

20 JAN 2010

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DAY : _____

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



20 JAN 2010

DATE

'Nothing impossible with discipline'

Manila Bay clean-up will take a while – DENR

By **Kuhlin Ceslie Gacula**

An official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday expressed confidence that cleaning up and rehabilitating Manila Bay is “not an impossible mission” if citizens would do their share.

DENR Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda emphasized that the lack of discipline among Filipinos could be the single and biggest obstacle to the success of the rehabilitation being undertaken by the Duterte administration.

“We are not only cleaning up the bay. We are saving something from dying because otherwise more people will die,” Antiporda said without elaborating on the deaths he attributed to the polluted bay.

Still, past studies had shown that pollution in Manila Bay had contributed to billions of pesos in economic losses each year, including for medical expenditures associated with diseases attributed to living in polluted communities.

In 2008, the Supreme Court issued a mandamus directing the DENR and 12 other government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay and to restore and maintain its water quality to a level fit for swimming.

Antiporda lamented how the efforts of the agencies tasked to clean up the bay have not been visible or felt during the 10 years the High Court directive has been in effect.

He attributed previous unsuccessful efforts to “weak coordination and

collaboration among mandamus agencies.”

This time, however, Antiporda said the DENR and other government agencies have the full backing of President Duterte, allowing them to effectively enforce the law and ensure compliance of local government units with their mandate towards environmental protection.

Failure of past efforts blamed on lack of coordination among government agencies.

He added that the DENR is coming up with interventions that would hasten the improvement of Manila Bay's water quality.

While he acknowledged that the cleanup would not be completed under Duterte's term, Antiporda said the public could

expect “a drastic change that would give the next administration no choice but to carry on current efforts.”

At present, fecal coliform at Manila Bay had been measured at 330 million MPN (most probable number) per 100 milliliter compared to the 100MPN/ML standard for a body of water to be declared as safe for swimming.

The DENR under Secretary Roy Cimatu is coming off a largely successful rehabilitation of Boracay Island in Aklan which now has water quality measuring 8MPN/ML.

Manila Bay rehab not impossible -- Antiporda

By **CORY MARTINEZ**

"NOT an impossible mission!"

Thus Environment and Undersecretary Benny Antiporda stressed regarding the cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

Antiporda said the government's effort on the massive rehabilitation is possible with the citizens' cooperation.

"If citizens would do their share, this (rehabilitation) mission of DENR is not impossible," Antiporda said.

He lamented that the lack of discipline among Filipinos could be the single biggest obstacle to the success of the rehabilitation.

"Tisa lang ang nakikita naming balakid: ang kakulangan ng disiplina ng taumbayan. Ang kailangan natin ay disiplina. We are not only cleaning up the bay. Nililigtas natin ang isang bagay na maramatay dahil kung hindi ay mas maraming maramatay na tao," Antiporda

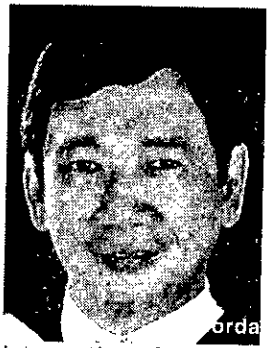
added. In 2008, the Supreme Court issued a mandamus directing the DENR and 12 other government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay and to restore and maintain its water quality to a level fit for swimming and other contact recreation.

Antiporda claimed that efforts of mandamus agencies to clean up the bay have not been visible or felt during the 10 years the high court directive has been in effect.

He attributed previous unsuccessful efforts to "weak coordination and collaboration among mandamus agencies."

This time, however, Antiporda said the DENR and other government agencies have the full backing of President Duterte, allowing them to effectively enforce the law and ensure compliance of local government units with their mandate towards environmental protection.

He added that the DENR is coming up with



interventions that would hasten the improvement of Manila Bay's water quality.

At the same time, Antiporda allayed fears the rehabilitation would result in loss of jobs and livelihood within the Manila Bay area.

"Ang DENR ay hindi berdugo. We are here to prevent pollution from making it into the sea," he stated.

While he acknowledged that the cleanup would not be completed under Duterte's term, Antiporda said the public could expect "a drastic change that would give the next administration no choice but to carry on current efforts."



Paglilinis ng Manila Bay hindi impossible -- DENR

TINIYAK ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na hindi magiging imposible ang gagawing paglilinis sa Manila Bay kung makikipagtulungan ang mamamayan sa rehabilitasyon nito.

Ayon kay DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, ang kakulangan ng disiplina ng mga Filipino ang dapat na tutukan upang maging matagumpay ang gagawing paglilinis sa Manila Bay.

"Iisa lang ang nakikita naming balakid: ang kakulangan ng disiplina ng taumbayan," sabi pa ni Antiporda sa pañayam. "Ang kailangan natin ay disiplina."

Aniya, "We are not only cleaning up the bay. Nililigtas natin ang isang bagay na mamamata'y dahil kung hindi ay mas maraming mamamata'y na tao."

Noong 2008 nang maglabas ng "mandamús" ang Supreme Court na nag-uutos sa DENR at 12 pang government agencies para linisin, i-rehabilitate at pangalagaan ang Manila Bay upang malbalik sa dati ang maliinis nitong tubig na maaring paliguan at iba pang gawain.

Nagtaka si Antiporda kung bakit hindi naging matagumpay ang pagsisikap ng mga naatasang ahensya ng gobyerno mahigit 10 taon na ang nakalilipas mula nang ilabas ang kautusan ng SC.

Sinisi ng opisyal ang hindi maayos na koordinasyon ng bawat ahensya kaya't nabalewala ang kanilang pagsisikap na linisin ang Manila Bay.

Sa pagkakataong ito, tiniyak ni Antiporda na sa tulong at tamang koordinasyon ng iba pang ahensya ng gobyerno at sa pagbibigay na rin ng suporta ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na ipatupad ang batas upang sumunod ang mga local government unit para sa environmental protection ay magiging maganda ang resulta ng gagawing rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay.

Sabi pa nito, may mga plano na ang DENR upang mapadali ang gagawing paglilinis sa tubig ng Manila Bay.

Kasabay nito, nilinaw rin ni Antiporda na ang pakay ng DENR sa Manila Bay ay linisin ito at pangalagaan ang karagatan at hindi ang tanggalan ng hanapbuhay ang mga residente sa paligid nito.

"Ang DENR ay hindi berdugo. We are here to prevent pollution from making it into the sea," dagdag pa ni Antiporda.

SANTI CELARIO



Master plan sa Manila Bay rehab ilantad

PINALALANTAD ni Anak-pawis party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang master plan sa kontrobersyal na Manila Bay rehabilitation kasabay ng apela sa House committee on natural resources and ecology na tutukan ang nasabing proyekto ng gobyerno.

"While we are not opposing the rehabilitation, it must be done in a manner that its so-called benefits will not adversely affect the small stakeholders. According to fisher folk group Pamalakaya, an estimated 300,000 residents made up mostly of small fisher folks, will be affected by the inter-city clean up and rehabilitation," sabi pa ni Casilao.

Plano ng Makabayan bloc na mag-file ng resolusyon sa Kamara upang atasan ang DENR na isapubliko ang detalye ng master plan ng Manila Bay rehab para

malaman ang epekto nito sa apektadong komunidad.

