

01 DEC 2013

DATE : \_\_\_\_\_

DAY : **Saturday** \_\_\_\_\_

# DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



# EAS CONGRESS 2018

THE EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS

**25** Years of Partnerships  
for Healthy Oceans,  
People and Economies  
Moving as One with the  
Global Ocean Agenda

**27-30 November 2018**  
**Iloilo Convention Center**  
**PHILIPPINES**



The flags representing countries of the East Asian seas



Sixth Ministerial Forum at the Courtyard, Marriott Hotel

TITLE: *EAS Congress 2014*

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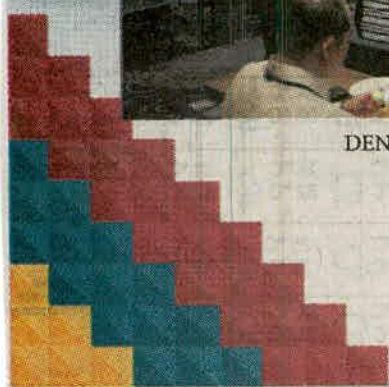
Symbol of solidarity: Ministers, DENR, and PEMSEA officials join hands during the Sixth Ministerial Forum, EAS Congress 2018



Closing ceremony of the EAS Congress at the Iloilo Convention Center with NEDA Secretary Ernesto M. Pernia



DENR presscon after the Ministerial Forum





## ILOILO MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

### East Asian Region Moving As One to Secure Healthy Oceans, People and Economies

The 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Forum  
East Asian Seas Congress 2018  
November 29, 2018

- WE**, the Representatives of eleven countries bordering on the Seas of East Asia have gathered in Iloilo City, Philippines, on the 29th day of November 2018 to re-affirm our shared commitments for the sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia to reach our shared vision for healthy oceans, people and economies of the region. On this auspicious occasion, as we together celebrate PEMSEA's twenty-five years, we reflect our satisfaction on the achievements that we have collectively realized and consider our joint future direction.
- WE RE-AFFIRM** our shared commitments made in Putrajaya, Malaysia (2003) to work together towards the sustainable development of the region's coasts and oceans with a common platform under the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).
- WE REMAIN** steadfast in our commitments under the Manila Declaration (2009) on strengthening the implementation of Integrated Coastal Management for sustainable development and climate change adaptation; the Changwon Declaration (2012) on moving toward an ocean-based blue economy; and the Da Nang Compact (2015) on aligning our strategies in the SDS-SEA with global goals and targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- WE ACKNOWLEDGE** the significant value and critical contribution of coastal and marine ecosystems goods and services to securing food and jobs; helping to eradicate poverty and building resilient coastal communities and blue economies in the East Asian region. Juxtaposed against these opportunities is the vulnerability of the region to climate change and other environmental threats such as marine-related disasters, destruction and loss of habitats and natural coastlines, biodiversity loss and degradation, overfishing and lack of food security, pollution from land and sea-based sources, and impairment of water quality, water supply and water security.
- WE NOTE** the bold strides that we have collectively taken to transform PEMSEA from a mere program into a self-sustaining regional organization to work towards achieving our shared vision.
- WE FURTHER NOTE** with pride and appreciation, PEMSEA's pioneering work in the region to develop best practices in the design and implementation of the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) approach. PEMSEA is also at the forefront of developing knowledge and capacity to build climate smart policies and enable ocean-based blue economies.
- WE BELIEVE** that PEMSEA remains relevant and is well-positioned to continue performing its role as the regional platform to encourage the development of common policies, building capacity and orchestrating essential collaborative and scaled up actions alongside smart financing to deliver economic and social dividends as well as protect biodiversity and address shrinking coastlines.
- WE BELIEVE FURTHER** that because of its competence, pool of experts, and related body of information generated through its years of work on the ground, PEMSEA has established itself as the coastal and marine knowledge center that can support the region in the effective implementation of the SDS-SEA aligned with the UN SDGs and other international and regional commitments.
- WE ARE CONFIDENT** that PEMSEA will continue to facilitate regional cooperation to respond to the challenges within the context of the rapidly changing social, political, economic and environmental landscapes and encourage the region to move towards a Blue Economy and Sustainable Development of its coasts and oceans.

### OUR COMMITMENTS TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

1. We will continue to work to achieve the remaining targets set under the Danang Compact by 2021, namely,
  - a. 25% ICM coverage of the region's coastlines, and
  - b. the adoption and implementation of ICM national laws and policies in all countries in the region.
2. We will regularly update the State of the Oceans and Coasts reports to highlight the contributions of coasts and oceans to economies. We further commit to establish environmental, social and economic indicators, where appropriate, to measure the development impact of initiatives on the state of the coasts, communities and economies.
3. We recognize the importance of the PEMSEA Resource Facility as the coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the SDS-SEA. We commit to support its operations through voluntary country contributions beyond 2019.
4. We support PEMSEA's efforts in identifying and developing blue economy investments at the national and local level. We welcome opportunities to work with our partners, both government and non-government, to develop, finance and implement blue economy projects in ICM sites as well as activities set forth in the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022.
5. We acknowledge the current strong momentum to tackle marine debris globally. We commit to significantly reducing or preventing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based and sea-based activities, including marine litter and nutrient pollution.
6. We commit to implementing policies and programs for the sustainable management of coastal tourism destinations. If properly planned and managed, coastal tourism will benefit the environment, the people and the economy. Sustainable tourism planning not only considers social, environmental and economic impacts within the tourist area or facility itself, but also the impacts on the host coastal community, including livelihoods, water and food security, solid waste disposal, water pollution and social and environmental factors.
7. We realize the critical importance of regional collaboration in dealing with coastal and marine hazards such as storm surges and tsunamis. We commit to working together to adopt innovative strategies to raise awareness and build regional capacity to monitor, forecast and provide timely early warnings to support safety of life and property at sea, coastal management and minimization of impact of such hazards.
8. We recognize that we are all parties to the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC and aware of the urgency and seriousness of the threat of climate change to the sustainable development of our countries and region; We commit to implement adaptation and mitigation strategies to respond to climate change.

