

DATE : 07 SEP 2019

DAY : Saturday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



DENR: Thumbs up for Laguna lake

By Elmer N. Manuel

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announced on Friday that the agency is in favor of sourcing additional water supply from the Laguna Lake.

In a statement, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said that he and Laguna Lake Development Authority general manager Jaime Medina had revealed their position to lawmakers regarding government's action plan to address the water shortage that plague Metro Manila.

"The population is increasing in Metro Manila,

so there should be a different computation on water consumption," said Cimatu. "That's the reason why we approve of using Laguna Lake as one of the water sources of Metro Manila."

The DENR secretary revealed this plan to the House Appropriations Committee during the Environment department's budget presentation for its P25-billion proposed budget for 2020.

Medina, on the other hand, noted that concessionaires Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Company Inc. could still increase the current supply volume they are getting from the lake.



LAGUNA LAKE GAGAMITING WATER SOURCE

PABOR ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa suhestiyon na gamitin bilang water source ang Laguna Lake para masolusyunan ang krisis sa tubig sa Metro Manila.

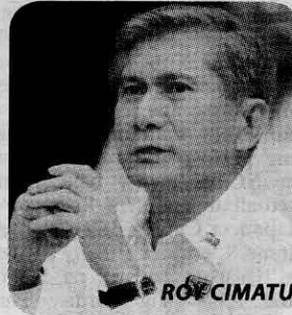
Ayon kay DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, lumalaki na ang populasyon sa Metro Manila at nag-iiba na ang water consumption, kaya aprubado

nila ang naturang suhestiyon.

Maaari naman daw taasan pa ng mga water concessionaires ang dami ng kinukuha mula sa Laguna Lake ayon kay Laguna Lake Development Authority General Manager Jaime Medina.

Sa ngayon ay 3% ng tubig sa Laguna Lake ang kinukuha ng dalawang concessionaires.

DWIZ882



ROY CIMATU



Laguna Lake bilang water source ng MM, ok sa DENR

Suportado ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang paggamit ng Laguna Lake bilang isa sa mga water sources ng Metro Manila bukod sa Angat dam sa Bulacan.

Ayon kay DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu, patuloy na lumalaki ang populasyon sa Metro Manila kayat dapat paghandaan ang mas mataas na demand ng tubig.

Ayon naman kay Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) Jaime Medina, ang Laguna Lake ay ginagamit na ng dalawang concessionaires bilang water source.

Sa ngayon, 3 percent ng tubig mula sa Laguna Lake ang naisusuplay sa MM sa pamamagitan ng water treatment plant sa Muntinlupa ng Maynilad Water na nagkaloob ng 300 million liters per day ng tubig at treatment facility ng Manila Water sa Cardona, Cavite na nagkaloob ng 100 million liters per day ng tubig.

Samantala 90 percent ng tubig sa MM ay mula naman sa Angat dam.

Sinabi ni Medina na kaya pa ng Laguna Lake na magsuplay ng tubig ngunit kailangan dumaan sa dredging at rehabilitasyon dahil ang tubig sa ngayon ay sapat lamang para sa pangangisda. (*Angie dela Cruz*)



Hiling ng DENR

P1.4-B SA MANILA BAY REHAB

HUMIHINGI ng P1.4 billion na pondo ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para sa rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Sa budget presentation ng DENR, sinabi ni Environment Sec. Roy Cimatu na gagamitin ang pondo sa pagpapatuloy ng clean up at rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay sa susunod

na taon.

Ayon naman kay Usec. Mitch Cuna, malaki na ang naging pagbabago ng Manila Bay mula nang simulan ang paglilinis dito noong Enero 27.

Patuloy, aniya, ang clean up at water quality monitoring sa Manila Bay kung saan nabawasan na ang mga basurang palutang-lutang sa dagat at bumaba rin ang fecal coliform level nito.

Bukod sa linggo-linggong paglilinis sa Manila Bay katuwang ang mga organisasyon at iba pang volunteers, nakipag-partner din ang DENR sa pribadong sektor na siyang mag-a-adopt

sa ibang bahagi ng Manila Bay para patuloy ang pangangalaga rito.

Patuloy rin ang monitoring ng DILG, MMDA, LLDA at DPWH para tiyakin na nag-ko-comply sa sewerage treatment

ang mga establisimiyento na nakatayo malapit sa Manila Bay.

Sa 2020, tumaas ng 16% ang pondo ng DENR sa P25.495 billion mula sa kasalukuyang P21.959 billion. **CONDEBATAC**



DENR trains forest rangers on gun use

A training of forest rangers on how to use shotguns is being conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said he does not want a repeat of the killing of forest rangers, citing one who was hacked to death in Barangay Bagumbayan, El Nido, Palawan on Wednesday.

Cimatu said three forest rangers had recently been killed in Palawan.

At a budget briefing at the House of Representatives yesterday, Cimatu said forest rangers should be provided police security

whenever they conduct patrol.

Cimatu said it is the best that the DENR could do in the absence of a law authorizing forest rangers to carry firearms.

He said there is also no law that allows the DENR to hire security guards during patrol.

Cimatu said he is hopeful that a law creating an enforcement bureau to implement forestry laws would soon be passed.

The DENR said there are more than 2,000 forest rangers across the country.

— Rhodina Villanueva



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Cimatu seeks law arming DENR forest rangers

By Maricel V. Cruz

FOREST rangers are now being trained to use shotguns following the killing of a forest ranger in Palawan allegedly by illegal loggers.

This was revealed on Friday by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu during the hearing on the DENR's budget in 2020.

"I initiated the weapons training of my enforcers there *kasi pinapatay po ang mga tao namin eh* (because they are getting killed). Enforcers are being trained to handle shotguns," Cimatu told lawmakers.

Cimatu said that soldiers and policemen usually accompany forest rangers on patrols.

However, the DENR enforcers are forced to go out on their own when soldiers or policemen are not available.

Owing to the violence inflicted by illegal loggers and other environmental law violators on DENR personnel, Cimatu asked the legislators for a law that would create an enforcement bureau to be composed of armed personnel boost the implementation of environmental laws, particularly the Anti-Illegal Logging Act.

"*Hindi naman kami pwede mag-hire ng security guard to help us in the patrolling. In the end, sana mayroon na tayong batas na makatulong sa atin,*" he said.



Metro water supply now stable; Bay still needs work

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu told lawmakers during a hearing on his department's 2020 budget the water supply in Metro Manila was now "stable."