Duda ang Pamalakaya at ilang environmental groups na ginagamit lamang na 'front' ang rehabilitasyon para sa large-scale reclamation para sa commercial ventures sa Manila Bay.

Ayon sa grupo, tinatayang nasa 32,492.56 hektarya ng Manila Bay ang iri-reclaim para gamitin sa negosyo at turismo, kabilang ang pagpapatayo ng mga hotels, elite residences at casino. Mayroon umanong 43 reclamation project ang inaprubahan at pending for approval na sumasakop sa buong Manila Bay.

Magugunita na binatikos ni Casilao ang DENR at Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) sa kanilang anti-urban poor campaign at paninisi sa mga mahihirap sa paligid ng baybayin na dahilan ng polusyon.

OUT OF ORDER



Kung hindi pa nagsagawa ng inspeksyon ang DENR sa mga estero na patungong Manila Bay, hindi pa madidiskubre na ang Manila Zoo ang numero unong pasilidad na nagpo-pollute ng Manila Bay.

Mismong si DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu ang nagkumpirma na walang sewage treatment plant (STP) ang Manila Zoological and Botanical Garden na nasa ilalim ng

Manila Zoo at polusyon sa Manila Bay

Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Maynila.

Hulyo 1959 pa nagsimulang mag-operate ang Manila Zoo na siyang pinaka-unang pasilidad para sa mga hayop at halaman. Inookupa nito ang 5.5 hektaryang lupa malapit sa karagatan ng Manila Bay at mayroong 500 hayop sa kasalukuyan.

Ibig sabihin, 60 taon nang nagpapakawala ng "untreated sewage" ang Manila Zoo sa Estero de San Antonio Abad na rekta sa Manila Bay. Nagrehistro ng pinakamataas na coliform level na tumutuloy sa karagatan ng Maynila ang Manila Zoo sa "1.3 billion for every 100 milliliters of water" at ito ay galing sa kumbinasyon ng dumi ng mga tao at hayop.

Ang nakakatawa lang

ay ang naging pabayag ng pamunuan ng Manila Zoo sa pamamagitan ni acting administrator Jasyrr Garcia na nagsabing: "We were not aware that we were required to [have a] sewage treatment plant, as we have only been discharging wastewater; and the animal waste, we convert to fertilizer."

Isinagawa ni Cimatu ang inspeksyon bilang bahagi ng Phase 1 ng "Manila Bay Action Plan" na siyang magsasailalim ng paglilinis at rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay bago matakpos ang taong 2019 sa halagang P47 billion.

Maagap naman ang naging tugon ng Manila City Hall na nagpahayag ng planong konstruksyon ng dalawang water treatment plants sa loob ng

Manila Zoo na ayon kay city administrator Jojo Alcomendaz ay kailangan nilang madaliin kung kaya posibleng wala nang maganap na bidding.

Aabutin ng mula tatlo hanggang apat na buwan ang konstruksyon ng dalawang water treatment facility at mismong si Alcomendaz na ang nakatutok sa nasabing proyekto.

Sa pagkakaalam ko, taong 2013 noong unang termino ni President-Mayor Joseph Estrada nagsimula magkaroon ng diskusyon para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Zoo sa pamamagitan ng isang grupo ng mga Singaporean investor at isang lokal na kumpanya.

Anak ng negosyanteng si Jaime Dichaves ang na-appoint noong administrator ng Ma-

nila Zoo at noong 2015, nagkaroon ng pirmanhan sa pagitan ng Manila City government at Metropolitan Zoo and Botanical Garden Inc. ng Singapore para sa isang joint venture agreement na nagkakahalaga ng P1.5 billion.

Sa hindi malamang kadahilanan, nanatiling naka-pending ang approval ng JVA sa city council kung saan ang presiding officer ay si Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna na naging kaaway sa politika ni Mayor Erap.

Kung natuloy sana noong 2015 ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Zoo ay matagal na sanang naayos ang problema nito sa sewage treatment at hindi na sana naideklara ng DENR na pangunahing sanhi ng polusyon sa Manila Bay.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Manila Standard

34
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

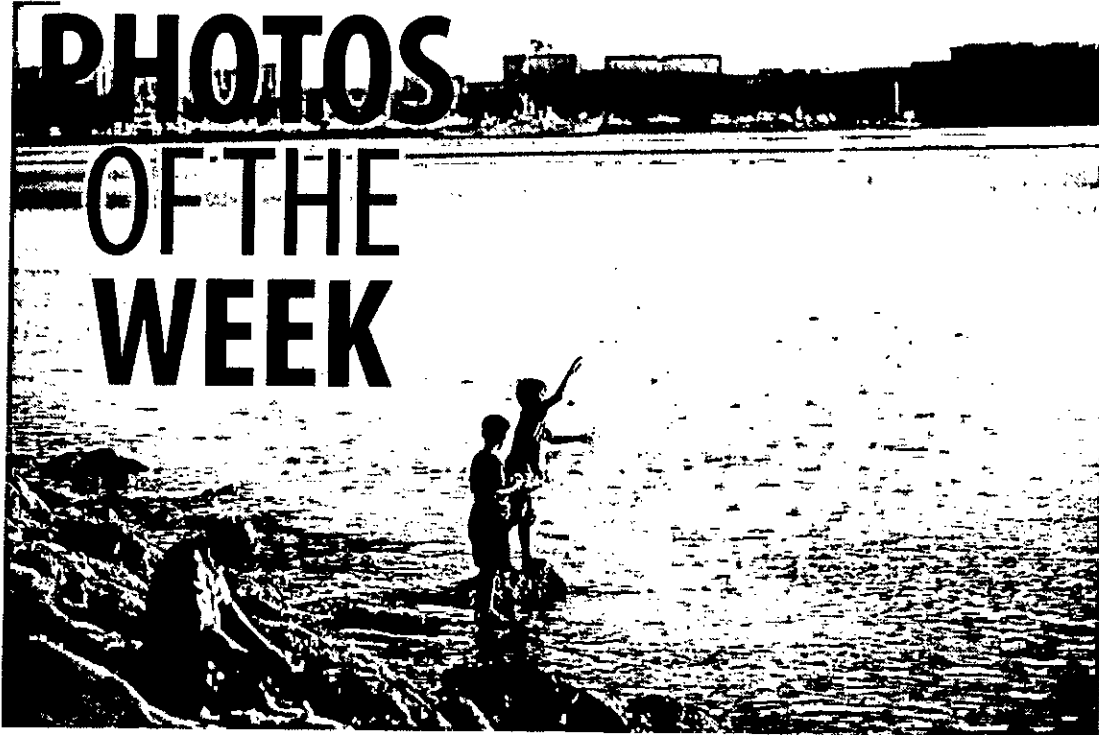
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EDITORIAL

CARTOON

20 JAN 2013

DATE



TEST FISHING. Young boys throw their lines to catch fish at Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard in Manila on Friday, ahead of government plans to rehabilitate the heavily-polluted waterway. **Ey Acasio**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Manila Standard

AS1
PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

20 JAN 2019

DATE



BIRDS AT THE BAY. Migratory birds wander over and around the Manila Bay. The once world-famous scenic spot known for its breathtaking sunset is set to be rehabilitated by the government, **Norman Cruz**



