

*STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE*

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**DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Metallic minerals Output down 11%

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The value of metallic minerals produced in Philippine mines fell by 11 percent year-on-year to about P75.9 billion in the nine months to September of 2016 from P85.5 billion a year ago, according to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

January to September output value also showed a decline for the second year in a row. In 2014, the value of nine-month output was pegged at P102.5 billion.

The MGB said in its quarterly

report the "anemic" performance was due to the shuttering of seven nickel mines operated by six companies in Palawan and Zambales, as well as depressed prices of nickel and copper.

The agency was referring to the project run by Zambales Diversified Metals Corp.; Benguet Corp Nickel Mines Inc.; Eramen Minerals Inc.; and LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc.—all in Sta. Cruz town in Zambales.

Also suspended amid a clampdown led by Environment Secretary Regina Lopez were

the projects of Berong Nickel Corp. in Quezon town as well as the projects of Citinickel Mines and Development Corp. in Sofronio Espanola and Narra towns—all in Palawan.

"Individual performance of the nickel mines was significantly affected by the sluggish price of nickel in the international market," the MGB added.

"In September 2016 alone, we saw nickel price nosedive to \$2.67 per pound, the lowest price to be recorded since 2002," MGB said.

MGB monitoring further

showed that the price of nickel went down by as much as 30 percent over a nine-month period from \$3.84 per pound last January to \$2.67 per pound in September.

As for copper, the nine-month average price dropped 20 percent from \$2.57 a pound to \$2.04 a pound.

From January to September, nickel miners shipped out P17.3 billion worth of ore (down 44 percent year-on-year) and P10.9 billion worth of mixed nickel sulfides (down 19 percent). Nickel production accounted

for 37 percent of total output value for the period.

Precious metals continued to outperform the base metals, with gold output jumping by 30 percent in value to P33.6 billion, and 13 percent in volume to reach 17,555 kilograms. The yellow metal represented 44 percent of total output value.

During the nine months, the average price of gold rose by 6.5 percent or \$76 per ounce to reach \$1,256.70.

Further, copper production represented 18 percent of total,

decreasing in value by 7 percent to post P13.3 billion.

The remaining 1 percent or P840 million of mine output are in the form of silver, zinc, iron ore and chromite.

According to the MGB, the main contributors during the period were Didipio copper-gold project (OceanaGold Philippines Inc.), P10.94 billion; Masbate gold project (Philippines Gold Processing and Refining Corp.), P9.44 billion; and Toledo copper operations (Carmen Copper Corp.), P8.21 billion. INQ

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## CRACKDOWN ON MINING CUTS OUTPUT PH metallic mineral value drops 11% to P76B

METALLIC mineral production value dropped by more than a tenth in the first three quarters of the year amid the government's tough crackdown on mining operations, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said on Monday.

In a report, MGB said that the total value of minerals produced by large mining operations declined by 11 percent to P75.93 billion in January-September 2016, from P85.47 billion during the same period a year ago.

The agency attributed the decrease to weak prices of base metals coupled with the suspension of some nickel operations in the provinces of Palawan and Zambales.

Gold continued to be the biggest contributor to the total metallic min-

eral production value with 44 percent or P33.57 billion, followed by nickel with 37 percent or P28.21 billion, and copper with 18 percent or P13.32 billion. The remaining 1 percent or P0.84 billion came from the collective values of silver, chromite and iron ore.

During the period, the average prices of nickel and copper tumbled 30.65 percent and 20.49 percent, respectively. The price of nickel was pegged at \$3.95 per pound (lbs) from \$5.70 per pound; while the copper price was at \$2.04 per pound, from \$2.57 per pound.

Precious metals, on the other hand, continued to post steady increase - gold registering a 6.49 percent increase and silver with 6.36 percent, respectively. The price of the

yellow metal stood at \$1,256.58 per ounce while silver or white metal prices averaged \$17.05 per ounce.

After months of delays and hiccups, Environment Secretary Regina Paz Lopez said that they will release the result of the mine audit on December 15, with expectations that more mines will be suspended following further review.

The crackdown is aimed at enforcing stricter environmental protection measures, with tough-talking President Rodrigo Duterte warning in August that the nation could survive without a mining industry.