The DENR's P25.59 billion proposed 2020 budget is 16 percent higher compared to P21.5 billion in 2019.

Tens of thousands in the capital's east zone endured water rationing last summer as authorities acknowledged the lack of alternative sources while the supply at Angat Dam dwindled.

Cimatu said told the legislators the level at Angat was at 183 meters.

Authorities earlier placed the normal operating level there at 180 meters.

Meanwhile, a party-list solon and an environmental advocate urged President Rodrigo Duterte to crack a whip against two water concessionaires in Metro Manila for its failure to install wastewater treatment plants to stop the degradation of Manila Bay.

Buhay Party-list Rep. Lito Atienza and Environmental protection advocate, Commodore Robert "Bobby" Lim Joseph of the Manila Yacht Club, said the two water facilities now owe the government

P1.4 billion in penalty for violating the Clean Water Act since 2009 to present.

The two water utilities failed to install and maintain wastewater treatment facilities in Metro Manila that should be connected to an available sewage system for proper wastewater treatment and disposal, Atienza said.

"The untreated water wastes from thousands of establishments and residential areas are directly being dumped into Manila Bay, making the once famous shoreline a big septic tank," Joseph told the **Manila Standard. Vito Barcelo**



Kaliwa Dam's left-field risks

There is renewed public interest about the Kaliwa Dam project due to the alarming findings by the Commission on Audit that the contract for the major water infrastructure project was rigged in favor of its winning bidder, China Energy Engineering Co. (CEEC) Ltd.

The country's audit agency said CEEC bagged the project despite its failure to submit the required documents, giving the impression that the public bidding was actually a negotiated procurement in disguise.

This issue raises a clear red flag, because public bidding policy and practice automatically disqualifies bidders that fail to submit required documents, since official action tending to show liberality in the enforcement of bidding rules may be construed as bias for specific bidders.

In fact, in the case of the public bidding for the country's third telco player, the Department of Information and Communications Technology's bids and awards committee was very strict in implementing its rules, and disqualified bidders that failed to follow its procedures to the letter.

There was no reason for the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to have green-lighted CEEC's bid if the company had patently failed to submit the required bidding documents. Instead, the MWSS should have declared a failure of bidding and scheduled a new one, as has been the bidding policy and practice across all of government.

The Kaliwa Dam project's woes do not end there. As a result of the audit report, the MWSS now has to answer to the Philippine

COMMENTARY

TERRY RIDON

Competition Commission (PCC) on whether it committed anticompetitive behavior by seemingly rigging the bidding for the P18.7-billion project.

The Kaliwa Dam contract should be a simple open-and-shut case for the PCC, because the rules of government public bidding have been long defined by law, regulation and jurisprudence: There should be no doubt that failure to submit the required documents merits the outright rejection of bids or the disqualification of bidders.

Further, even if the MWSS continues to downplay the grassroots objections in the affected local governments and communities, not a single concrete block will be built without these approvals on the local level.

The continuing objection of the local government of Infanta, Quezon, is a major regulatory roadblock for the dam project, because Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Government Code (LGC) require the approval of LGU legislative councils affected by projects that may cause the loss of cropland, rangeland or forest cover. Certainly, the Kaliwa Dam will cause all of these things to Infanta.

Contrary to the MWSS' statements, the approvals made by Quezon province or by the Calabarzon regional development council are insufficient to comply with the specific LGC requirement of legislative council approval.

Moreover, indigenous communities are also objecting to the dam project. It is therefore critical that the permitting process for indigenous peoples be closely monitored, particularly the "free, prior and informed consent" mechanism, because the dam project does not only deal with the use of ancestral domain for an environmentally critical project, it also deals with the loss of ancestral domain, with indigenous areas at risk of being submerged and rendered unusable by indigenous groups.

Most significantly, the Kaliwa Dam project is ripe for a writ of kalikasan petition. With regulatory and environmental objections involving local governments and communities in the provinces of Quezon and Rizal, it would not be surprising if affected communities decide to resort to this extraordinary remedy.

It should serve as fair warning to the government that previous Kalikasan proceedings had effectively suspended and delayed major environmentally critical projects similar to the Kaliwa Dam. In fact, in a previous Kalikasan case involving a proposed major power plant, project implementation has been suspended and delayed for the last seven years and counting.

No question that a new water source should be developed for Metro Manila and its surroundings. The recent water crisis is a testament to this urgent need. But the government should be reminded that fundamental to national critical infrastructure is not only to build and do it fast, but also to build and do it right.

Terry Ridon is the convener of Infracatch PH and former chief of the urban poor commission under the Duterte administration.



FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

Kaliwa

FFor over two decades now, we have been talking about the New Centennial Water Supply Project – more commonly known as the Kaliwa (Laiban) Dam project.

Without this new fresh water source, the Mega Manila area will continue to endure water supply shortages during the dry months.

The metropolitan area is 98 percent dependent on water supplied from the ancient Angat Dam. That structure, and the small watershed around it, simply cannot deliver the water a booming metropolis needs.

It is not only that the population of the Mega Manila area continues to grow despite the congestion. Improving prosperity in the area also means that per capita water consumption will increase in the coming years. Water shortages will only become more severe unless a new water source is developed.

The only possible source of fresh water supply for the metropolitan area is the Kaliwa River in nearby Quezon Province. To obtain the fresh water that passes through this river draining into the Pacific Ocean, we have to build a dam (or a complex of water impounding structures) and then divert water flow toward the city.

This might sound simple enough. But the New Centennial Water Supply Project has been delayed for years by every imaginable problem: debate over the correct engineering solution to achieve the water diversion, the financing of the undertaking, the ecological soundness of the project and the potential dislocation of an indigenous community inhabiting the area to be flooded by the dam.

Had this project been completed according to its original schedule, which is two decades ago, we might have been spared the long bouts of water shortages that become all the more severe during El Nino years. With all the effects associated with climate change, the water shortage can only become more severe.

The good news is that China has offered official development assistance amounting to \$211 million to see through the Kaliwa River project. But that represents only about 60 percent of total project costs, less if the costs inflate due to delays.

With this financing channel available, government abandoned the old public-private partnership format in favor of building the dam as a straight out public works endeavor. Continuing with the old format will probably delay this project by at least a decade more.

Accepting Chinese ODA, however, entails a Chinese company undertakes the project. The company will have to be chosen according to our own procurement rules. Those rules call for at least three qualified companies to participate in the bidding for the project.

This sets the stage for the bad news.