### PARTNERSHIPS

**WE ARE AWARE** that achieving our goals will require the support of all stakeholders across sectors; We will continue our efforts to improve cooperation and engagement between PEMSEA and other countries, relevant international development organizations, local organizations, the private sector, financial institution and investors, nongovernment organizations, academic and research institutions, communities and grassroots, women and youth organizations.

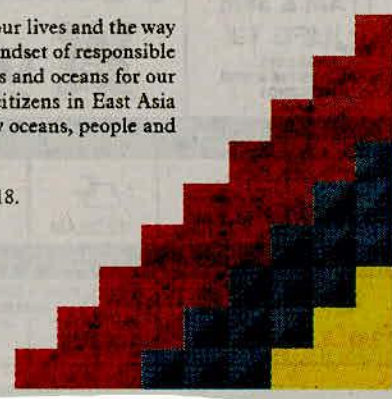
**WE AGREE** to step up the cooperation with regional organizations to achieve the targets under the SDS-SEA; We recognize the opportunities for increased knowledge, efficiency gains and effectiveness when collectively addressing implementation challenges.

**WE ARE DETERMINED** to continue working together as PEMSEA country partners to deliver our common objectives in line with the SDS-SEA and our regional and global commitments. We are convinced that through our collective actions, PEMSEA will lead to more effective solutions with positive impacts on coastal communities and ecosystems as evidenced in the next regional State of Oceans and Coasts report in 2022.

### CONCLUSION

The biggest threat that we face in the region is ourselves, in the way we live our lives and the way we manage our resources. We therefore strongly urge everyone to shift towards a mindset of responsible stewardship, and pledge to take bold steps to protect, manage and restore our coasts and oceans for our present and future generations. PEMSEA Country Partners are ready to engage citizens in East Asia and peoples in other regions to work together to secure our shared vision of healthy oceans, people and economy.

Adopted in Iloilo City, Philippines, this 29<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2018.





# Asian nations forge ocean pact

By **Kuhlin Ceslie Gacula**

Eleven countries issued a joint declaration reaffirming their commitment to the conservation and sustainable development of coastal and marine resources during the 6th Ministerial Forum of the East Asian Seas Congress 2018 held in Iloilo City from 27 to 30 November.

Titled "East Asian Region Moving As One to Secure Healthy Oceans, People and Economies," the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration was adopted by environment ministers and heads of delegation.

The Iloilo Declaration recognizes the significant value and critical contribution of coastal and marine ecosystems goods and services to securing food and jobs, helping to eradicate poverty and building resilient coastal communities and blue economies in East Asia.

The countries that adopted the declaration were Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, North Korea, Singapore, South Korea, Timor-Leste, Vietnam and the Philippines.

The signatories are all members of the Partnerships in Environmental Management

for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), an intergovernmental organization advocating healthy and resilient seas and oceans, coasts, communities and economies across the region.

In his statement, Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu hailed the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration as "a reiteration and stronger call to action" among countries within the East Asian region.

"The Seas of East Asia are the most biodiverse marine areas in the world, yet they face severe threats from climate change and densely populated coastal communities," Cimatu pointed out.

**DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu hailed the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration as "a reiteration and stronger call to action" among countries within the East Asian region.**

"The declaration, supported by the respective countries' plans of action, will ensure that partner countries will work together in addressing complex issues faced by this region," he added.

To achieve these objectives, PEMSEA member nations acknowledged the need to protect coastal and marine ecosystems from the impacts of climate change and other threats, including marine-related disasters, destruction and loss of habitats and natural coastlines, biodiversity loss and degradation and overfishing and lack of food security.

"We are confident that PEMSEA will continue to facilitate regional cooperation to respond to the challenges within the context of the rapidly changing social, political, economic and environmental landscapes and encourage the region to move towards a blue economy and sustainable development of its coasts and oceans," the declaration reads.

The countries, through their representatives, also vowed to implement policies and programs for the sustainable management of coastal tourism destinations.

They also recognized the critical importance of regional collaboration in dealing with coastal and marine hazards like storm surges and tsunamis.





01 DEC 2018

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## Goitia, nagbigay ng bagong karangalan sa PRRC

ISANG buwan makaraang magwagi ang Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission ng 2018 Asian Riverprize mula sa International River Foundation sa Australia, muling nagbigay ng karangalan si PRRC Executive Director Jose Antonio "Ka Pepeton" E. Goitia nang maging tagapagsalita sa 1st High Level Sustainable Blue Water Economy Conference sa Nairo-

bi, Kenya.

Hinangaan sa buong mundo ang political will ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa ginawa ng PRRC na buhayin ang patay nang Pasig River na idineklarang "biologically dead" noong 1990s.

Nagsalita si Goitia nitong Nobyembre 26-28 makaraang kumbidahin ng Philippine Ambassador to Kenya Uriel Norman Garibay, Ministry of Foreign Affairs ng Kenya at ng Uni-

ted Nations bilang speaker at moderator sa kauna-unahang Sustainable Blue Water Economy Conference.

Humanga ang Presidente ng Kenya na si H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta at ang opisyal ng United Nations Development Program sa ipinisinta ni Goitia na rehabilitasyon at epektibong restoration management ng PRRC sa Pasig River.

"Our commission would like

to thank Ambassador H.E. Uriel Norman Garibay for the opportunity to present to the whole world the Philippine achievements in the field of river and waste management through the strong leadership of our President Rodrigo Roa Duterte," sabi ni Goitia. "Now more opportunities for foreign grants and assistance are becoming a reality for PRRC."

Nabatid na humanga ang mga lider ng Africa at United Nations kung paano nagawa ng PRRC ang wastong rehabilitasyon sa Ilog Pasig.



## GOITIA NAGBIGAY NG BAGONG KARANGALAN SA PRRC

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



IPINALILIWANAG ni Goitia kung paano binuhay ng PRRC ang Pasig River.

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# Coliform closes El Nido, Panglao resorts

By Elmer N. Manuel

Department of Tourism (DoT) Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat over the weekend said a swimming ban had been imposed along some beaches in Panglao, Bohol and El Nido in Palawan because of "very high" levels of coliform.