Since it launched the audit on July 8, the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources

(DENR) has suspended about 10 mines, eight of them nickel producers, for environmental lapses.

Another 20 mines are facing possible suspension for environmental violations, unsystematic mining methods and outstanding social issues.

### More suspensions expected

Among those recommended for suspension are the following: Libjo Mining Corp., AAM-Phil Natural Resources Exploration and Development Corp. - Parcel 1 and Parcel 2B, Krominco Inc., Carrascal Nickel Corp., Marcventures Mining and Development Corp.,

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Filinvest Resources Corp., Strongbuilt Mining Development Corp., Sinosteel Philippines HY Mining Corp., Oriental Synergy Mining Corp., and Wellex Mining Corp.

Also included in the recommendation for suspension are

Century Peak Corp. - Rapid City Nickel Project and Casiguran Nickel Project, Oriental Vision Mining Philippines Corp., and GTP Construction and Mining Corp., Agata Mining Ventures Inc., Hinatuan Mining Corp., Benguet Corp., Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co., OceanaGold Phils. Inc., Adnama Mining Resources, Inc., and SR Metals, Inc.

The number of suspended min-

ers and those to be issued with recommendation for suspension represents about three quarters of the total operating mines in the country.

Of these 30 mines, 18 are nickel producers that account for 55.5 percent of the country's total nickel ore output based on last year's production.

Meanwhile, the MGB said that the individual performance of

the nickel mines was significantly affected by the sluggish price of nickel in the international market.

"In September 2016 alone, we saw nickel price nosedive to \$2.67 per pound, the lowest price to be recorded since 2002. Nickel price went down by as much as 30 percent since the start of the year from \$3.84 per lb. in January 2016 to \$2.67 per pound in September 2016," it said.

The six nickel mines that are currently suspended include: Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation (Sta. Cruz-Candelaria Mining Project); Benguet Corp Nickel Mines Inc. (Sta. Cruz Nickel Mining Project); Eramen Minerals Inc. (Sta. Cruz Mining Project); LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc. (Sta. Cruz Mining Project); Berong Nickel Corporation (Berong Nickel Project); and Citinickel Mines and Development

Corporation (Toronto and Pulot Nickel Projects).

These nickel mines account for about 10 percent of the total nickel production of the country.

Similarly, the mining operation of Ore Asia Mining and Development Corporation, the lone iron ore producer in country, located in the province of Bulacan, was also suspended last August 2016.

**JAMES KONSTANTIN GALVEZ**

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Mining production shrinks 11%

By Anna Leah E. Gonzales

**M**INERAL production shrank 11 percent in the first three quarters from a year ago, following the suspension of several mines, the government said Monday.

Data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau showed mineral production dropped to P75.93 billion in January to September from P85.47 billion registered in the same period last year.

"Poor base metal prices of nickel and copper coupled with

the suspension of six nickel mines in the provinces of Palawan and Zambales led to the anemic performance of the metallic sector," MGB said.

MGB said the value of gold production which accounted for almost half of the total

value reached P33.57 billion, while direct shipping nickel ore and mixed nickel-cobalt sulfide amounted to P28.21 billion.

Value of copper production amounted to P13.32 billion, while collective values of silver, chromite and iron ore reached P840 million.

MGB said the average price of nickel in the nine-month period went down 30.65 percent to \$3.95 per pound from \$5.70 per pound last year, while copper prices also dropped 20.49 percent to \$2.04 per pound from \$2.57

per pound.

Prices of precious metals, gold and silver rose 6.49 percent and 6.36 percent, respectively during the period.

MGB said the average price of gold increased to \$1,256.7 per ounce this year from \$1,180.13 last year, while silver reported an average of \$17.05 per ounce from \$16.03 per ounce in 2015.

The Environment Department suspended the operations of six nickel mines in Zambales and Palawan. The mining operation

of Ore Asia Mining and Development Corp., the lone iron ore producer operating in Bulacan province, was also suspended in August 2016.

MGB said in terms of peso value, the top five mining projects in the first nine months were the Didipio Copper Gold Project, Masbate Gold Project, Toledo Copper Operations, Padcal Copper-Gold Project and Coral Bay HPAAL Project.