Irregular

The bidding was duly conducted. Three (Chinese) companies did participate. But the Commission on Audit (COA) does not find the bidding to be truly competitive, making the awarding of the contract irregular.

The COA sent its observations through an Audit Observation Memorandum (AOM) sent to the MWSS, the agency in charge of this project. In that AOM, the watchdog agency says state auditors “deduced that the two bidders/contractors were included merely to comply with the ‘at least three bidders requirement’ as stated under the Procurement Law.”

In more direct language, the state auditors are saying that the two losing bidders were brought in simply to create some semblance of competitive bidding. That was not the substance of the process by which the contract was eventually awarded.

The MWSS, it appears, did not give the AOM the attention it merits. It merrily went ahead with the project in contempt of the state auditors. That could turn out to be a costly mistake.

Recently, Manila Rep. Manny Lopez, chairman of the House committee on Metro Manila Development, called out the MWSS for trying to sweep under the rug what the COA deems to be an irregularity. He called on the water agency to properly address the serious procedural issues raised by the state auditors.

The COA observation could be a rallying point for a diverse range of interests critical of the project. These range from environmentalist groups and advocates for the indigenous communities, entities espousing an alternative engineering design for the project and corporations wanting a return to the old PPP format.

Unless the MWSS properly addresses the procedural issues raised by the state auditors, these issues could create a common ground for a diverse range of forces wanting the project scuttled. A project this large, this vital and this controversial requires great care on the part of the government agencies charged with executing it.

That care, apparently was not exercised.

Unless the procedural issues are cured, perhaps by way of rebidding the project, these issues could unleash political forces that could further delay or even destroy the entire undertaking. That is not an enticing prospect.

The dismissive attitude the MWSS has taken toward the audit observation amounts to a provocation. That will only magnify the concerns and allow an issue to be exploited by groups who are opposed to this project in any form.

Because it amounts to a provocation, it is irresponsible. It compromises the vital project or at least exposes it to unbearable delay while political forces come to play.

If enough agitation is enabled, the project might not happen. The metropolitan area will be vulnerable to long dry spells that will take a toll on our economic performance. People queuing up to pails of water will be as much a waste of productive time as people trapped in infernal traffic.

That is the bad news.



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NEWS BRIEFS

Manila Bay 'swimmable' by December?

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday invited Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante Jr. for a dip in Manila Bay by the end of December when the Bay's waters would have been in swimmable state. Cimatu made the remark during committee deliberations on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' proposed 2020 budget at the House of Representatives after Abante, a Manila representative, waxed nostalgic about how he spent his childhood swimming in the bay.—DJ YAP



LIBRENG LEGAL COUNSELING SA MGA NAKIISA SA PAGLINIS NG MGA ESTERO HANDOG NG DENR LEGAL TEAM

NAGBIGAY ng free legal counseling ang legal team ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa mga nakiisa sa cleanup drive ng mga estero at coastline sa Barangay Sipac Almacen sa Navotas City.

Sa ginanap na kick-off cleanup activity kumakailan, nagbigay ng free legal counseling ang mga abogado ng DENR Legal Affairs Service (LAS) sa mga residente ng barangay kapalit ng pakikibahagi ng mga ito sa ginawang paglilinis.

Ang Sipac Almacen, na siyang seat of government ng lungsod ng Navotas ay napaaligiran ng Manila Bay sa kanluran at ng highly polluted na Malabon-Navotas River sa silangan.

Ang paglilinis ng ilog ay nakatalaga sa mga Undersecretaries ng DENR na sina Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr. at Benny D. Antiporda at Assistant Secretary Jesus Moises Enrico B. Salazar.

Ayon kay LAS Director Norlito Eneran, upang makahikayat ng mga residenteng makikibahagi sa cleanup activity ay nagbigay sila ng free legal advice na may temang "Payo pang-legal ang alay ko, pag basura mo linisin mo."

"Ang mga nakilahok ay

binigyan ng tig-isang kupon (coupon) sa bawa't sako ng basura na naipon nila. Ang kupon ay may kapalit na libreng legal counseling," paliwanag ni Eneran.

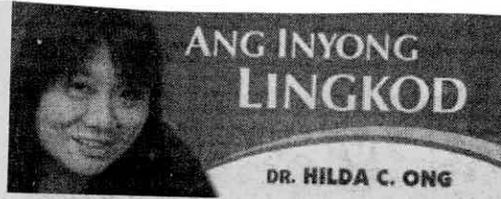
Bukod sa staff ng LAS, katuwang din ang Lawyers Guild Inc. ng DENR, Malabon-Navotas Chapter ng Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) at ang Public Attorneys' Office ng Quezon City sa pagbibigay ng free legal consultation sa lahat nakilahaok sa paglilinis.

Ang naturang cleanup drive ay binuo bilang bahagi ng "Battle for Manila Bay", na pinangungunahan ng inter-agency task force na pinamumunuan ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Ayon naman kay Adobo, hindi lamang ang gobyerno ang dapat na kumilos upang maibalik ang dating ganda at linis ng Manila Bay bagkus ay kailangan din ang tulong ng lahat ng sektor.

"Our agency will take the lead role in the Battle for Manila Bay, which Secretary Cimatu assessed, has to begin with the Battle for the Rivers and Esteros that drain into Manila Bay," sabi ni Adobo.

Pinuri naman ni Antiporda, na siya ring DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste



DR. HILDA C. ONG

Management and Local Government Units Concerns ang hakbang ni Eneran at ng mga tauhan nito sa LAS na nagbigay ng free legal counseling sa mga nakibahagi ng cleanup drive.

"I commend Director Eneran for initiating this activity," saad ni Antiporda. "I had availed the services of lawyers for legal problems, but I never imagined engaging lawyers to clean the garbage of Manila Bay."

Nanawagan naman si Salazar sa mga residenteng naninirahan sa paligid ng Malabon-Navotas river na makibahagi sa isinasagawang cleanup activity dahil sila rin ang makikinabang dito at ang iba pang stakeholders ng Ma-

nila Bay.

"We need to be responsible for our environment for the enjoyment of present and future generations," dagdag pa ni Salazar.

Ang bawat division ng LAS ay nakatalaga sa isang barangay sa Malabon-Navotas river system.

Mayroon ding kinatawan ang bawat division na siyang makikipag-ugnayan sa kanilang counterpart sa komunidad.

Nagsumite ang bawat grupo ng kani-kanilang plano para sa naturang river system tulad ng cleanup drive; information and education campaign; enforcement of environmental laws; at monitoring and evaluation.