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Daily Tribune

www.DailyTribune.com



20 JAN 2010

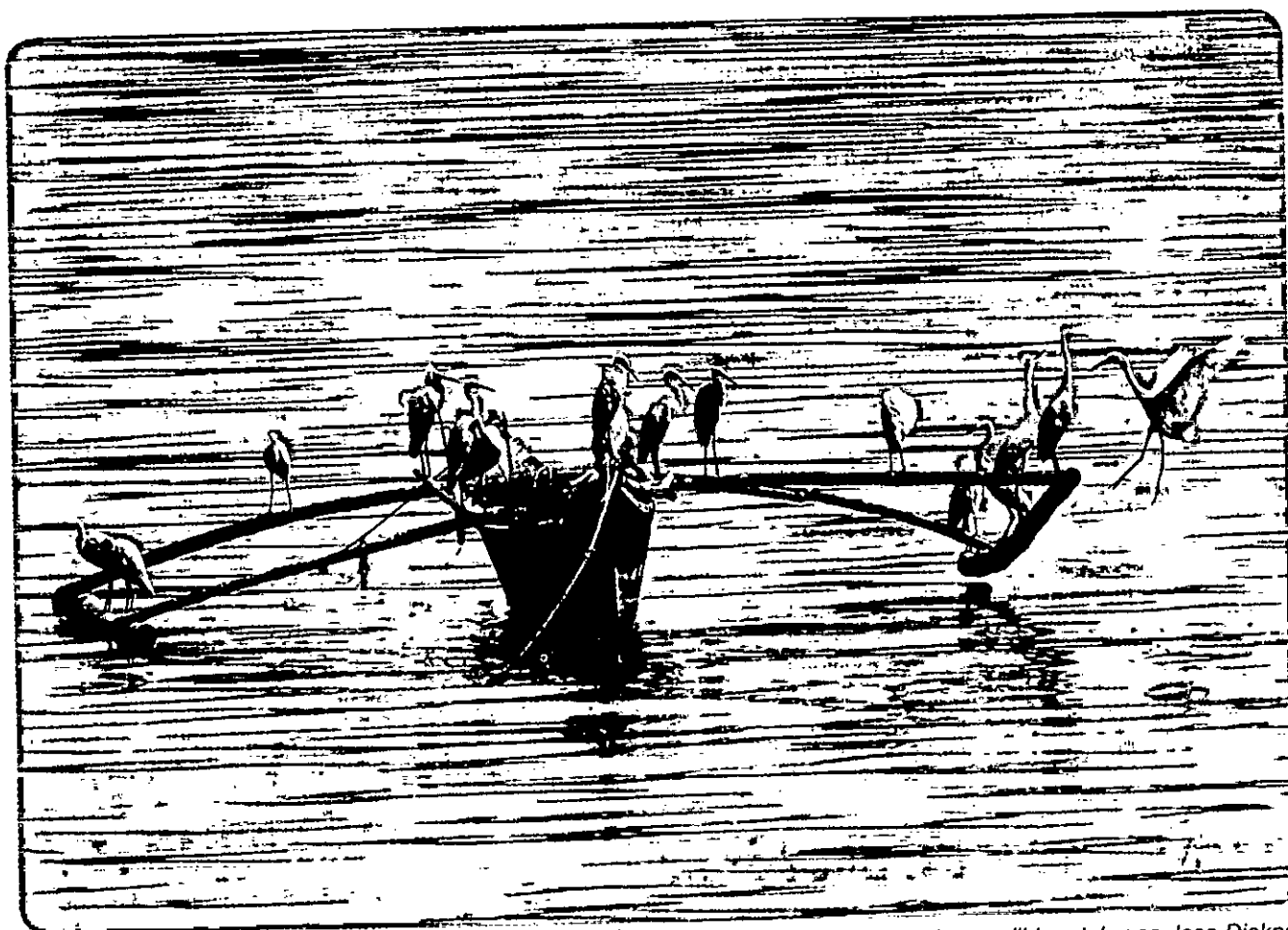
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Trying their luck Two fishermen try to catch fish in area off Manila Bay which was earlier declared for rehabilitation by the national government.

BOB DUNGO JR.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



GINAWANG pahingahan ng mga migratory bird mula pa sa ibang bansa ang isang bangka sa gilid ng tulay sa Jose Diokno Blvd., Pasay City.
Kuha ni **RUSTY ROMAN**



ABISO

iii PAUL EDWARD SISON

HINDI kasi tayo nakikinig:

Ilang ulit nang pinapaalala ni Dr. Mahar Lagmay ng Project NOAH na meron tayong mga existing nationwide-scale hazards maps para sa baha at landslides na pinondohan ng gobyerno. Hindi siya nagkulang sa pakiusap na gamitin ito ng pamahalaan, lalo na ang mga local government units o mayor ng mga siyudad at munisipyo. Pero, binalawala lang natin.

Kailangan pang mangyari ang mga disaster sa Itogon, Benguet at sa Naga, Cebu bago tayo namulat sa kahalagahan ng mga mapang ito. Pero, tulad ng kasabihan, "better late than never."

Sa paglilinaw ni Lagmay, dalawa ang nationwide-scale hazards maps na ito: ang DENR-MGB geohazard maps (nagsimula ilang taon pagkatapos ng 1999 Cherry Hills landslide) at ang NOAH hazard maps (nagsimula isang taon pagkatapos ng 2011 Sendong Disaster).

Ano ba ang diperensiya ng dalawa?

a. Magkaiba ang metolohiya ng paggawa ng mapa.

b. Sa MGB maps, lahat ng hazards sa lugar ay naka-mapa, samantalang sa Project NOA."

c. Historical records ng hazards ang gamit ng MGB samantalang scenarios ng mga mas malalang hazards na hindi pa na-experience ng komunidad ang sa NOAH.

d. Ang MGB geohazard maps ay deterministic (single-scenario). Ang NOAH maps ay probabilistic (multi-scenario). Ang probabilistic risk assessment ay required ng Philippine Development Plan (PDP 2017-2022)

Ayon kay Lagmay, ang ibig daw sabihin ng "sa-

SA WAKAS, ANG MGA MAPA AY MAKAPAGLILIGTAS

fest places sa community" ay kapag pinagsama-sama mo ang flood at landslide hazards (at storm surge kung coastal area) ay may matitira pang mga lugar na walang flood at landslide hazards na pwedeng gamitin na evacuation site. Ito ang "safest places" sa barangay or community na pwede rin na i-develop ng LGU sa kanilang mga plano para kung dumating ang baha at landslide ay malaki ang tsansa na hindi sila tatamaan ng ganitong klaseng delubyo.

Ang MGB ay naglalabas ng worst-case scenario na hazard na nakabase sa kanilang interview at interpretation. Pero wala itong Climate Change projections o iyong hazards na mas malaki sa alam ng mga tao sa komunidad.