In an interview, Puyat said their water quality checks showed that Alona Beach in Panglao had registered a coliform count of 16,000 most probable number (mpn), while the Buena Suerte Beach in El Nido had 1,300 mpn.

She explained the normal water quality for beaches is 100 mpn, while swimming pools usually have 400 mpn.

"The mayor implemented the no swimming policy because it's not good for the health of the tourists," Puyat said, adding "even if one person will claim on social media that he/she got sick because of that, our entire tourism industry will be affected."

Puyat, however, did not mention when the ban on swimming in the two popular beaches would be lifted but said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is conducting water quality checks every 15 days.

"El Nido and Panglao will not be entirely closed for rehabilitation since the islands have several beaches," Puyat clarified.

"We already told the mayor to put up

no swimming signages, I hope she listens. If they are too stubborn, the national government might be forced to implement a total closure" Puyat stressed.

**She explained the normal water quality for beaches is 100 mpn while swimming pools usually have 400 mpn.**

To recall, the DENR conducted coliform tests in El Nido and Panglao some few weeks ago prior to the dismantling of some establishments that failed to comply with environmental laws.

For her part, El Nido Mayor Nieves Cabunalda-Rosento expressed confidence

that water quality in her town is expected to improve within six months.

"We already have the number of establishments about to be closed for dumping their waste water [in] the esteros" she said.

The national government launched an environmental crackdown in El Nido after it rehabilitated famed beach destination Boracay from April to October.

Boracay was closed to tourists for six months after President Rodrigo Duterte described its waters as "cesspools" because of sewage woes.

Coron, Panglao, Siargao and Puerto Galera will all undergo similar environmental audit and clean-up in the coming weeks.



# 'Coliform high in Panglao, El Nido beaches'

"Very high" levels of coliform have been found at popular resorts in Panglao in Bohol and in El Nido in Palawan, according to an inter-agency body tasked to monitor tourist attractions and ensure their compliance with environmental laws.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said in an interview that coliform count was 16,000 most probable number (mpn) at the Alona Beach in Panglao and 1,300 mpn at the Buena Suerte Beach in El Nido.

The coliform level found is

much higher than the normal water quality of 100 mpn.

The other members of the inter-agency group are Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and Interior Secretary Eduardo Año.

Puyat said they have already informed concerned local government officials about

the problem.

In a meeting with local officials last Tuesday, the inter-agency body – along with socioeconomic chief Ernesto Pernia – gave assurance that concerned tourist attractions would only be rehabilitated and not closed.

She said that they have already told the city mayor of Panglao "to start informing the establishments" about the easement laws.

"The law says 20 meters, but the local government passed an ordinance last 2014, adding 10 meters. So it's 30 meters. We

hope that the current mayor will finally implement the easement," Puyat said.

She also said local officials in El Nido have ordered the closure of more than 22 establishments found not complying with environmental laws.

– Robertzon Ramirez



## Tourism dept shuts Panglao, El Nido beaches

THE Department of Tourism (DoT) on Friday blamed local chief executives for the "high levels" of coliform on beaches in Panglao, Bohol and El Nido, Palawan.

Because of the risk of catching coliform bacteria, Tourism Secretary

Bernadette Romulo Puyat said, tourists and locals have been barred from swimming on Alona Beach and Buena Suerte Beach.

In a quality check by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Panglao's Alona yielded a coliform count of 16,000 most probable number while Buena Suerte in El Nido had 1,300 mpn.

The DENR said normal water quality for beaches is 100 mpn, while swimming pools usually have 400 mpn.

Registering above a 1,000-mpn level is risky.

Puyat said the presence of such bacteria indicates contamination caused by the negligence of local government officials in enforcing easement ordinances.

"Local executives should have already enforced a 'no swimming' policy on the beaches because it's not good for the health of the tourists," she told reporters in a text message.

In Panglao, Puyat said, environmental laws and local ordinances provide that a total of 30 meters of easement should be implemented, but it is only 20 meters in El Nido.

Puyat said an easement of only 3 meters is being observed by tourism establishments along the beaches.

"Local chiefs should start enforcing strict and stringent measures or else we would be forced to shut these beaches down for rehabilitation," she added.

The Tourism chief, however, assured that the Panglao and El Nido beaches would not be entirely closed for rehabilitation, unlike Boracay.

The swimming ban on the two famed beaches would be lifted if they yielded a standard or lower coliform count as the DENR checks water quality every 15 days.

In April, the government closed Boracay island to tourists for six months to clean its waters that have become "cesspools."

Puyat said the government has received complaints about the sorry environmental state of several tourist spots, among them La Union, Baguio, Puerto Galera, Coron and Siargao.

"We have also started evaluating the situation in these places," she added.

**NEIL JAYSON N. SERVALLOS**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



01 DEC 2013  
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# House addresses socialized housing program backlog

By **BEN R. ROSARIO**

**A** bill proposing to convert idle government lands as socialized housing sites has been approved on second reading in the House of Representatives.

Getting unanimous approval during a recent plenary session was House Bill No. 8553 or the "Idle Government-Owned Lands Disposition Act," a consolidated legislative proposal authored by Reps. Gus Tambunting (PDP-Laban, Parañaque City), Rozzano Rufino Biazon (PDP-Laban, Muntinlupa City), Eric Singson (PDP-Laban, Ilocos Sur), Winston Castelo (PDP-Laban, Quezon City), and Alfredo "Albee" Benitez (PDP-Laban, Negros Occidental).

Benitez, chairman of the House Committee on Housing and Urban Development, said third and final reading

approval of the measure is expected before Congress goes on Christmas break this month.

Benitez said the measure seeks to ensure the availability of sufficient land for socialized housing and address the huge housing backlog being experienced in the country.

The senior administration lawmaker said the measure also proposes to improve the capability of local government units in undertaking urban development and housing programs.

Castelo, chairman of the House Committee on Metro Manila Development, has proposed that at least 10 percent of unused government-owned lands be segregated for socialized housing projects.

