa kakulangan ng mga treatment facility, dumidirekso ang mga tubig na nagamit natin sa mga surface water na nagiging sanhi ng pagdumi nito.

Malaki rin ang kontribusyon ng mga agricultural wastewater at mga industrial waste-

water.

Walang habas nating dinudumihan ang mga pupwedeng mapagkunan natin ng tubig". Kung magpapatuloy tayo sa pagwawalang-bahala at pagmamatigas, mararanasan talaga natin ang kakaipusan sa tubig-inumin sa taong 2025. Kaya habang may panahon pa, hamon natin sa ating mga mambabatas, agad na isabatas ang rebisyon ng Presidential Decree No. 1067, at samahan natin ang NWRB sa kanilang mandato na masiguro na mayroon tayong potable water.

Napapanahon na rin na maglaan ang pamahalaan ng mas malalaking insentibo sa mga industriya at iba pang negosyo upang makapagtayo ng mga water treatment facilities nang sa gayon ay nalilinis muna ang mga tubig na nagamit bago pa mapunta sa

ANG INYONG LINGKOD

DR. HILDA C. ONG

**ANG TUBIG AY MAHALAGA
KAYA DAPAT NA TAYONG
KUMILOS NGAYON!**

mga ilog at lawa.

Panukala nga ng United Nations (UN) kailangang mabuhayin sa mga bagong water infrastructure, maglaan ng sanitation facilities at higit na palawakin ang kaalaman sa kalinisan o hygiene.

Hindi pa huli, may nalalabing panahon, upang ang nagbabantang krisis sa pagkakahaw ay hindi tukuyan nating maranasan sa Pilipinas.