Ang NOAH naman ay marami ang scenario per hazard, kasama ang mas malalaki na hazard, mas malaki pa sa na-experience ng mga tao sa komunidad. Kapag hindi tayo nakapag-anticipate sa plano, palagi nating maririnig sa disaster victims ang ganito, "first time nangyari ang ganitong klaseng baha" o "more than a hundred years ago na walang nangyaring ganito (#RositaPH)" o "di namin inakala na magiging ganun kataas ang baha (#UsmanPH)".

Sana naman ay ma-realize na ng mga LGU official ang kahalagahan ng hazards maps na ito. Para sa akin, may kredibilidad si Lagmay at Project NOAH dahil marami ang naligtas sa tiyak na kapahamakan sa Marikina nung mga nakaraang baha dulot ng Habagat ng 2012 atbp dahil sa paggamit namin ng kanilang website at dahil nakinig kami sa kanilang mga pag-alerto sa parating na baha mula Montalban River.

Salamat sa Project NOAH. Salamat sa DENR-MGB.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Boracay's kiteboarding area opens soon

By Elmer N. Manuel

Apparently wary that he might be branded as killjoy or spoiler anytime soon, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Saturday said he is eyeing to reopen to the public Boracay Island's Bulabog Beach – which is a top draw for kiteboarding and windsurfing enthusiasts.

Cimatu said the coliform level in the waters off the eastern side of the island has already dropped following Boracay's six-month closure and rehabilitation which is one of the reasons he was contemplating on reopening the said area.

He, however, reiterated that wedding ceremonies and other similar activities on the beach are still not allowed while photo shoots may be allowed but visitors must not wear shoes or should be barefoot.

The secretary added they are planning to hire a general manager who will oversee the tourism operations in the island as the inter-agency task force was only created for the massive clean-up.

A communal sewage treatment plant (STP), to be developed by a Chinese private firm, is also being eyed that can accommodate some 20 households.

He, however, reiterated that wedding ceremonies and other similar activities on the beach front are still not allowed.

Meanwhile, AirAsia Philippines announced that it has opened flights to Macau, Kunming and Chengdu in China from Kalibo International Airport to expand its international network.

The Kalibo-Macau route will commence on 2 March, Kalibo-Kunming on 25 January while the Kalibo-Chengdu flights will operate starting 24 January.



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PAGE



UPPER

STORY



LOWER

STORY



FEATURE

STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

20 JAN 2013

DATE

Bagong sistema sa Bora, pinaplantsa

Matapos ang dalawang buwan mula nang buksan muli sa publiko, dagdagdagan na naman ng pamahalaan ang patakaran nito sa Boracay Island, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ipinahayag ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, binabalangkas na ng Boracay Task Force ang mga alintuntuning ipatutupad sa mga turistang bisita sa isla bago matapos ang Marso ng kasalukuyang taon.

Kabilang aniya sa tinalakay ng task force ang posibleng paglalabas ng polisiya hinggil sa beach wedding at ang pagpapayag na pagbisita ng ilang cruise ships sa isla.

Ayon sa kanya, kailangang masigurado ng mga organizers na amlinis ang beach kapag pinayagan ang mga kahalintulad na beach ritual weddings.

Possible rin aniyang payagan ng mga itong bumisita sa Boracay ang malilit na cruise ship.

Jun N. Aguirre



20 JAN 2010

DATE

4

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

BEACH SA BORA BUBUKSAN NA RIN, KASAL BAWAL PA

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ment of Environment
and Natural Resources
(DENR) na buksan na
rin sa publiko ang Bu-
labog Beach sa Bora-
cay Island.

Pahayag ni Envi-
ronment Secretary Roy
Cimatu, bumaba na ang
coliform level sa si-
langang bahagi ng isla
kung saan ginagawa
ang mga kiteboarding
at windsurfing activi-
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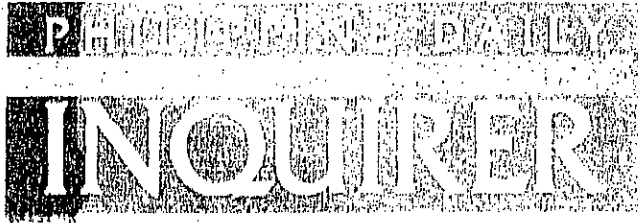
Paglilinaw ni
Cimatu, ipinagbabawal
pa rin ang pagdaraos
ng ilang mga aktibidad
sa Boracay gaya ng
kasal.

Pinapayagan na-
man ang mga photo
shoot sa beach pero
mahigpit na ipinagba-
bawal ang pagsusuot
ng sapatos.

Plano rin ng DENR
na kumuha ng general
manager para mama-
halá sa tourism opera-
tions ng isla. **PMRT**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE



Alto
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

20 JAN 2013

DATE

How Tagbanua tribesmen protect the 'mermaids' of Palawan

By Gregg Yan
Best Alternatives Campaign,
Contributor

Wearing fins from recycled plastic containers, tough Tagbanua tribesmen have become the protectors of the dugong, those gentle marine mammals that have become prey to poachers in Northern Palawan.

The dugong (scientific name: *Dugong dugon*) is legally protected by Republic Act No. 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, because aside from being occasionally hunted, the mammals often drown after becoming entangled in fishing nets.

"We're here to safeguard about 30 dugong," said Deave, a Tagbanua tribesman enlisted as both spotter and guard against poachers and illegal fishers in the Calamianes Islands in Northern Palawan.

"Our livelihood depends on wildlife so it makes sense to protect them. Protecting [the] dugong safeguards our own fu-

ture," he added.

The dugong, or sea cow, which is related to elephants, can grow up to 3 meters in length and weigh up to 400 kilograms. It is the fourth member of the order Sirenia, alongside three manatee species. The dugong has a forked tail while a manatee has a round, paddle-like tail.

Wiped out

A fifth species, the gigantic 8-meter-long Steller's sea cow, was completely wiped out by 1768, just 30 years after being discovered by scientists.

Dugong comes from the Malay word *duyung*, meaning "lady of the sea," which might explain so-called mermaid sightings by sailors in olden times.

Sizable herds of dugong once plied the Philippine archipelago until hunting and habitat loss reduced their number.

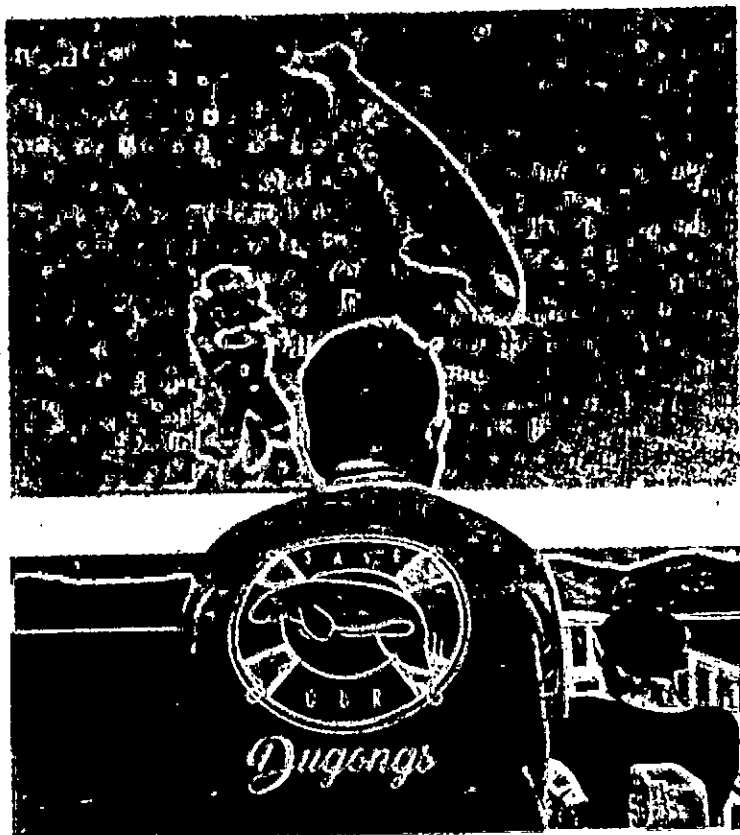
Today, the dugong is globally classified as vulnerable, though it is considered critically endangered in the Philippines because of its rarity. Small populations still hold out in Isabela,

P.1



P. 2

How Tagbanua tribesmen...