"Consistent with a rationalized land use plan, housing for the underprivileged could be set aside from government-owned lands for home-

less Filipinos," said Castelo.

Tambunting, who filed HB 228, explained that the consolidated measure directs the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council and Department of Environment and Natural Resources to conduct an inventory of all idle government-owned lands.

These lands may be considered idle if undeveloped and unused for any other purpose.

According to Tambunting, the Department of the Interior and Local Government will conduct the inventory of the unused land owned by local government units (LGUs).

Once identified and reserved for socialized housing purposes, the National Housing Authority (NHA) and Land Management Bureau will identify which land are suitable for socialized housing.



# No more 'business as usual': Climate change requires PH to walk the talk

By **Jhesset O. Enano**  
@JhessetEnanoINQ

Nine years after Tropical Storm "Ondoy" (international name: Ketsana) dumped record-breaking rains on Metro Manila and nearby provinces, Minda Sonajo still has vivid memories of murky floodwaters engulfing her home in Marikina City.

She remembered her panic at the sight of rapidly rising water, made worse by the swollen Marikina River that was only a few blocks away. There was no time to flee. The water quickly reached the second floor of her three-story house, pushing her entire family to the topmost floor—and nowhere else to go.

Sonajo prayed the water would not go any higher.

"It was unlike anything else I've ever seen," said the 53-year-old mother, who has lived in Marikina City since 1987.

The flood did not breach their refuge, but it trapped her family of six, along with several neighbors from low-lying houses who scrambled to her home for safety.

## PH vulnerability

"Since then, fear grips my heart every time there's heavy rain," Sonajo said.

Nearly a decade since it struck in September 2009, Ondoy remained a constant topic in conversations involving disasters and has set into motion climate talks across several sec-



**DESOLATE LANDSCAPE** A seaside barangay in Palo, Leyte, is left in ruins by Super typhoon "Yolanda" in 2013. —INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

tors. Four years later, in November 2013, Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan) would further bare the Philippines' vulnerability to climate change, as over 6,000 people died and at least 4 million were displaced.

In the face of worsening climate-related risks, climate groups said the Philippines should continue to rise as a leading voice of vulnerable nations, particularly as it joins other countries at the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change next week.

Set in Katowice, Poland, the high-level meeting is expected to focus on crafting the guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, a landmark climate accord aimed at capping global temperature at 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

At the same time, the Philippine government must also walk the talk in urgently addressing climate-related issues at home, according to civil society groups, which are also set to head to Poland to track the negotiations and demand accountability for climate change.

## Rapid warming

"Our positions abroad need to reflect how we tackle domestic problems," said Renato Rendentor Constantino, executive director of policy think-tank Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities.

"It is not enough to simply say that rich countries are to blame for climate change," he added.

Central to the Paris Agreement, which the country ratified in March 2017, was the reduction of carbon emissions

that contribute largely to the planet's rapid warming.

In 2015, the Philippines committed to slash its emissions by 70 percent by 2030 as its nationally determined contribution (NDC). This commitment, which was conditional on foreign aid from developed nations, focused on reductions in particular sectors, including waste, industry, transport, forestry and energy.

Yet at present, the government's plan of action for its NDCs remained unclear.

Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman, vice chair of the Climate Change Commission (CCC), said it was still in the process of revisiting and reviewing the NDC commitment, considering the country's projected growth.

Earlier, President Duterte, who also serves as CCC chair, said that efforts to address climate change should not hinder the country's



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
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*No more business as usual ...*

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path to industrialization.

What is clear, De Guzman said, is that the country can no longer afford to be "business as usual." He cited the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that warned of catastrophic risks without urgent actions to curb emissions.

The IPCC report said even a half-degree difference could worsen floods, extreme heat and drought, and push millions more into poverty.

#### **Cheap but dirty**

Despite the country's commitment to climate action, its continued dependence on coal—a cheap yet dirty fossil fuel—as a source of energy presented a clear challenge and contradiction.

"The Philippines, along with Vietnam and Indonesia, should not hide behind the right to develop as they pursue coal expansion," said Gerry Arances, executive director of the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED).

"In order for us to achieve the 1.5-C threshold, all coal-fired power plants should be phased out," he added.

At present, 25 coal-fired power plants operate across the country, supplying majority of the country's electricity.

CEED has recorded over 20 more coal-fired plants in the pipeline, which Arances said could make the country a very critical battleground for coal in

the coming years.

In order to achieve its climate ambitions, he said the government should focus instead on transitioning to renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and geothermal.

After all, the Philippines has the 10-year-old Renewable Energy Act, the first such law in Southeast Asia, which was supposed to push for the promotion and development of renewable energy in the country.

All of these actions come with a looming deadline: the IPCC report says the world only has 12 years to enforce radical changes to meet the 1.5-C threshold.

Ian Rivera, national coordinator of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, said the government should prioritize finalizing its NDCs to formally lay down the country's climate targets.

#### **Mitigation projects**

At the COP24, the Philippines should enjoin other countries to put emphasis on mitigation projects, Arances said.

Constantino said that as the government pressed for accountability from developed countries that were historically responsible for climate change, it should also make strategic plans and projects domestically.

"We cannot afford to wait for the rich countries to wake up wiser and give us appropriate [funding]," he said. "If we are reliant on that kind of justice, that is an injustice to our people." INQ





## Changing the game: Building a culture of resilience through public-private partnerships

By Sen. LOREN LEGARDA

*(Speech delivered at the Top Leaders Forum 2018, on Nov. 29 at SMX Convention Center, Pasay City)*

If there was an off-the-shelf solution to avert disasters, I am certain all chief executive officers of private companies would have already bought it. But not everything comes with a price tag and it is in things that money cannot buy where we draw hope and inspiration, where we foster unity, where cooperation and selflessness arise.

While it is heartwarming to hear stories of survival and compassion in the aftermath of disasters, it is likewise heart-wrenching because lives and livelihood could have been saved if enough resources and effort had been put in risk reduction and prevention.