"A new entrant to the production scene is Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project of FCF Min-

erals Corp. located in Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya," MGB said.

MGB said the company was the fourth financial or technical assistance agreement approved by the government in 2009.

The initial mine output of FCF which started commercial operation in June 2016 was 93 kilograms of gold and 20 kilograms of silver.

The gold mine has an estimated 18.10 million metric tons of ore reserve with an average grade of 1.93 grams/ton Au and estimated mine life of 10 years.

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# Metal mine production sinks further, but at a slower pace

THE VALUE of production of the country's 41 metal mines sank in the nine months to September, but an annual increase in the price of gold helped break the fall compared to a year ago.

A press statement posted yesterday on the Web site of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said the total value of metallic mineral production sank 11% to P75.93 billion from P85.47 billion in those comparable nine months, although that decline was slighter than the first half's 13.59% fall and the 20% drop in the first three quarters of 2015.

"Poor base metal prices of nickel and copper, coupled with the suspension of six nickel mines in the provinces of Palawan and Zambales, led to the anemic performance of the metallic sector," MGB said in its press statement.

Gold continued to contribute more than the other metals, accounting for 44% of the total at P33.572 billion, reflecting a 30% increase from the year-ago P28.878 billion.

The yellow metal was followed by direct shipping nickel ore and mixed nickel-cobalt

sulfide with a combined 37% at P28.21 billion that dropped from a year ago.

Copper contributed 18% at P13.316 billion, falling seven percent from the past year's P14.264 billion.

The remaining one percent — about P840 million — came from the collective values of silver, chromite and iron ore.

The average price of gold increased by 6.49% to \$1,256.70 per ounce (/oz) from \$1,180.13/oz year on year, compared to the 8.43% annual drop recorded in 2015's first nine months.

Silver similarly stayed robust with a 6.36% year-on-year increase to \$17.05/oz from \$16.03/oz in the same comparative nine months, compared with a 19.64% annual fall recorded the past year.

But the impact of these price increases was offset by 30.65% and 20.49% declines in the prices of nickel and copper respectively. Nickel price tumbled to \$3.95 per pound (/lb) from \$5.70/lb, while that of copper fell to \$2.04/lb from \$2.57/lb.

Mine, SI/11

SOURCE: MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU BUSINESSWORLD GRAPHICS: BONG R. FORTIN

Mine,  
from SI/1

This year has seen operations at 10 metal mines nationwide suspended as a result of a state environmental audit, and 20 others face the same fate should they be found liable for various deficiencies and violations.

Before that, the industry had already been reeling from a moratorium on new permits that has been in place since 2011 and extended indefinitely through Executive Order No. 79 signed on July 6, 2012. — with J. C. Lim



## PHILIPPINE METALLIC MINERAL PRODUCTION

(value in million pesos)

	Jan.-Sept. 2015	Jan.-Sept. 2016	
Gold	25,878	33,572	▲ 30%
Silver	482.74	714.36	▲ 48%
Copper Concentrate	14,263	13,316	▼ 7%
Mixed Nickel-Cobalt Sulfide	13,440	10,909	▼ 19%
Nickle Direct Shipping Ore	31,099	17,300	▼ 44%
Chromite	93.34	109.90	▲ 18%
Iron Ore	210.41	12.27	▼ 94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,467</b>	<b>75,934</b>	<b>▼ 11%</b>

## Nickel output drops 16%; Green clampdown bites

THE Philippines' output of nickel ore fell 16 percent in the third quarter from a year earlier, government data showed, after the world's top supplier of the metal suspended some mines in a clampdown on environmental violations.

Lopez said more suspensions to be announced this week



The Philippines has already stopped work at 10 of its 41 mines in a campaign, backed by President Rodrigo Duterte, against what the government says is irresponsible mining. A group of a further 20 more faces possible suspension.

Output of nickel ore for direct shipping fell to 9.34 million tonnes in July-September from 11.09 million tons in the same period last year, data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau showed.

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Regina Lopez told Reuters on Friday that there will "definitely" be more mine suspensions when the ruling on the 20 facing suspension is released, possibly within the week.