SWIMS WITH THE DUGONG The author with a 3-meter-long bull dugong in Northern Palawan (top photo). A Tagbanua tribesman (above) on the lookout for dugong poachers. —DANNY OCAMPO

Mindanao, Guimaras and Palawan, but encounters are extremely rare.

The Calamianes Islands in Northern Palawan remain one of the last areas in the country where the giant marine herbivores can be seen regularly.

Guided by expert divers and Tagbanua tribesmen, Best Alternatives Campaign, a movement to promote good environmental and sustainability practices, recently got a chance to interact with the dugong.

To successfully conserve the dugong, local government units and communities must stamp out poaching, minimize the threat of accidental entanglement in fishing nets, and most importantly, preserve the integrity of seagrass meadows.

Often overshadowed by more colorful and popular marine habitats like coral reefs and mangroves, seagrass meadows are highly productive and provide food for many marine creatures—from rabbitfish (samaral) to sea turtles and the dugong. Unfortunately, many seagrass

habitats are being destroyed by reclamation and pollution.

Best caretakers

"We can learn a lot about sustainable use and responsible stewardship from the dugong. The mammal consumes a lot of seagrass yet it leaves the seagrass bed even healthier than before," said dugong conservationist Dr. Teri Aquino.

"When feeding, [the] dugong helps release micronutrients from the seabed, making nutrients more accessible for small fish. And this is why we always see fish swimming with [the] dugong. This marine mammal living the simplest of lives is one of the best caretakers of our seagrass habitats and the animals that live in them," Aquino explained.

Through the dedicated efforts of local wardens like Palawan's Tagbanua tribesmen and by protecting the country's remaining seagrass meadows, tomorrow's Pinoys might yet get a chance to swim with real mermaids. INQ



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UPPER
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PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

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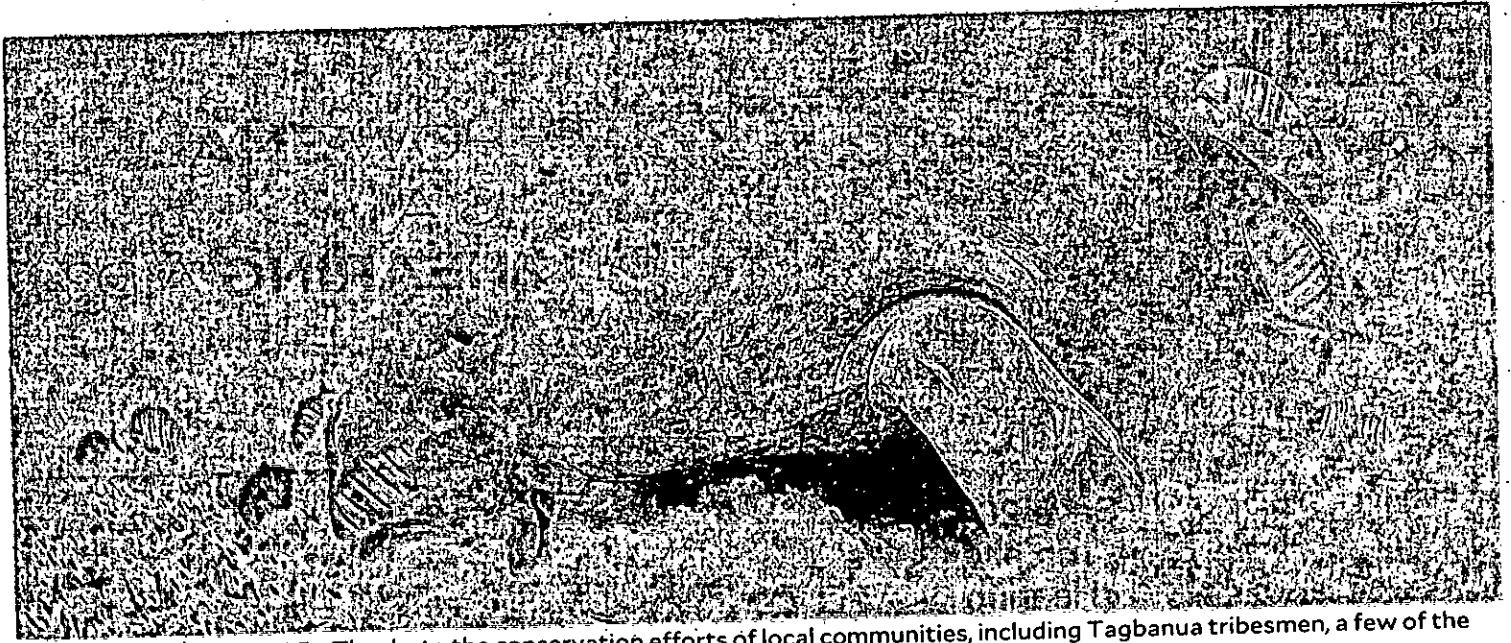
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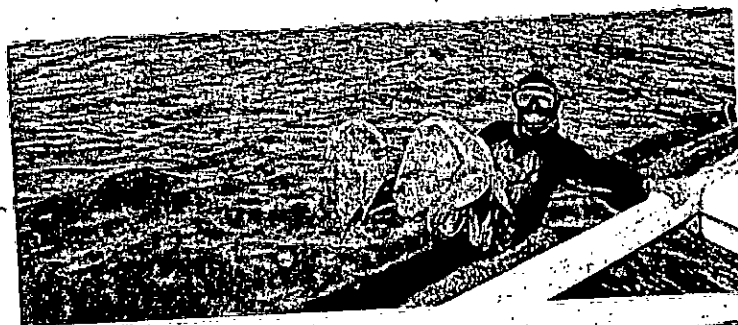
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

p: 3

How Tagbanua tribesmen ... 4



RARE AND VULNERABLE Thanks to the conservation efforts of local communities, including Tagbanua tribesmen, a few of the exceptionally rare dugong can still be found in Northern Palawan. —DANNY OCAMPO



SAVING THE DUGONG A tribesman shows off makeshift fins from recycled plastic (top photo). The Halophila seagrass (above) provides food to the dugong. —GREGG YAN AND DANNY OCAMPO