But our forum today is a testament to the value of cooperation, the importance of unity. The Top Leaders Forum has become a venue to turn challenges into opportunities and it has been effective in scaling up public-private partnerships to reduce and manage disaster risks.

Several supertyphoons have already hit the country since Yolanda in 2013, but thankfully, we have not seen the same tragic consequences in equal scope and magnitude. I would like to believe that strengthened disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) efforts have become integral not only in governance but also in corporate management. Citizens themselves have become more attentive to public service advisories. One proof is that more people now heed early evacuation guidance even before the onset of typhoons.

This should not, however, lull us into complacency. In fact, all the more we need to heighten efforts to build our capacities to reduce disaster risks.

According to the 2017 World Bank report, Philippines Urbanization Review: Fostering Competitive, Sustainable and Inclusive Cities, the country's urban population will increase by approximately 20 million over the next 20 years. It estimates that 102 million Filipinos will be living in cities by the year 2050. This means, almost the whole Filipino population at present will be crowding our already congested cities a generation from now. This would certainly pose a great challenge to governance, especially in building healthy, liveable, resilient and sustainable communities.

Our theme for this year's forum is "Changing the Game: Building a Culture of Resilience Through Public-Private Partnerships," and I would like to mention that there is no gamechanger more urgent, more re-

quiring of our leadership and resolve today, than the call to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

We must take seriously our country's climate leadership among the vulnerable nations, we must embrace innovation and new technology, and we must enable the policies in order to rapidly transform our societal systems and practices for a safer and more sustainable world. We can draw inspiration from India, which in 2017, generated 40% of all its new electricity capacity from solar; from Germany, with its grid running on renewable energy above 53%; and from the Marshall Islands, which recently released their national Tile Til EoClimate Strategy, meaning "Lighting the Way" in Marshallese - to be carbon neutral by 2050.[1]

Companies such as Apple, Microsoft, and Intel, are already at or close to 100% renewable energy, with Apple also promising to adopt a 100% circular business model. Google's data center in Finland runs on 100% wind power. And 94 companies representing 12.5% of the fashion industry have also signed the 2020 Circular Fashion System Commitment to reduce waste.

As we hold this forum today, let us ask the questions: "What can the Philippines innovate? How do we prepare for a scenario of a hundred million population? What would a green Philippine city look like? How can we reduce disaster risks and promote sustainability?"

That we shall discuss all of these things here and create a plan, is par for the course. But what is more important is that we take action that produce meaningful results, and inspire many more to do the same.

We build a culture of resilience by making it a way of life. We do not only act when natural hazards are about to strike, but all our actions are already geared towards resilience. It means that we segregate our waste at source and reduce, reuse, recycle so that we minimize waste production. It means, growing more trees and mangroves because these are natural barriers to flooding and storm surge. It means constructing buildings and structures to be safe and habitable based on multihazard maps.

I am certain, all of us here today know all of these already. And the challenge to us is to strengthen public-private partnerships, pooling our resources and knowledge to mobilize communities and motivate individual action. Let us lead the way.

Thank you and good morning.



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# Leyte road project shutdown urged

By **MARIE TONETTE GRACE MARTICIO**

**T**ACLOBAN CITY - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) called on Leyte's 4th Engineering District to stop the construction of the four-kilometer diversion road linking San Juan, Lao and Naungan in Ormoc City until it gets the necessary clearances from authorities.

In a statement, DENR Regional Director for Eastern Visayas Crizaldy Barcelo said the project, which is to be implemented in four packages, has yet to secure an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) and a tree-cutting permit (TCP), which are required because the road goes through an environmental critical area (ECA).

The road will link villages only reached by boat, an 11-kilometer trip.

The engineering district will build

the 2.8-km section in packages A and B, while the remaining distance will be implemented by Department of Public Works and Highways' (DPWH) regional office in packages C and D.

There are reportedly 16 mangrove trees that will be affected at the project site of package A and 196 trees will have to be cut in package B.

Based on ground verification by Ormoc's Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CEN-

RO), 21 trees within packages A and B have already been cut.

"There are a lot of relevant laws, policies, rules and regulations, which need to be reviewed and complied with in implementing developments especially in environmental critical areas. We will be very strict in implementing these laws," Barcelo said.

District Engineer Lino Gonzales assured the public he will conduct an investigation on the tree-cutting by the

project contractor.

"Based on the survey conducted by our planning and design section, the mangrove area is located at the end portion of package B. As of now, the project is still halfway towards the end portion, and only traverses the swamp area within nipa plants," Gonzales said.

He said he is aware of the laws regarding the cutting of trees and will comply with them.



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# S. KOREAN TRASH GOING BACK — BOC

By Joel dela Torre

**THE tons of garbage illegally transported from South Korea to the country will be returned to its origin before the year ends.**

This was the assurance of the Bureau of Customs which was welcomed by environmental groups EcoWaste Coalition and Greenpeace which put pressure on the agency through a peaceful protest rally.

Last Wednesday, the EWC said that BoC spokesman Atty. Erastus Sandino Austria came out of his office and met the protesting group where he assured the demonstrators that necessary steps are being taken by Customs authorities to resolve the trash imports and bring it back to South Korea.

"Message heard, loud and clear," Austria told the EcoWaste Coalition, referring to the group's non-violent action at the Port Area in Manila to push for the speedy repatriation of the misdeclared garbage as demanded by the provincial government of Misamis Oriental, the municipal government of Togoloan, and environment groups.

The BoC official according to the EWC also relayed a message that the customs officials through the Collec-

tion District of Cagayan de Oro had already initiated talks with the government of South Korea to fast track the re-export of the waste shipments to the place of origin — Pyeongtaek City.

"We laud Atty. Austria for accepting our invitation for him to address our assembly, and for confirming that efforts are underway to get the Korean garbage shipped back to where it should be. However, we seek a specific date for the re-export of garbage to Korea. The overstaying garbage from Canada provides a compelling reason why a defined date should be set and adhered to," the environmental group said.

The EWC said they are hoping that the re-export process would not be stalled by bureaucratic excuses. "By the time any probe is conducted by the House of Representatives or the Senate, we hope the illegal garbage shipments would already be out of the Philippines and the places where these were dumped safely cleaned up," EWC coordinator Aileen Lucero said.