The Philippines is the biggest supplier of nickel ore to China, where the metal is used to make stainless steel. Eight of the 10 suspended mines are nickel producers, and along with 14 of the 20 facing suspension, they accounted for more than half of the Philippines' nickel ore output last year.

Production dropped to 19.8 million tons in the nine months to September from 25.97 million tons a year ago, according to the data.

Weak prices also contributed to the drop in output during the nine-month period, the mining bureau said. By value, nickel direct shipping ore dropped 44 percent in January-September. - Reuters

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## Former UN expert warns against waste-to-energy projects

DAVAO CITY – A former chief technical advisor for the United Nations (UN) on Global Environment Projects, urged the government to shun engaging in waste-to-energy (WTE) projects, which produce the most toxic chemical substances that are detrimental to environment and human health.

"All thermal WTE technologies produce the most toxic substances, known to science. I am a scientist and also an engineer. In science, the most toxic chemical we know are a group of compounds known as dioxins. Dioxins are produced by all of these WTE technologies," Dr. Jose Emmanuel told a press conference on Monday.

He said that the Philippines does not have the capability to manage any WTE technology project, and has no capability to monitor the level of toxic substances the WTE plant is releasing into the environment.

"Dioxins are toxic even at very, very small concentrations. For example, if

you put one drop of dioxin into a lake, that is enough to produce harmful effects on people who eat the fish in the lake," he said.

He said that people who are exposed to dioxins are at risk of getting cancer, dysfunction of ovaries in women, reproductive disorders in men whose mothers have been exposed to dioxin, and decreases the IQ level among the children.

"The moral issue is that if you release dioxin today that dioxin will remain in our environment for at least 40 generations, so that means we are not only endangering ourselves and our children. We are endangering our great, great, great, great, and great grand children because it will take a long time for dioxin to disappear from the environment," he said.

He also urged the government to study the proposals of the more advanced countries, particularly Japan, in putting up a WTE plant here. (Antonio L. Colina IV)

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

# DENR warned on waste-to-energy tech

ENVIRONMENTAL organizations said the government should block further approvals of waste-to-energy (wte) projects, which they said will lead to a deterioration in air quality.

EcoWaste Coalition's Ochie Tolentino said the technology will undermine the country's effort to curb environmental degradation and pursue a low-carbon development path.

"[Once] we allow burn wte technologies, our citizens will be locked in to years of dirty, toxic, and costly solid waste management systems. Burn wte facilities emit greenhouse gases and toxic fly ash and bottom ash. Allowing these facilities will sabotage our country's efforts to clean our air and implement the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act," Mr. Tolentino was quoted as saying in the group's statement e-mailed to reporters Friday.

"We urge (Environment) Secretary (Regina Paz L.) Lopez to take the

lead in promoting ecological and sustainable solutions to the country's garbage problems. We already have cities, municipalities and barangays that are successfully implementing safe, proven and low-cost ecological management of municipal solid waste and their experiences can be replicated across the country," Mr. Tolentino added.

The groups, part of the Stop waste-to-energy (wte) Alliance, said the DENR has not acted on a petition sent by various environmental networks on Sept. 1, 2016.

The petition calls for a repeal of the National Solid Waste Management Commission Resolution No. 669, series 2016, which allows the entry and operations of burn wte projects. The NSWMC is chaired by the DENR.

Meanwhile, a parallel anti-wte forum was also held in Davao City organized by the Sustainable Davao Movement, Ateneo University Community Engagement and Ad-

vocacy Council and the EcoWaste Coalition.

The forum included presentations by Dr. Jorge Emmanuel, former chief technical advisor of the United Nations Development Program on global (UNDP) environment waste projects.

"There is no such thing as 'clean incineration,'" Mr. Emmanuel, former chief technical advisor of the UNDP on global environment waste projects, said in a separate statement released on Monday.

"All incinerators release toxic particulates, toxic gases such as carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide, toxic metals such as lead and mercury and other pollutants in addition to dioxins," Mr. Emmanuel added.

Dioxins are toxic at very low levels and are known to cause various types of cancer. A single particulate of the kind that is released to the environment will remain for up to 150 years if on topsoil more than 500 years if in bodies of water.



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## Help solve trash woes, DENR head urged

INITIATIVES SERVICE

VARIOUS environmental groups yesterday urged Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez to take the lead in promoting ecological and sustainable solutions to the country's garbage woes.