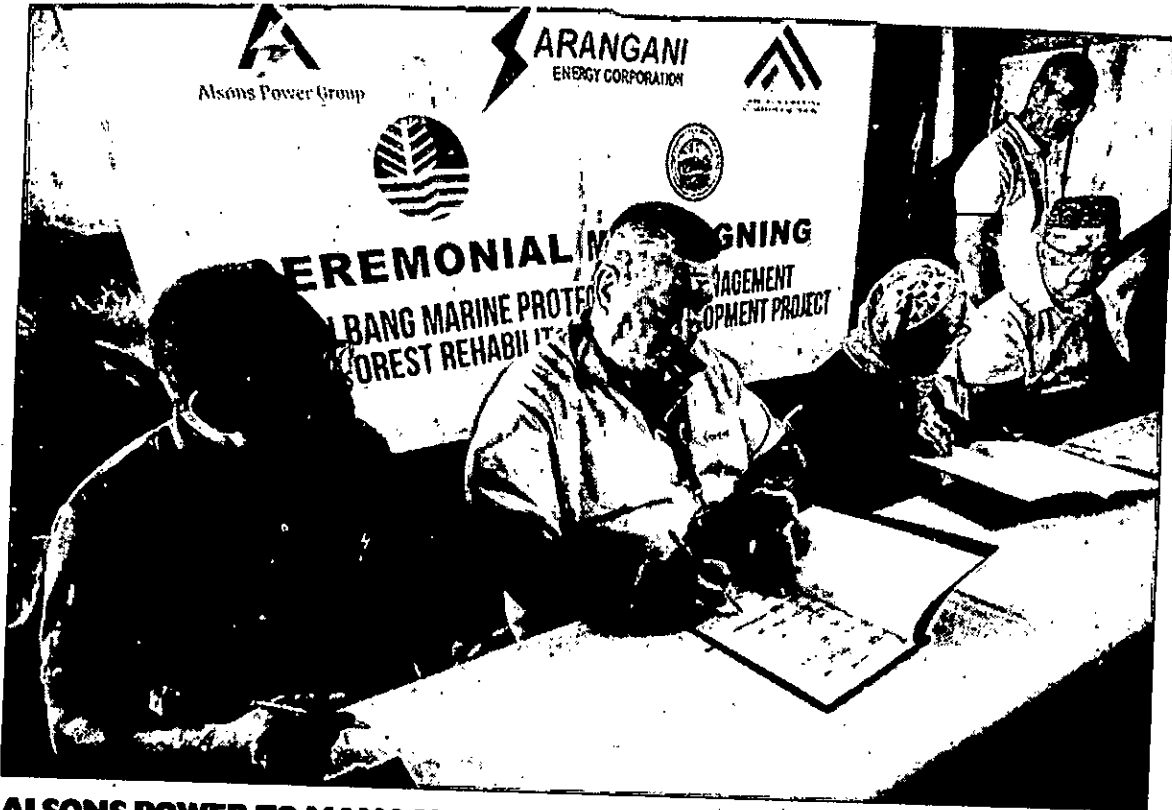


20 JAN 2019

TITLE:

PAGE /

DATE



ALSONS POWER TO MANAGE SARANGANI BAY'S MARINE SANCTUARY: Sarangani Energy Corp. (SEC) of the Alsons Group is helping establish a new 31.9-hectare marine protected area along with a beach forest rehabilitation and development project in Maasim, Sarangani in joint efforts with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In photo are SEC power plant manager Jori Llimatta (2nd from left) and DENR Region 12 regional technical director Hadja Didaw Plang-Brahim (3rd from left), Alsons Power corporate affairs manager Ruben Tungpalan and Maasim Vice Mayor Uttoh Salem Cutan.



DICT, China ink P232-B cell tower deal

The fund-raising activity aims to support the various ministries of our Commission in its service to the poor.

The choir sings an extremely varied repertoire of sacred music from numerous Christian traditions, incorporating classical European works, hymnody, contemporary church music, traditional African pieces, spirituals and gospel songs. Excelsis takes its name from the Latin word, meaning 'highest'. Through the music which it sings, the choir aims to achieve the highest musical standards, in order to give praise to the Highest.

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) signed a memorandum of understanding with the China Energy Engineering Corp. (CEEC) involving a P232 billion (\$4.4 billion) investments to build a common cell towers that local telcos could lease to improve faster delivery of communication services.

The deal allows the CEEC to deploy at least 50,000 cell sites across the country to make the Philippines competitive with its neighboring countries in providing quality telco services to the public.

"The number of towers that will be built by the CEEC will depend on the demand of telco operators. And of course, we will do it based on the requirement of the DICT and NTC (National Telecommunications

Commission). According to DICT, there should be totally around 50,000 towers to be built. For our capability, we have no problem in building this total of 50,000 towers," Huang Fei, vice president of CEEC, said in a press briefing.

The DICT has expressed its intention to sign more deals with tower providers to build and deploy cell sites and other facilities that will be leased to telco firms.

DICT Acting Secretary Eliseo Rio Jr. said the government would provide assistance to common tower providers in facilitating permits, right of way, and support for infrastructure, should they secure a contract with any of the telco operators.

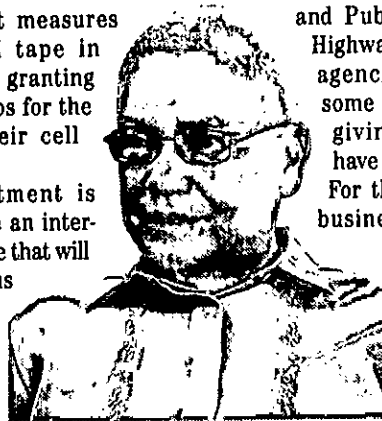
He stressed that the DICT

will implement measures to reduce red tape in the process of granting permits to telcos for the building of their cell sites.

The department is eyeing to create an inter-agency task force that will consist of various agencies, such as the Department of the Interior and Local Government,

Department of Public Works and Highways; Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and local government units to expedite the process of issuance of permits.

"This is the function of an inter-agency that we will be creating. There is the DILG, LGUs, DENR



RIO

and Public (Works and) Highways. All of these agencies that are in some way involved in giving permits will have a one-stop shop. For the ease of doing business, if before it

takes eight months for the granting of permits, we can now compress it to seven days," Rio said.

To date, the DICT has signed MOUs with five tower providers: local firm ISOC Infrastructures, Inc.; Singapore's ISON ECP Tower Pte. Ltd.; IHS Towers of Nigeria; Edotco Group of Malaysia; and China Energy Engineering Corp.

The DICT has expressed its

intention to sign more deals with tower providers to build and deploy cell sites and other facilities that will be leased to telco firms, which may then use them to improve their delivery of service.

The number of towers that will be built by the CEEC will depend on the demand of telco operators.

The Philippines currently has 16,000 cell sites against 67 million Internet users, giving it the lowest cell site density in Asia.

The lack of cell towers has been identified as one of the barriers to affordable and consistently reliable Internet services in the country. **KM**





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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

Davos, inequality & the climate emergency

BY DANIEL MITTLER

BERLIN: Four of the top five most impactful threats in this year's World Economic Forum's "Global Risks" report are related to climate change. The report warns that we are "sleepwalking to disaster". But that is not true.