Senators Koko Pimentel, Nancy Binay and Grace Poe have filed separate resolutions calling for an inquiry on the matter in aid of legislation. Iligan City Representative Fredrick Siao has likewise proposed a congressional inquiry.



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# PEOPLES JOURNALS

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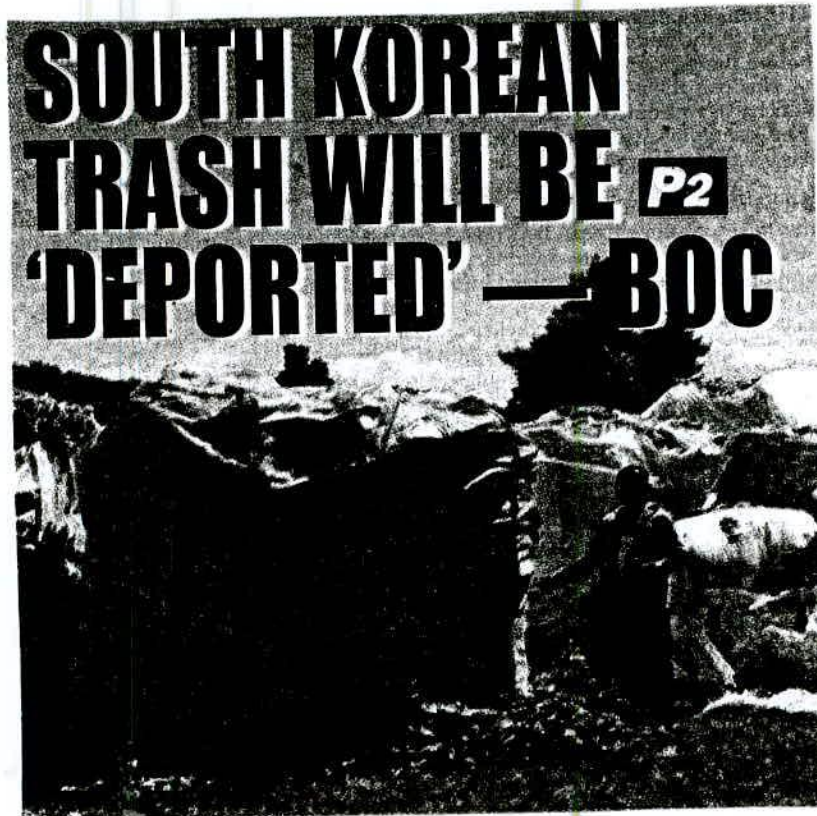
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## EDITORIAL

# Customs' baggage

**T**HE Philippines has again become a dumping ground of industrialized countries, thanks to the hospitality of the Bureau of Customs.

Shipments of garbage misdeclared as "plastic synthetic flakes" from South Korea arrived on July 21, 2018 at the port of Philippine Sinter Corp. in Villanueva, and on Oct. 20, 2018 at the Mindanao International Container Terminal in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental province.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources discovered that the shipments, consigned to Verde Soko Philippines Industrial Corp., arrived with no prior importation clearance from the agency, and were found to contain bales of plastic waste with hazardous materials, such as used

dextrose tubes, diapers, batteries, bulbs and electronic equipment.

The garbage shipments violated several Philippine laws, including the rules against toxic substances and hazardous wastes, and ecological solid management.

The Korean Embassy in the Philippines confirmed the illegal shipments. A joint inspection by the Korean Customs Service and the Ministry of Environment and Customs Service of the exporter's warehouse in Pyeongtaek City found plastic garbage waiting to be shipped, mixed with large amount of waste wood, metal and residuals that have not gone through appropriate recycling process. The embassy promised to take measures to have the wastes in question brought back to Korea as soon as possible.

How these shipments ar-

rived on Philippine shores and passed through Customs is puzzling. But the finger of blame is pointing squarely to the bureau for allowing the entry of the illegal wastes.

The incident is not new to Customs. In July 2015, 26 of the 103 garbage-filled container vans from Canada were secretly buried in a private landfill in Tarlac City at the request of Customs, drawing condemnation from local and national politicians, civil society groups and citizens.

Customs officials liable for the uploading of the Korean garbage in Tagoloan even without importation clearance, meanwhile, should be held accountable for the latest incident. They should be dismissed from office outright, for ignorance of the law and endangering the health of their countrymen and the environment.