The groups made the appeal in a protest action in front of the DENR main office in Visayas Avenue, Quezon City.

The green groups lamented the flooding of thermal or burn "waste-to-energy" (WtE) technology proposals, which they believed will undermine the country's effort to curb environmental degradation and pursue a low-carbon development path.

The protesters that marched to the DENR were composed of various environmental watchdog groups and advocates such as Bangon Kalikasan Movement, Consumer Rights for Safe Food, EcoWaste Coalition, Greenpeace Southeast Asia, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Health Care Without Harm, Mother Earth Foundation, Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, and Piglas ng Kababaihan.

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

The petition urged Lopez to repeal the National Solid Waste Management Commission Resolution 669 series of 2016, which allows the entry and operations of burn WtE. The NSWMC is chaired by the DENR.

"We urge Secretary Lopez to take the lead in promoting ecological and sustainable solutions to the country's garbage woes. We already have cities, municipalities and barangays that are successfully implementing safe, proven and low-cost ecological management of municipal solid waste and their experiences can be replicated across the country," said EcoWaste Coalition Zero Waste campaigner Ochie Tolentino.

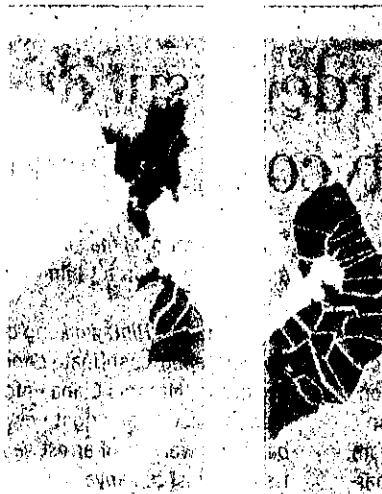
Tolentino said that once the burn WtE technologies will be allowed, the people will be locked-in to years of dirty, toxic and costly solid waste management systems.

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

According to the groups, burn WtE technologies are rebranded garbage-burning facilities and incinerators used by waste industries and vendors to hide the technology's dirty image and dupe unaware buyers and clients, particularly from developing countries like the Philippines.

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

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



### CALABARZON AND NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION Talks set before permit moratorium, dismantling of illegal aqua facilities in Laguna de Bay

WITH the impending dismantling of illegal fish pens and cages at the Laguna de Bay by the second week of December and a moratorium on permits by January, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) plans to hold talks with operators to further explain the need to rationalize the use of the 90,000-hectare (ha) lake. "The thrust there is to send the message that the DENR, under Secretary (Gina L.) Lopez, will rationalize the lake and the bias will be for the fisherfolk to have access to their traditional fishing ground," said DENR Undersecretary Arturo T. Valdez, who also heads the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTF). Recently, the NAECTF demolished a 13-ha illegal fish pen falling within the jurisdiction of Muntinlupa City. "Secretary Lopez has made it very clear that the fisherfolk should enjoy the lake," he said. DENR said the lake's current carrying capacity allows up to only 9,000 ha for aquaculture, but fish pens and cages are occupying 12,375.18 ha of the surface water.

**Registered operators:**

713 = fish cage  
305 = fishpen

**Illegal operators:**

2,261

SOURCE: LAGUNA LAKE  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (LLDA)

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## Worldinbrief

### 190 NATIONS BACK BIODIVERSITY INCLUSION IN FORESTRY, AGRICULTURE, TOURISM

**UNITED NATIONS, United States:** More than 190 countries at a major United Nations conference in Mexico have pledged to step up efforts to integrate biodiversity into the policies of their forests, fisheries, tourism and agriculture sectors. Over the weekend, countries adopted the Cancun Declaration, named after the Mexican city where the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), known as COP13, is being held. The Declaration represents an unprecedented recognition from the international community that biodiversity protection must involve different governmental and economic sectors and not just environment ministries. "The Cancun Declaration, and the powerful commitments made here at the High Level Segment send a strong signal that countries are ready to achieve the Aichi Targets," said Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, executive secretary of the CBD, referring to the 20 biodiversity targets that parties to the CBD are meant to achieve by 2020. **UN NEWS**