The disaster is already here, it's not something we are still walking towards. Climate change is no future threat, it's a current one. We have entered a new phase, one in which the impacts are coming faster, with greater intensity.

Already this year, Thailand has seen its worst storm in 30 years rip through coastal areas. In the Alps, just east of Davos, extreme weather is causing snow chaos.

The climate crisis also isn't caused by sleep or ignorance. The rich and powerful gathered in Davos brought us to the existential brink wide awake. The "profit first" neoliberal economic model has dominated policy making

around the world for too long.

It has resulted in national laws, trade and finance rules that drive our current overconsumption of resources, lead to climate disruption — and bring about more and more inequality.

The world's richest 1 percent took home an obscene 82 percent of all new wealth last year and, according to the World Bank, almost half of all people worldwide are one medical bill or crop failure away from destitution. Inequality continues to rise as the world warms and the causes of both are linked.

As Oxfam has shown, the richest 10 percent are responsible for almost half carbon emissions caused by consumption. And yet all around the world it's the poor and marginalized that are most at risk from the devastating effects of climate change.

The failure by governments to prioritize climate action and the fight against inequality is

caused by state institutions and decision-makers — in South as well as North — being captured by specific corporate interests.

The report *Justice for People and Planet*, for example, showcases 20 examples of how the rules that govern our global economy (and sometimes the lack thereof) result in environmental destruction and corporate human rights abuses.

The sad truth is, that those cases are just the tip of the iceberg. They merely illustrate the systemic problem we face.

Because the crises we face are the result of our current economic and political rules, neither the climate emergency nor inequality can be fixed by public private partnerships, as Klaus Schwab, the founder and director of the World Economic Forum tries to make us believe.

To the contrary. We only have a chance to stop walking towards catastrophe if we force our gov-

ernments to adopt new rules — nationally and globally — that have ending climate pollution and inequality at their heart.

This is certainly possible. At the global level, we do have some regulations with teeth. The World Trade Organisation, for example, can sanction countries that break its rules.

Those very rules have prevented many positive laws and changes — because the threat of the WTO overruling a social or environmental measure always looms.

We need similarly strong rules to counter the climate emergency and to fight inequality. Environmental and social bodies should be able to impose sanctions and fines. Corporate accountability and liability needs to extend to all corporate impacts on people and the environment around the world. Trade rules, similarly, need to be revamped to put people and planet first.

At the national level, we need binding targets to at least halve

global emissions by 2030, and we need tax rules that ensure that the corporations and the rich pay their fair share. We can take heart in some rules that are already on the statute books.

France, for example, requires corporations to identify potential risks to people and the environment as a result of their activities, and act to prevent harm to people and the environment.

The UK's Modern Slavery Act meanwhile require businesses to tackle slavery and human trafficking in their supply chains — one extreme part of the inequality crisis.

We need more such laws, in more countries. Urgently. And that's, luckily, what grassroots movements are demanding around the world.

As the World Economic Forum gathers in Davos, January 22 to 25, people are mobilizing in many countries to put an end to inequality as part of the Fight In-

equality alliance week of action.

Feminists, workers, environmentalists and many more movements have come together in this alliance in the knowledge that we do not need nice words or acts of charity from the Davos elite but fundamentally different rules for our global economy if we are to survive.

As the global Fight Inequality alliance manifesto says: "We stand together to build a world of greater equality — where all people's rights are respected and fulfilled, a world of shared prosperity, opportunity and dignity, living within the planet's boundaries."

That world is possible. Via collective mobilization around the world we are making it a little bit more real every day. **IPS**

Daniel Mittler is the Political Director of Greenpeace International and is on the steering committee of the global Fight Inequality alliance.



Eco-group: Stop the use of single-use plastic banderitas

By **CHITO CHAVEZ**

Environmental group EcoWaste Coalition made persistent calls for the public to avoid using single-use plastic to preserve the ecosystem.

However, the group said the single-use plastic banderitas adorning the streets of Tondo in celebration of the feast of Santo Niño are not in sync with the government's plan to clean up Manila and rehabilitate Manila Bay.

The group made this observation after visiting last Wednesday and Friday the vicinity of the Santo Niño de Tondo Church and finding the streets and alleys excessively decorated with plastic buntings.

"We are appalled by the extreme use of plastic bags, plastic strips, plastic packaging scraps and plastic product advertisements as fiesta banderitas as if the 1,175 tons of garbage that Manila churns out daily is not yet enough," said Daniel Alejandro, Zero Waste Campaigner, EcoWaste Coalition.

"These banderitas are basura in the making. After the festivities this Sunday, the banderitas will be taken down and transported by barge, along with other

post-fiesta discards, to the Navotas Sanitary Landfill, the dumping ground for Manila's garbage," he added.

Alejandro pointed out that "reckless wasting as manifested by the banderitas hanging on every street and alley of Tondo goes against the moves to clean up Manila and reduce the city's huge waste production."

"Some of these banderitas may end up as street litter or blown away to the sea, while being hauled to the loading station at Pier 18 and onto the landfill near Manila Bay," he noted.

The Quezon City-based group urged city, barangay and church officials to act decisively against the unnecessary hanging and irresponsible disposal of plastic banderitas that are simply thrown away after the fiesta.

"We can easily do away with wasteful banderitas as these are not crucial to the good conduct of any community celebration," Alejandro said.

EcoWaste Coalition suggested that May 2019 poll candidates should stop politicizing faith-based activities with hollow "happy fiesta" banners and other campaign materials.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

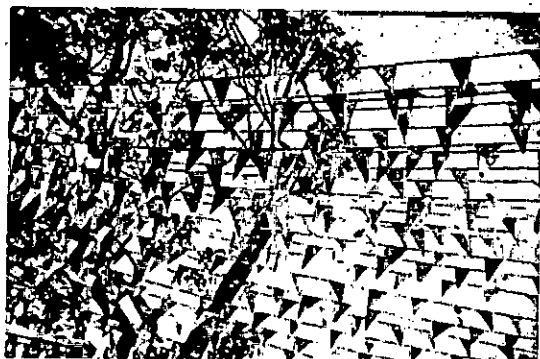
EcoWaste: Banderitas basura in the making

By **ITCHIE G. CABAYAN**

THE EcoWaste Coalition, a waste and pollution watch group, yesterday called on city, barangay and church officials to act decisively against the unnecessary hanging and irresponsible disposal of plastic banderitas that are simply thrown away after the fiesta, in view of today's celebration of the Feast of Sto. Nino in Tondo, Manila.

It said the single-use plastic banderitas adorning the streets of Tondo are not in sync with the government's plan to clean up Manila and rehabilitate the highly-polluted Manila Bay, after visiting last Wednesday and Friday the immediate vicinity of the Santo Niño de Tondo Church and finding the streets and alleys excessively decorated with plastic buntings as if there was no tomorrow.

"We are appalled by the extreme use of plastic bags, plastic strips, plastic packaging scraps and plastic product advertisements as fiesta banderitas as if the 1,175 tons of garbage that Manila churns out daily



is not yet enough," said Daniel Alejandro of the said group.

"These banderitas are basura in the making. After the festivities this Sunday, the banderitas will be taken down and transported by barge, along with other post-fiesta discards, to the Navotas Sanitary Landfill, the dumping ground for Manila's garbage," he added.