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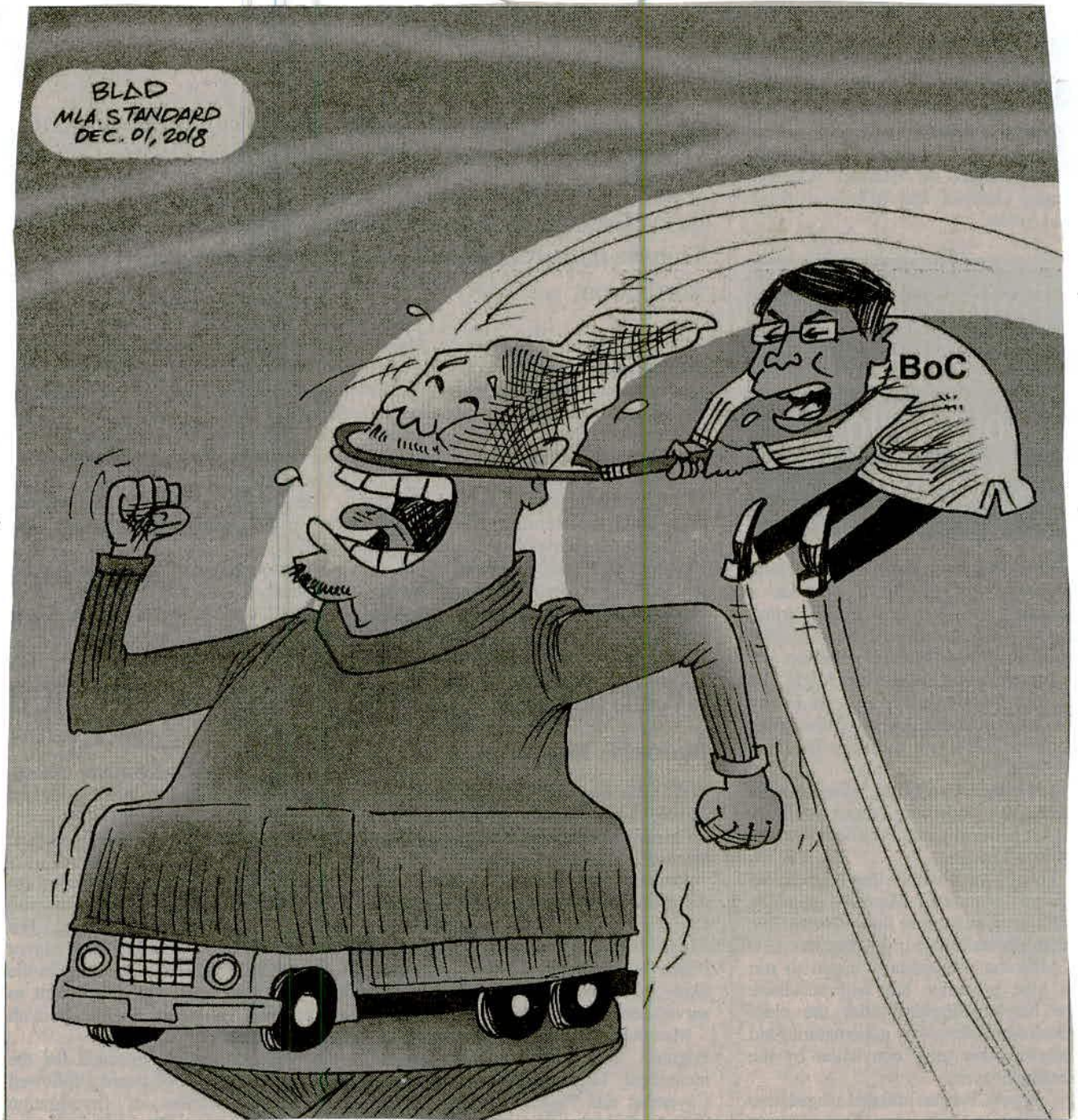
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# Masungi Georeserve wins global nature conservation award

**M**asungi Georeserve – a local conservation project that protects a geological heritage comprising the Masungi karst landscape and its biodiversity in Baras, Rizal – was recently honored as a global model for conservation innovation and excellence at the inaugural Pathfinder Awards presented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and WildArk. The awarding ceremony was held during the opening plenary of the 14th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt in the presence of more than 190 ministers from UN member states.

## Selecting the winners

A high-level international jury composed of experts on protected area financing and resourcing determined the winners for the 2018 Pathfinder Award from over 200 nominations around the world.

The esteemed jury included Inger Andersen, the Director General of the IUCN; Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Egypt; Mark Hutchinson, the founder of WildArk; Kathy MacKinnon, the Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas; Crisbana Paşca Palmer, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, Minister of Costa Rica; and Achim Steiner, administrator of UNDP.

With up to five winning slots, the jury chose only four projects and organizations to receive the awards. Masungi Georeserve is the only awardee from the Asia-Pacific Region.

Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, Costa Rica minister, presented the award to Masungi Georeserve. "You cannot tell how impressed I was with [Masungi Georeserve's] work. [They] must continue what they are doing," he said.

The Pathfinder Award recognizes outstanding and innovative solutions for protected and conserved areas, developed and implemented by individuals, organizations, or groups.

## Masungi's solution

The inaugural edition of the Pathfinder Award celebrates solutions that address insufficient investment for protected and conserved areas. While protected and conserved areas provide considerable and diverse benefits, the global funding gap for effectively managing these sites is huge — estimated at US\$30 to US\$35 billion per year.

The jury lauded Masungi's innovative techniques and approaches in conservation financing, using ecotourism to fund and achieve conservation objectives.

Through this model, conservation efforts at Masungi are self-sustained and need not compete with stretched out public or grant funding.

The jury also noted the georeserve's practices that balance the attractiveness of the park to visitors with low pressure on the environment.

In a joint statement, the UNDP, IUCN, WPA and WildArk note, "The nomination by Masungi Georeserve Foundation describes an innovative approach to ecotourism, based on the pillars of conservation, education/ research and sustainable development, and using "mindful engineering" through tourism infrastructure that mimics nature, e.g. spider webs."

They stressed how the georeserve can be replicated by other protected and conserved areas around the globe when it comes to creating long-term and sustainable value for environmentally-sensitive areas.



Patak - Air House



Tulay



Sawa - Python Rapid Exit



Duyan - Hammock

Since opening trail experiences to limited visitors to finance its conservation mission, Masungi Georeserve has been generating domestic and international acclaim for its spider webs, hammocks, viewing decks, bridges and rope courses floating above a tropical rainforest canopy.

The light, non-invasive structures of local themes and materials, many of them mimicking indigenous flora and fauna, were introduced so that points of significance may be accessible to park rangers, researchers, volunteers, and guests without harming the existing environment and disrupting the biodiversity of a once-abused karst terrain. From treetops, they can appreciate and participate in the georeserve's story of rebirth.

Besides creative engineering, Masungi's solution also emphasizes policy enforcement to maintain the long-term value of conservation area. The georeserve implements policies such as Leave No Trace, no smoking, and no boisterous noises. There is a Php3,000 penalty implemented on the first instance of violation.

## Innovative partnerships for conservation

The Masungi Georeserve is a conservation initiative of Masungi Georeserve Foundation in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

It is home to a sprawling limestone formation dating back 60 million years, that was the subject of rampant environmental degradation and real estate speculation.

After 20 years of daunting dedicated conservation work, it is coming back to life and is now a sanctuary for more than 400 species of flora and fauna, several of which are endemic to the Philippines and Luzon.