Toxic waste nakatambak sa 7 district hospital sa Bulacan

KINALAMPAG ng Commission on Audit (COA) ang pamahalaang lokal ng Bulacan dahil sa mga nakatambak diumanong hazardous at infectious waste sa pitong district hospital ng lalawigan na isang paglabag sa batas.

Base sa 2018 Annual Audit Report ng COA, marami silang nakitang kakulangan sa waste management ng pitong district hospital kung saan higit isang taon nang nakatambak ang mga hazardous at infectious waste.

Kabilang sa pitong district hospital na tinukoy sa COA report ay ang Bulacan Medical Center, Rogaciono M. Mercado Memorial Hospital, Emilio G. Perez Memorial District Hospital, Baliuag District Hospital, San Miguel District Hospital, Calumpit District Hospital, at Gregorio Del Pilar District Hospital.

Sabi ng COA, dahil sa kabiguan ng pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Bulacan na resolbahin ang problema sa mga delikado at nakalalasang basura na nakatengga sa mga nabanggit na ospital ay nalalagay naman sa panganib ang kanilang mga pasyente, health worker at ang publiko sa pangkalahatan.

Sa isinagawa umanong imbestigasyon ng mga state auditor, nalaman na hindi regular na kinokolekta ang mga nabanggit na basura sa loob ng nakalipas na anim na buwan hanggang isang taon.

Tinukoy pa ng COA ang Bulacan Medical Center na gumawa na umano ng ilegal na dumping site dahil sa pagkaantala ng kumukuha sa kanilang mga basura.

"Inquiry revealed that as late as February, 2019, the permit of Cleanway, the Province's service provider on hauling of hospital wastes was still pending approval with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)," ayon sa COA report.

Ganito rin umano ang ini-report ng Rogaciono M. Mercado Memorial Hospital kung saan ang nakokolekta lang umano ng Cleanway sa tuwing pumupunta sa nasabing pagamutan ay nasa 30 hanggang 40 na drum lamang ng mga basura at marami pa ang naiiwan na nabubulok na.

Mahigit isang taon na rin umano na hindi pa nakokolekta ng Cleanway ang mga basura naman mula sa Baliuag District Hospital, San Miguel District Hospital, at Calumpit District Hospital. Sa Gregorio Del Pilar District Hospital naman ay pansamantalang itinambak ang mga basura sa balkonahe nito na nasa ikalawang palapag ng pagamutan.

Sabi ng COA, paglabag ang mga ganitong gawain sa Republic Act No. 8749 o Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999, RA 9003 o Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, at health manual ng Department of Health.

Noong 2017 ay sinita na rin ng COA ang pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Bulacan dahil inilipat nito ang responsibilidad sa solid waste management na mula sa Bulacan Environmental Natural Resources Office (BENRO) ay ibinigay sa General Services Office (GSO), isang departamento na naka-focus sa quarrying at revenue generation.

Nirekomenda ng COA kay Bulacan Governor Daniel Fernando na atasan ang BENRO para ipatupad ang maayos na waste management practices at pag-isipan ng GSO na kumuha ng bagong service provider para makolekta ang mga nakatambak na hazardous at infectious waste sa mga district hospital. (Yves Briones)



Health-care wastes big Manila Bay polluter

PROPER health-care waste management plays a vital role in the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay, an expert said.

Department of Health Environmental and Occupational Health Cluster head engineer Gerardo Mongol said health care facilities like clinics and hospitals contribute to the destruction of the bay and all the living organisms depending on it.

"Hindi lang (not just) households ang source of waste, pati rin ang (but also) health care facilities especially their liquid waste. And the major contributors are the Region 4-A provinces near the bay. In terms of population, it is big, because Cavite alone has a lot of informal settlers and they don't have sanitation facilities, and there are a number of hospitals in the region," Mogol said.

Cavite, Rizal, and Laguna were identified as the biggest contributors to health-care waste in Manila Bay.

Citing that the Supreme Court, through Department of Environment and Natural Resources-DoH Administrative Order 2005-2, has instruct-

ed DoH 4-A to report which hospitals comply with proper waste management, Mogol said it is deemed that many hospitals are unable to dispose of their health-care wastes properly.

"Hospitals in the region must be able to satisfy all the elements like waste generation, waste segregation and storage, collection and transport, treatment disposal and liquid waste management," he said.

In line with this, Mogol explained that secondary and tertiary health care facilities are expected to have their own sewerage treatment facilities that would handle their liquid wastes which can be chemicals, biological fluids, or a combination of both.

"Organic materials and other contaminants must be treated because the ecosystem has a carrying capacity, wherein it can no longer handle or treat heavy pollution load. The living creatures in the bay will be affected like the fish they can be contaminated with coliform and heavy metals and also people who are using the bay who are taking a bath there or doing some

recreational activities there," he said.

To address this issue, the DoH 4-A conducted three-day training for the local government units and hospitals in the region on liquid waste management, solid waste management, informal settler families and illegal structures, habitat and resources management, and institutional arrangement and governance.

"The good thing about this is that the hospitals will be enlightened since there's a protocol on how to dispose waste, but it's not clear with some as to how it is going to be from the patient to the nurses' station to storage and to where exactly the waste must be disposed. I think the lapses happen there," Non-Communicable Disease cluster head Dr. Espiritu said.

"Through this training and the technical, spread of infectious diseases especially if the ones disposed are infectious wastes like syringes, placenta, human waste," Espiritu added.

The training, which started on Tuesday until Thursday, also provided the participants updates on the Manila Bay monitoring tool.



DTI, DENR agree on stricter standards in steel industry

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have agreed to align their policies for stricter environmental standards and more modern and cleaner technology in steelmaking industry.

During a meeting between DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez and DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu early this week said this general policy is aimed to ensure manufacturers produce quality and safer steel products as well as encourage industries to be environment-friendly.

Specifically, both secretaries agreed to review existing environmental standards and production technologies used in steelmaking, considering reports that several used induction furnace facilities have been set up, which can be more pollutive and produce inconsistent quality and non-conforming steel products.

"What we need in the country are modern, environmentally friendly technologies that will consistently produce quality products," said Lopez.

It could be recalled that the Board of Investments (BOI), which is chaired by Lopez, has denied the application of Chinese firm Sanjia-Steel Corporation to invest P800 million for the production of reinforcing steel bars (rebars) using coreless electric furnace smelting technology because it will employ obsolete and pollution-causing technologies.