Alejandro pointed out that "reckless wasting as manifested by the banderitas hanging on every street and alley of Tondo goes against the moves to clean up Manila and reduce the city's huge waste production," adding that "some of these ban-

deritas may end up as street litter or blown away to the sea while being hauled to the loading station at Pier 18 and onto the landfill near Manila Bay."

According to him, residents can easily do away with wasteful banderitas as these are not crucial to the good conduct of any community celebration.

The group also suggested that May 2019 poll candidates should stop politicizing faith-based activities with hollow 'happy fiesta' banners and other campaign materials, saying that these tarpaulins only add to the street clutter, as well as garbage.



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Manila Standard

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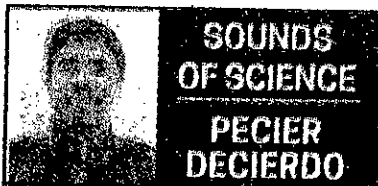
PAGE 1
STORY

BARRIER
STORY

EDITORIAL

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NO, THE PLANET IS NOT GOING TO BE OKAY

THERE is a line of reasoning that I keep on hearing whenever climate change is discussed. I hear it in conversations, see it posted on social media, and read it in comment threads. It goes along these lines. Yes, climate change is bad, but it is bad only for humans. The planet will be fine.

This line of reasoning is wrong. Yes, climate change is negatively affecting humans, but only because we are part of the complex web of life on this planet. That entire web is being disrupted by climate change, and we, along with all the living things with whom we share this planet, are suffering from the impact. Hence, saving ourselves by acting on climate change is no different from saving the web of life to which we belong. We cannot save people without saving the planet.

Now, to be charitable, the people making the argument have a point. When they say that the planet will be fine, they are thinking of the fact that the Earth has gone through countless changes over its 4.5 billion-year history.

Indeed, many of the changes in the past were drastic. For instance, the Earth has been through deep ice ages when a lot of its water was locked up in continent-sized glaciers, draining entire seas. During such times, what is now the Mediterranean Sea was a desert, and what are now the seas separating Indonesia and the Philippines from mainland Asia were land bridges.

The Earth has also gone through some very hot times. During the Carboniferous period some 359 million to 299 million years ago, the average global temperature was 20 degrees hotter than today's. The Earth was a very swampy, damp planet filled with lush forests and giant dragonflies with 2-foot wingspans.

Even further back in time, the Earth was a hellscape where no life was possible. During the Earth's early days, in the aptly named Hadean time, the Earth was so hot its surface was an ocean of molten lava.

In other words, climate change over the hundreds of thousands of years is part of the Earth's natural cycles. These cycles are caused by a lot of factors, from changes in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to the amount of energy released by the sun.

Some of the Earth's changes were even catastrophic. The most famous example is the event that caused the demise of the dinosaurs some 66 million years ago, when an asteroid slammed into Earth. That event caused tons of dust to spray into the atmosphere, plummeting the planet into a global winter that lasted for years.

We get mini versions of this whenever a major volcanic explosion happens. When Mount Pinatubo erupted in 1991, the ashes from the volcano cooled the Earth's temperature by up to 0.6 degrees. Meanwhile, the eruption of Indonesia's Mount Tambora probably resulted in 1816 to be "The Year Without a Summer."

So in some sense, the Earth will indeed be fine. After all, it has survived far worse.

However, it is only correct so far as we are talking about the mere lump of rocks that is Earth. Most of the time when people talk about "the planet," they are not merely referring to the inanimate parts of Earth. When people say "the planet," that usually includes the Earth's living components. It is, after all, what makes Earth such a unique planet.

When one includes this living component, then the planet is indeed under threat because of climate change. Climate change will result in a great dying throughout the planet, the likes of which humans have never seen before. Even a warming of 1.5 degrees will wipe out hundreds of species of animals and plants.

A warming of 2 degrees will make the problem much worse. According to the special report released last year by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a warming of 2 degrees will put 98 percent of the world's coral reefs at risk. Millions of people, and even more marine animals, depend on healthy coral reefs. When the corals go, they will take countless other living things with them.

The stable climate of the past few thousand years is what made complex human civilization possible. Climate change is disrupting that once stable foundation. The things we depend on, from predictable seasonal changes to healthy forests, are going away. If that foundation collapses altogether because of climate change, it is not just humans who will suffer. Instead, we will be dragging hundreds of thousands of species along with us, from some obscure forest frog to the coffee plants we farm for their seeds.

This is why saving the planet and saving human civilization amount to the same task. There is no doing one without doing the other.



Green financing vs climate change

By Joshua Lao

Climate change is a major global concern affecting everybody from the tropics to the poles as the Earth's temperature rises causing an increase in extreme weather events, shrinking water supply, dying coral reefs, forests fires and other intense variations in the atmosphere.

For its part, the Philippines has had its share of the ill-effects of climate change, with Super Typhoon Yolanda (international code name Haiyan), the most devastating to hit the country in

November 2013 killing at least 6,300 people on official count (some estimates the death toll to reach nearly 20,000).

The increased number of super typhoons hitting the Philippines had significantly impacted the agriculture sector. With this concern brought by climate change, the Philippine government in collaboration with the local communities and international partners are joining hands to act with the clear aim of escaping the worst impacts of climate change and establish a safer future for the country.

In our pursuit of a robust economy and public infrastructure development, we make it a point to ensure that our sustainability goals are not compromised.

The Duterte administration's efforts to revive and rehabilitate the country's environment can be clearly observed with the ambitious P47 billion plan to clean the once pristine waters of the famous Manila Bay, duplicating the government's success in rehabilitating Boracay beach.

However, programs and actions to save the environment comes with a price and financing it added to the concerns. Good thing help came from concerned institutions and other countries such as the United Kingdom (UK).

Green Financing

The UK Government through the British Embassy Manila, convened a forum on green financing in partnership

with the Department of Finance, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, National Economic and Development Authority and Climate Change Commission.

With the theme, Green Finance Towards a Sustainable Philippines, the forum intends to serve as a platform for harnessing and building on the growing interest in climate funding and development of new markets for green finance to support and accelerate green investment and projects in the country.

Among such projects in the country was the Green, Green, Green which aims to provide a more sustainable and livable community in 145 cities through the development of public open spaces.

Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno, whose department spearheaded the program's launch last year, had cited that the project was in line with the Duterte administration's massive infrastructure programs.

"In our pursuit of a robust economy and public infrastructure development, we make it a point to ensure that our sustainability goals are not compromised," Diokno said.

"Green, Green, Green will help city governments create forest parks, arboretum and botanical gardens; improve livability of urban areas through



various activities and methods such as landscaping, turfing and tree planting; and transform streetscapes through installation of eco-friendly street furniture, fixtures and shading," he added.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III during the forum announced the possibility of green financing for various public private partnership projects and the desire of the government to provide mainstream access to such funding, encouraging sustainable development through banks and microfinance institutions.

"The Duterte administration is mulling over the possible expansion of the coverage of the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) Green Bonds Framework to include sectors such as transportation, infrastructure and commercial banking in step with heightened global efforts to mobilize investments aimed at improving the resilience of communities to the perils of climate change," Dominguez explained.