The project's latest mission is to restore and conserve in perpetuity some 3,000 hectares of denuded mountains around the georeserve through the Masungi Geopark Project. These mountains remain in constant threat of quarrying, illegal logging, kaingin, treasure-hunting, and land speculation despite previous efforts to conserve them.

"We hope this award can inspire others to join our movement. Our time is running out, and resources for conservation continue to be limited. We need to exhaust all possible solutions – from the government, private sector and civil society – if we are really serious about saving the environment, and ultimately, saving ourselves," said Ann Adeline Dumaliang, trustee and project manager of Masungi Georeserve.

This year's award is organized in cooperation with the UNDP-Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) and the PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet initiative, which IUCN co-leads.

Individuals and teams interested to contribute to restoration work or visit the georeserve may contact [trail@masungigeoreserve.com](mailto:trail@masungigeoreserve.com) or go to [www.masungigeoreserve.com](http://www.masungigeoreserve.com)



# Miners told to cooperate with gov't in preserving environment

By **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLORE**

As the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) attempts to improve "the overall governance structure" in the mining sector, mining companies were also told to cooperate with the government and ramp up efforts on preserving the environment and natural resources.

In a statement, MGB Director Wilfredo Moncano expressed hope for the mining companies to continue to ramp up their efforts in reforestation and preservation of the environment and natural resources.

He then commended mining companies for doing a great job in cooperating with the government and for helping improving the overall governance structure in mining.

"I would like to say that you are doing a great job in complying with the government's directives and in cooperating with us, to address the gaps in the regulatory system and improving the overall governance structure in mining," he said.

MGB recently led the distribution of presidential awards to mining companies which was held as part of the 65th Annual National Mine Safety Environment Conference (ANMSEC).

During ANMSEC, three companies, which excelled in surface mining operation and mineral processing over the past 12 months, received the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award (PMIEA).

The PMIEA, the highest award the

Philippine government gives to mining companies, was established under Executive Order No. 399 on February 3, 1997 in compliance with the policy that mineral exploration activities and mining operations shall not only be pro-environment but also pro-people.

The awardees were recommended by state-run mine regulator MGB and selected by an inter-agency selection committee

The companies that topped the Surface Mining category this year are Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp. (RTNMC) and Agata Mining Ventures, Inc., while Coral Bay Nickel Corp. is the sole PMIEA awardee for the Mineral Processing category.

No mining firm was awarded under the Quarry Operation and Mineral Exploration categories.

RTNMC is a subsidiary of Nickel Asia Corp., the largest nickel producer in the Philippines, while Agata Mining operates under TVI Resource Development Philippines, Inc., a mining company controlled by former Senator Manny Villar.

Coral Bay, on the other hand, is owned by Sumitomo Metal Mining Co., Mitsui & Co., Sojitz Corporation. It is also partly owned by RTNMC.

Moncano said the result of the awards was presented to the Office of the President (OP) prior to ANMSEC.

Neither Moncano or Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu would confirm if President Rodrigo Duterte saw the results before being given the OP's green light.

"There were guidelines for the selection of the awardees. There has been no conflict. For those who were nominated in the awards, most of them were only being asked to do minor corrections on their operations," Moncano told reporters.

The word on the street is that another miner, SR Metals, Inc. (SRMI), was also supposed to receive the PMIEA award like it did last year.

But since it went through a voluntary suspension some time this year, the PMIEA Selection Committee, composed of the cabinet secretaries, government officials, and mining stakeholders, decided to not include the firm on the list.

Nevertheless, SRMI received a Platinum award for Surface Mining category since it received a "certain score," as per Moncano, despite not being able to completely operate within a 12-month period.

PMIEA is part of the ANMSEC, which was organized by Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association (PMSEA).

During the awarding ceremony, Cimatu reiterated his intention to work with miners for the advancement of the highly scrutinized industry.

When asked about the timing of the release of his decision on the motion for reconsideration (MRs) filed by several miners that are at the risk of being suspended and closed, which came more than a week before ANMSEC, Cimatu said there was just really a timetable being followed for both events.





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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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## Environmental care

Retired Apostolic Vicariate of Taytay, Palawan Bishop Edgardo Juanich has called on the faithful to sustain and strengthen their advocacy for environmental care and protection. "Let us renew our love for the environment. Let us live simple lives and be content with simple food. Let us sustain and strengthen our advocacy for environmental care and protection because that is where we get our strength as we commune with the Lord in prayer, our inspiration as we get up every morning," Juanich said over Church-run Radio Veritas. Juanich said that he will continue with his programs for the vicariate such the Adopt a Mountain campaign. He will also push for communities to plant their own vegetables and fruits in their back yards "as these are slowly being replaced in the markets with imported produce," he said. (Christina I. Hermoso)



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**SALE OF PUBLIC LAND**

Notice is hereby given that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, PENRO Negros Oriental, Larena Drive, Taclobo, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, in pursuant to Administrative Order No. 2016-07 dated May 19, 2016, will sell through sealed bidding to the highest bidder on January 28, 2019 at 10:00 o'clock a.m., a tract of land situated at Brgy. Lipayo, Dauin, Negros Oriental, which is specifically described below, to wit:

APPLICATION NUMBER	NAME OF APPLICANT	PLAN/LOT BLK. NUMBER	AREA IN SQUARE METER	APPRAISED VALUE PER SQUARE METER	TOTAL VALUE OF LAND	TOTAL VALUE OF IMPROVEMENT
MSA No. 07460975	Michelle Kristine D. Kalberer	9078-A.Csd-07-015829	237	PHP 1,200.00	PHP 284,400.00	

All bids must be sealed and submitted to the above-mentioned Office, on or before the hour and date stated above and plainly marked "bid for Land described in Miscellaneous Sales Application No. 074609-75". Bids must be accompanied with cash, money, order, treasury warrant, certified check, cashier's check or manager's check for a sum equivalent to 10% of the bid. Then a bid is withdrawn after the highest bidder is determined, the corresponding deposit therefore shall be forfeited to the government. No bid shall be less than the appraised value of the land. The highest right is reserved to reject any or all bids.

Dumaguete City.

(Sgd) CHARLIE E. FABRE, Ph.D.  
PENR Officer