In its July 18, 2019 meeting, the BOI Board "resolved to deny Philippine Sanjia-Steel Corporation's application, taking into consideration the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources' (DENR) policy against induction furnaces with defective or substandard air pollution control technology."

BOI grants tax and fiscal incentives to projects, mostly catering to the domestic market. These incentives include a maximum of 8 years in income tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital equipment, tax deduction on expenses for training, among others.

China, which has the top three steelmakers in the list of the top six largest in the world, has phased out and eradicated induction furnaces in 2017 because of its pollutive process and inconsistent quality products manufactured.

"We do not want those used pollutive induction furnaces to transfer to our country," the trade chief added.

DTI is intensifying its campaign for safer and higher quality steel products; thus, it is reviewing its policies and regulations on this matter.

"This collaboration with DENR will help us in promoting industrial capacity-building with the use of advance technology in steel making while protecting our environment. This is also a testament that as we drive economic growth, we encourage responsible businesses in the country," said Lopez.

The DTI and the DENR are set to form a Technical Working Group (TWG) to align its policies and strategies in ensuring steelmaking facilities are compliant with environmental standards and product quality. The TWG will likewise review the compliance of steel producers with an online monitoring system linked to the DENR. (BCM)



PUNCHLINE

Duterte fires Faeldon, orders re-arrest of convicts; watersheds closely watched



By **FRED M. LOBO**

Meanwhile, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu warned against the exploration of watershed areas, especially for mining purposes.

It's strictly prohibited, he declared.

Cimatu said the watersheds of Surigao del Sur and Northern Mindanao are crucial not only as water resources but also as habitats of biodiversity and homelands of indigenous peoples.

"There should be no exploration and no application should be approved in Caraga region," and other similar areas, Cimatu added.

The DENR head pointed out that watersheds in Surigao del Sur are among the 140 watersheds nationwide that have been identified by the national convergence initiative for sustainable rural development as convergence sites.

"A lot of groups wanted to explore within the watershed area but I won't allow it. Let the watershed stay as it is," he said.

He said that covert mining operations have been uncovered in some watershed areas like Cantilan in Surigao del Sur and such activities will never be tolerated.

By all means, let us protect and save our watersheds from greed.



QC TO RENAME LA MESA ECO-PARK AFTER LATE GINA LOPEZ

QUEZON City Mayor Joy Belmonte threw her support to the City Council's initiative to rename the La Mesa Eco-Park after the late environmentalist/philanthropist Gina Lopez, who passed away on Aug. 19 at 65.

"Suportado natin ang mga pagkilos ng ating konseho na ipangalan ang La Mesa Eco-Park sa namayapang si Gina Lopez. Her legacy deserves to live on in that park."

Two Quezon City councilors – Winnie Castelo and Candy Medina -- have filed separate resolutions seeking to rename La Mesa Dam Eco-Park to Gina Lopez Eco-Park.

"Her legacy lives on in the hearts of those who care for the welfare of Mother Nature. It is only fitting that she be memorialized where her legacy

continues," said Castelo, QC's ex-congressman.

According to Mayor Joy, she has already requested the Sangguniang Panlungsod to expedite the aforementioned resolutions amid calls from environmentalists to rename the Eco-Park after Lopez in honor of her legacy for the environment.

Lopez, chairperson of ABS-CBN's Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, established Bantay Kalikasan in 1999 as the foundations' environmental arm to aid relief to victims of natural calamities such as typhoons in the country.

Through "Bantay Kalikasan," Lopez championed the rehabilitation of the 2,700-hectare La Mesa Watershed and the development of the 32-hectare La Mesa Eco-Park,



Probe on QC Hall official's kin on extortion set

Mayor Joy has promised to conduct a thorough probe into the entrapment operation that led to the arrest of a relative of a local government official caught in the act of receiving a bribe within the city hall's premises.

"Kahit na ang umano'y extortionist ay hindi naman empleyado kundi kamag-anak lang ng kawani ng city hall, pina-iimbestigahan ko pa rin ang nangyari dahil sa city hall niya umano tinanggap ang pera. Alam naman natin dito sa Quezon City, walang puwang ang korapsyon at panlalamang sa

kapwa."

She was informed that the brother-in-law (Enrico Morillo) of Architect Pedro Rodriguez Jr., head of the City Planning Office, was arrested by the National Bureau of Investigation while allegedly receiving P175,000 bribe money from an establishment, as amicable settlement in exchange for the dropping of the complaint regarding the existence of cockroach in his food.

At the same time, she called on food establishments in the city to be vigilant against syndicates preying on restaurants and food shops for huge sums of money.



Gina Lopez Ecopark sinulong sa QC

SINUPORTAHAN ni Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte ang inisyatiba ng konseho ng lungsod upang palitan ang pangalan ng La Mesa Ecopark at isunod ito sa pangalan ng yumaong environmentalist-philanthropist na si Gina Lopez.

Dalawang konsehal ng Quezon City, sina Winston Castelo at Candy Medina, ang nagsampa ng magkahiwalay na resolusyon para ipangalan kay Lopez ang nabanggit na ecopark.

Ayon kay Belmonte, hiniling na niya sa Quezon City Council, na pina-mumunuan ni Vice Mayor Gian Sotto, upang mapabilis ang nabanggit na mga resolusyon sa gitna ng mga panawagan

ng ilang environmentalist na pangalan ang ecopark para kay Lopez bilang pagbibigay karangalan sa pamanang ibinigay nito para sa kapaligiran.

Si Lopez, tagapangulo ng Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation ng ABS-CBN, ay nagtatag ng Bantay Kalikasan noong 1999 bilang sandigan ng kapaligiran ng mga pundasyon upang makatulong sa mga biktima ng mga kalamidad tulad ng bagyo sa bansa.

Sa pamamagitan ng Bantay Kalikasan, si Lopez ay nagwagi sa rehabilitasyon ng 2,700-ektaryang La Mesa Watershed at pagbuo ng 32-ektaryang La Mesa Ecopark. **(Riz Dominguez)**

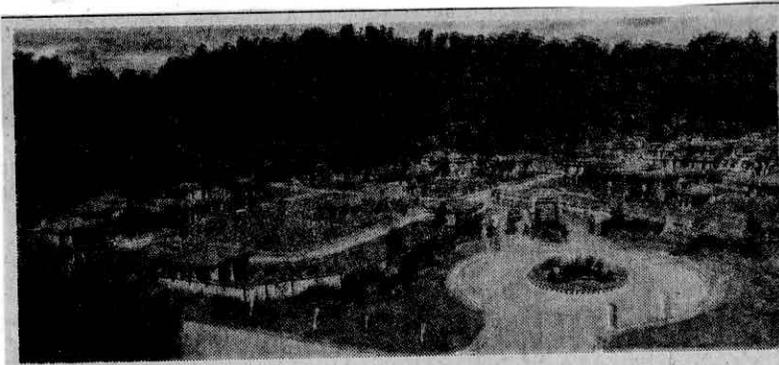


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RAINFOREST HAVEN. Pueblo de Oro Development Corporation (PDO) recently inked an agreement with the ICCP Group Foundation, Inc., the Bukidnon local government, and the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) to build and manage the first urban rainforest in the Philippines, at Cagayan de Oro. Pueblo de Oro kicked off its preservation efforts by planting endemic plant seedlings, or "wildlings", sourced from the rainforests of Mt. Kitanglad and other nearby mountains in Bukidnon, at its 400-hectare township project. The urban rainforest is a 40-hectare area in the heart of Cagayan de Oro's growth area, abundant with different plants animals. There are at least 20 species of birds that can be found within the township. They have been seen taking flight over the combination of grasslands and woodlands in the area, including different breeds of kingfishers and grass owls. More recently, PDO employees were joined by the archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, represented by members of the Laudato Si and Faith and Light communities, parishioners from the St. Francis Xavier chaplaincy, all of whom who heeded Pope Francis' call to "care for our common home".



Eastern Samar forms task force vs ASF

The order bans the entry of live animals without the complete and original documents

By Elmer Recuerdo

BORONGAN CITY, Eastern Samar — Gov. Ben Evardone signed an executive order last Tuesday creating a provincial Inter-Agency Contingency African Swine Fever (ASF) Task Force to prevent the possible entry of the disease in the province.

The order bans the entry of live animals without the complete and original documents including veterinary shipping permit, veterinary health certificate, and documents needed in the transport of livestock.

Shipment lacking the required

documents shall be directed to return to their point of origin.

The governor also ordered vendors of pork and pork-related products to secure a certificate of meat inspection from the National Meat Inspection Service.

Quarantine checkpoints will be put up in key point of entries to the province, in the towns of Lawaan, Guiuan, Taft, Oras and Arteche to ensure that the entry of live swine and pork products are monitored.

These checkpoints will be manned by the Office of the Municipal Agricultural Service personnel, Philippine National Police, and barangay tanods of their respective local government units.

The Provincial Inter-Agency Contingency ASF Task Force is composed

of the Provincial Governor's Office, Provincial Veterinary Office, Provincial Health Office, Department of the Interior and Local Government (Philippine National Police), Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office.



Brahminy kites released back to wilds

LAVEZARES, Northern Samar – Three brahminy kites, that were earlier thought to be eagles, were released back to the wilds in a farm in this town.

The kites were bought by former Mayor Quintin Saludaga and saved from possible execution from a local *bangus* farmer who captured the birds in traps to prevent them from preying on his *bangus* (milkfish) fingerlings.

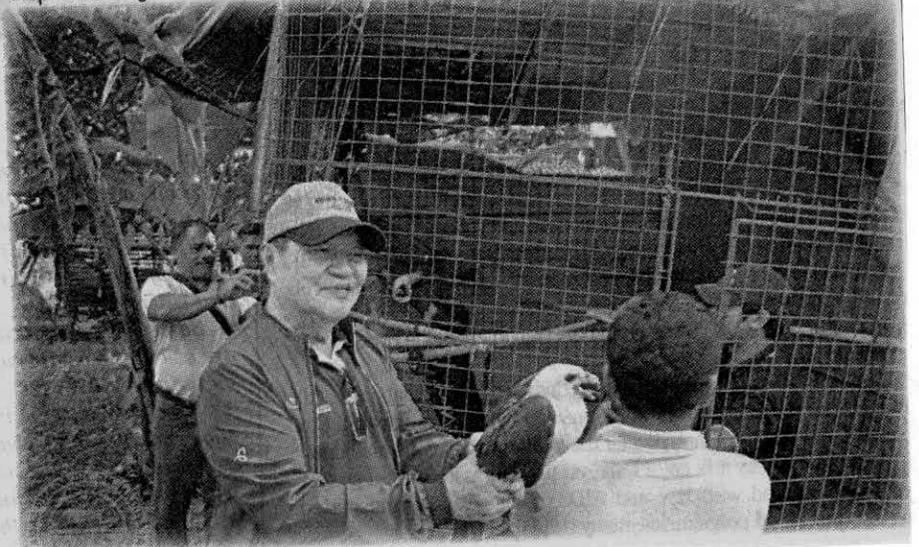
PENRO Supervising Ecosystem Management Specialist Nestor Collamar identified the birds of prey as kites, which belongs to the same family as eagles but are comparably smaller in size and weighing less.

Locally known as 'banog,' the Brahminy Kite is a medium-sized raptor with a white head and breast. The rest of its body is a striking chestnut brown but the very tip of its tail is white. The wings are broad with dark 'fingered' and its tail is short.

The Brahminy Kite feeds on dead animals, insects and fish. It swoops low over water, the ground or tree tops and snatches live prey from the surface. It also steals from fish-hunting birds, snatching prey in flight.

Governor Edwin Ongchuan, former congressman Emil Ong and Saludaga released back into the wild three Brahminy Kites in his private farm in this town. **Elmer Recuerdo**

Free again Three Brahminy Kites were released back to the wilds by former Northern Samar Rep. Emil Ong. ELMER RECUERDO





Haribon seeks measures to prevent grass fires

HARIBON Foundation is pushing for measures to prevent a repeat of the grass fires that scorched the Forests for Life Movement's (FFL) restoration sites in parts of Laguna and Rizal provinces.

The grass fires occurred in the last week of April and affected FFL's project sites in Mounts Banahaw-San Cristobal Protected Landscape in Barangay Bukal, Nagcarlan; Barangay San Cristobal, San Pablo, Laguna; and in the Yes City in the lands owned by the Rizal government in Barangay San Andres, Tanay, Rizal. The grass fires destroyed more than 22,000 native trees covering a total of 17 hectares.

"The open and denuded areas were reforested from 2015 to 2018 with the support of numerous partners and volunteers from the corporate sector, local and national government agencies, people's organizations and concerned individ-

uals. These incidents pose an urgent challenge and opportunity to equip stakeholders with appropriate strategies to help prevent and combat forest and grass fires," Haribon said in a statement.

Haribon said it needs the full support of the government, particularly the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through its Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), protected area superintendents, Multi-Sectoral Forest Protection Committees, *bantay gubats* (forest guards) and Deputy Environment and Natural Resources Officers.

It also pushed for the continued implementation of the Forest Protection and Law Enforcement Plan and Community-Based Forest Protection Strategy, and asked for the support of the Department of the Interior and Local Government through the Local Government

Units, Bureau of Fire Protection, and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council through its Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices.

"Haribon is currently working with concerned government agencies and potential funders to assist local partners on livelihood in order to support site rehabilitation, the establishment of sufficient fire lines, and to implement other projects such as rainwater catchment areas. A multi-stakeholder approach and government-supported initiatives are crucial to prevent these incidents from recurring," the organization said.

The DENR, through its Mounts Banahaw-San Cristobal Protected Landscape-Protected Area Management Board, investigated the case and identified three individuals as the source of the fires through slash-and-

burn farming or "kaingin". Haribon said three individuals will be made liable based on Republic Act (RA) 9847, or the act establishing Mounts Banahaw and San Cristobal in the provinces of Laguna and Quezon as a protected area, created pursuant to RA 7586, also known as the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act.

"The PAMB shall also release an agreement to be signed by the offenders, local government units, DENR and Haribon, requiring the identified offenders to helping replant the burned sites," the group said.

"The Haribon Team expresses its appreciation for the continued support of donors for the Forests for Life Movement and our Adopt-a-Seedling campaign as we appeal for everyone's understanding, in spite of these challenges, as we work together to bring back our forests," Haribon added.

THE TIMES

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Promoting 'climate crisis': New message strategy of climate alarmists

First word

SPREADING the word about human-caused global warming and scaring the world with climate catastrophe used to be enough messaging insofar as the climate alarmists, including the United Nations (UN), were concerned.

This month, with the forthcoming UN climate action summit in New York coming up on September 23, the climate alarmists have realized that their message strategy is not enough. They have to turn the messaging up a notch.

They have decided to highlight "climate crisis" as the principal message and theme in their propaganda. And they have picked the media as a special sector of concern.

The *Columbia Journalism Review* (CJR) started things rolling last April when it launched Covering Climate Now, a project to strengthen media's focus on climate change. Last week, CJR said 170 US and international news outlets have signed on with Covering Climate Now.

Media organizations joining the initiative agreed to run "a week's worth of climate coverage in the lead-up to the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York on September 23," according to CJR.



OBSERVER

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Seven-hour CNN marathon

Evidently, more have joined the initiative.

According to the *Washington Times*, CNN is one of nearly 200 news outlets that have vowed to increase their coverage of the "climate crisis."

On Wednesday, September 4, CNN aired an "unprecedented prime-time event on the climate crisis," a seven-hour marathon featuring 10 of the 2020 Democratic presidential primary candidates, who took questions early on from activists and climate-woke audience members, with nary a skeptic in sight.

"We have 11 years to avoid the catastrophic consequences of this crisis. Food shortages. Rising sea levels. More extreme weather events like Hurricane Dorian," said CNN host Wolf Blitzer at the town hall.

The CNN marathon proved to be a ratings flop, however. According to Nielsen, CNN came out a poor third to Fox News and MSNBC.

The 10 democratic candidates could not agree in their views of the climate problem.

Fault lines opened on issues like the future of fossil fuels, fracking, nuclear energy and the Senate filibuster, suggesting a debate on these differences should be at the forefront of the nomination process, not relegated to a sidebar.

On fracking, Senators Bernie Sanders and Kamala Harris called for total bans on the natural gas extraction process, while former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Amy Klobuchar made vague promises to review the safety of existing wells.

The back-to-back forums, which went on until midnight, highlighted the complexity of overhauling the entire global economy and added heft to activists' calls for a full-on debate on the climate crisis.

The forum came less than two weeks after the Democratic National Committee rejected party activists' efforts to get an official, sanctioned climate debate. Some suspect that party leaders' reluctance to have a debate is because they fear candidates' differences on issues like fracking might expose fissures that undermine the goal of defeating President Donald Trump, particularly in gas-rich battleground states like Pennsylvania.

Concerns about media objectivity

The "climate crisis" initiative has provoked serious criticism, principally this:

"Placing more emphasis on climate reporting is one thing, but by embracing the 'climate crisis' label pushed by global-warming activists, critics worry that the media outlets have taken sides on a complex, contentious issue, abandoning any pretense of balanced or neutral coverage."

Jim Lakely, spokesman of the Heartland Institute, declared in a statement:

"The fact that the *Columbia Journalism Review* has joined forces with far-leftist publications *The Guardian* and *The Nation* to propagandize a phony climate panic tells you all you need to know about the sad and hopelessly biased state of legacy media outlets today."

Kelly McBride, senior vice president at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, defended the project as well as the "climate crisis" tag, saying "a majority of scientists would say it's a crisis."

"I think a lot of journalists have shifted from viewing the climate issue as one that is disputed to one that is affecting different communities in different ways," she said. "So,

► ObserverA5



Promoting climate crisis: New message strategy of climate Alarmists

rather than reporting on whether climate change is happening, they are reporting on the actual impact."

All reputable climate scientists, even those dismissed as "deniers," believe that the rise in atmospheric carbon-dioxide levels, driven by human-caused emissions, has had an impact on the earth's climate, but that's a far cry from declaring the planet is in crisis.

Roy Spencer, a University of Alabama in Huntsville climate scientist formerly with NASA, has called the "crisis" label a "gross exaggeration."

"To use a term like 'crisis' when discussing climate change is a gross exaggeration, especially for journalists," said Mr. Spencer, author of *Inevitable Disaster: Why Hurricanes Can't Be Blamed on Global Warming*. "There is no aspect of climate change which is of 'crisis' proportions."

Reframing coverage of climate change

CJR's Covering Climate Now aims at "reframing the way journalists cover climate change" at a time when "civilization is accelerating toward disaster."

"The media are complacent while the world burns," declared CJR in an April 22 headline accompanied by a wildfire photo.

NASA, however, found that the area burned by global wildfires dropped by 25 percent from 2003-2019, raising the question: What happens to stories that run counter to the "climate crisis" narrative, already under-reported by mainstream media outlets?

Climate skeptic Marc Morano, who runs the Climate Depot website, called the journalism initiative "totally unnecessary," given that the media are "already doing the most crappy reporting they could possibly do."

"This latest attempt basically says, 'Keep up more of the same crappy reporting,'" said Mr. Morano. "No dissent. No debate. Let's promote the UN line, let's promote the UN claims, let's promote the idea that the government can control the climate."

Tim Graham, vice president for media analysis at the conservative Media Research Center, accused the news industry of attempting to snuff debate on climate science and policy.

"The media elites are not only goaded by the Left to see climate change as the overriding story of our lives, but

they are goaded to make sure democracy dies in darkness," said Mr. Graham.

Discouraging a 'both sides' approach

CJR's Emily Tamkin actually discouraged CNN from adopting a "both sides" approach to the climate story, saying "the moderators should operate on the assumption that the climate is in crisis and that this needs to be addressed."

Covering Climate Now comes after years of environmental groups urging media outlets to devote more coverage to climate change, a campaign that drew headlines after MSNBC's Chris Hayes tweeted in July 2018 that climate was "a palpable ratings killer."

Liberal foundations have been eager to fund climate journalism. The CJR initiative reported receiving \$1 million from Bill Moyers, president of the left-tilting Schumann Media Center, which also funds The Nation Institute and Democracy Now, according to InfluenceWatch.

The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, which publishes CJR, has come under scrutiny in recent years for its Energy and Environmental Reporting Project, which is funded in part by Democratic mega donor George Soros' Open Society Foundations and several Rockefeller charities, known for their climate advocacy.

The industry group Energy in Depth accused Columbia of "paid-for journalism" over the project's 2017 article in the *Los Angeles Times* blaming the Exxon Valdez spill on climate change. Two years earlier, an "Exxon Knew" article failed to disclose the project's funders, which the *Times* later added.

The *Times* said that the reporting was not influenced by its funders, although Rockefeller Family Fund president Lew Wasserman said in 2016 that "we paid a team of independent reporters" from Columbia "to try to determine what Exxon and other US oil companies had really known about climate science, and when."

The questions being raised about media objectivity in the face of calls for 'climate crisis journalism' are serious.

They test how seriously or how lightly a media organization takes its responsibility and its mission in society.

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Government's efforts in contributing to the 1.5°C climate goal

Second of two parts

(Presentation delivered at Our City 2030: Youth Visions and Solutions, a youth forum co-organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines and Plan International Philippines.)



ALL ABOUT
CHOICES

LUDWIG O.
FEDERIGAN

Climate Change Commission in action

THE Climate Change Commission (CCC) has been a visionary and bold leader in climate risk governance. Undoubtedly, it can even be bolder if it asserts its authority and mandate under the law. It can even be stronger as a science-based agency if its panel of experts will be fully engaged in the delivery of its work.

The CCC has led the framing and drawing of the national plan for climate action, which it is now updating and complementing with our Nationality Determined Contributions (NDC). The body has worked hard to breathe life to the law that created it as well as the amendatory law that created and lodged the People's Survival Fund in the commission.

It has also led in exploring new ways of thinking and doing in order to build the capacity and the climate resilience of our local communities. It has been piloting in the countryside a number of innovative and transformative ideas in their unrelenting search for sustainable solutions to the persistent problem of risk.

As early as 2015, it conceived the idea of the Philippine Climate Change Resilience Center, the South-South Center of Excellence for Climate Information Services. It continues to pursue this exciting idea.

And with the adoption of the various global frameworks of action in the same year, the CCC, pursuant to its mandate, initiated the convergence of key agencies and stakeholders to rollout the Communities for Resilience (CORE) initiative that has endeavored to set standards and systems for capacity building, risk financing, and education on climate change.

The CCC has been working closely with key government agencies and development partners in adopting standard modules for promulgating concepts and methodologies for risk assessment, greenhouse gases inventory, enhancing local plans with ecosystems-based adaptation and mitigation framework, to be quality assured against a set of standards soon to be adopted jointly with the Department of the Interior and Local Government. These are among the dozen standard CORE modules it continues to develop.

And for the delivery of trainings to the local government units, the CCC has been engaging with the academe, with higher education institutions, as implementing partners.

Just last week, the CCC relaunched its CORE Enhanced Local Climate Change Action Plan Training in Region 8, the ground zero for super typhoon "Yolanda," to further strengthen its resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change. This endeavor paved way for the signing of the CORE Resolve.

Local chief executives in the Yolanda corridor resolved to strengthen cooperation between and among the national and local governments and the science and academic community on mainstreaming climate change adaptation and mitigation in local development planning.

They also pledged to promote community-led climate change adaptation practices through peer-to-peer learning ex-

changes to accelerate and scale up climate resilience-building efforts at the local community level throughout the country.

In line with the ask of the Republic Act 9729, the local chief executives also vowed to enhance their Local Climate Change Action Plans to become science-based and risk-informed, more responsive to the prevailing and emerging needs of our local communities for climate change adaptation and mitigation, relevant to the pursuit of climate-resilient and low carbon investments.

The CCC is also in constant interaction with finance and banking institutions and professionals on risk insurance, risk transfer and mobilizing climate finance.

The CCC has been advocating and articulating convergence, linking and integrating the post-2015 global frameworks way ahead of anyone else in the country as well as in the international community.

As the country's climate policy landscape continues to change, the CCC is always quick to rise to the challenge — such is the case with the implementation of Green Jobs Law, the social preparation and sectoral action planning for the NDC, the alignment of our national plans with the 1.5 degrees Celsius climate goal, and many other revolutionary work for transforming our industries and sectors in this era of climate change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The CCC has done so much, but much remains to be done.

Closing

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing, allow me to affirm the importance of this forum and its theme.

As youth leaders emerge in these trying times, "solution revolution" should inspire our young people in heeding the global clamor for action in this era of climate change.



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Government's efforts in contributing to the 1.5 °C
climate goal

To all our youth present here today, we fervently hope that you will join and help the CCC in making a difference sooner than later in strengthening the climate resilience of our communities.

All these policies and capacity building initiatives I have mentioned will be nothing without your full support and cooperation.

Do know that I am excited to hear you and learn from you? Through this event, may we renew and strengthen our collective resolve to act and to foster more meaningful convergence like this among all sectors for a safer, greener and more secure future for the Filipino nation.

Thank you and Mabuhay."

The author is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum. He completed his climate change and development course at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (the United States). He will be one of the speakers for the annual student leadership training for Sultan Kudarat State University on September 8 and the Philippine Association of Campus Student Advisers National Capital Region (Metro Manila) Mid-Year Convention on September 14. He can be emailed at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com.