

DATE : 19 AUG 2019

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**DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

**Strategic Communication and Initiative Service**



DENR-PRIVATE SECTOR PROJECT

# POLLUTED SAN JUAN RIVER TO UNDERGO REHAB

By **Jhesset O. Enano**  
@JhessetEnanoINQ

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has entered into a partnership with the Aboitiz Group to spearhead the rehabilitation of San Juan River, earlier identified as one of the most polluted waterways in Metro Manila.

Under a memorandum of agreement signed on Friday, the private company will help clean up the 11-kilometer tributary within three years

through activities to be implemented by the Aboitiz Foundation Inc., its social development arm.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the partnership was part of the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay, that the river, which runs from Quezon City to the cities of San Juan, Manila and Mandaluyong, eventually drains into.

The goal, he said, was to lower the pollution levels in San Juan River through dredging and cleanup activities. Other compo-

nents of the rehabilitation plan included "social preparation and mobilization" with concerned local government units and regular water quality monitoring in selected areas of the river.

Aboitiz will fund the cleanup and provide the necessary equipment and materials for the project.

The DENR has also teamed up with other private companies to clean up Manila Bay and its tributaries, mostly under the "Adopt-an-Estero" program. INQ



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION INITIATIVES SERVICE

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## DENR partners with Aboitiz to rehabilitate San Juan River

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has partnered with the Aboitiz Group for the rehabilitation of the San Juan River, one of Metro Manila's main river systems and a major tributary

of Pasig River.

San Juan River, which runs from Quezon City to the cities of San Juan, Mandaluyong, and Manila, is considered as one of the most polluted waterways in the metropolis.

DENR, represented by Secretary Roy Cimatu, has

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## DENR partners... ◀1

signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Aboitiz Equity, Ventures, Inc. (AEVI) and the Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (AFI) for the development and implementation of the San Juan River Rehabilitation Plan.

The MOA aims to lower the pollution levels in San Juan River, which drains into the Manila Bay, through dredging and cleanup activities.

Aside from Cimatu, other signatories to the MOA were AEVI President and CEO Erramon Aboitiz and AFI trustee Sabin Aboitiz.

Last year, DENR also entered into an agreement with the Aboitiz group for the rehabilitation and development of the one-hectare Wetland 4 in Boracay, transforming it into a linear urban park for a period of three years.

The rehabilitation of the 11-kilometer San Juan River will run for three years and will be renewable for another year. It will be implemented by AFI, the social development arm of the Aboitiz Group.

The plan will have at least three

components: Social preparation and mobilization involving concerned local government units; dredging and cleanup; and regular water quality monitoring activities on selected points of the river identified by the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau.

Under the agreement, AEVI pledged to fund the rehabilitation and cleanup of the river and provide the equipment and materials needed for the undertaking. (Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)



# Aboitiz, DENR team up for San Juan River cleanup

## The river's cleanup is part of the larger Manila Bay Rehabilitation plan

The Aboitiz Group, its parent firm Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEV) and its corporate social responsibility arm Aboitiz Foundation, is partnering once again with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to help rehabilitate the San Juan River.

The San Juan River, a Pasig River tributary, spans nearly 11 kilometers from Quezon City to Manila, and considered by DENR as Metro Manila's most polluted waterway. At present, the river's water quality is considered poor, with fecal coliform (human or animal waste) and biochemical oxygen demand (organic strength of wastes in water) exceeding acceptable levels, and with no measurable dissolved oxygen, making it unsuitable for fish and other aquatic organisms.

The river's cleanup is part of the larger Manila Bay Rehabilitation plan.

Through a Memorandum of Agreement signed in Quezon City on 16 August by DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu and AEV Chief Operating Officer Sabin M.

Aboitiz, the San Juan river rehabilitation will involve the development and implementation of a comprehensive program intended to reduce pollution in San Juan River through the cleanup, rehabilitation, conservation, and preservation of the river.

**The DENR continues to be our vital and constant partner in this agenda, enabling us to make a meaningful contribution to collective efforts amid environmental challenges.**

Optimistic on the DENR's partnership with Aboitiz, Cimatu said: "Today, we take a solid and resolute step towards winning the Battle for Manila Bay with the signing of a memorandum of agreement among the DENR, Aboitiz Equity Ventures, and the Aboitiz Foundation, for the sustainable

cleanup and rehabilitation of the San Juan River."

For the Aboitiz Group, its partnership with DENR aligns with its longstanding commitment to the environment.

"The Aboitiz Group is committed to building a sustainable enterprise that can be entrusted to future generations and, in the process, we desire to bring about positive change for all our stakeholders. With this fundamental idea, we uphold our Group Purpose and Brand Promise—to drive change for a better world by advancing business and communities," Aboitiz said.

Over the next three years various stakeholder engagement activities,



THE San Juan River, which flows down from Quezon City considered by the DENR as the most polluted waterway in Metro Manila.



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## Aboitiz, DENR team up for San Juan River Cleanup

education campaigns, livelihood programs, and cleanup activities will be conducted. Specific rehabilitation efforts to be undertaken include garbage removal and cleanup activities, silt removal, easement recovery and protection, and an overall sustainability program involving local chief executives, homeowners' associations, private partners, and other stakeholders.

"The DENR continues to be our vital and constant partner in this agenda, enabling us to make a meaningful contribution to collective efforts amid environmental challenges such as deforestation, biodiversity loss, and water quality, just to name a few," Aboitiz added.

The project will be implemented in accordance with the "San Juan River Rehabilitation Plan" which will subsequently be finalized by Aboitiz, the Aboitiz Foundation and DENR.

This is not the first time the Aboitiz Group has partnered with the DENR. On 5 June, designated World Environment Day, Aboitiz and DENR renewed its partnership to sustain ecological balance through the planting of nine million trees by end-2020.

In August last year, the Aboitiz also pledged its support for the ongoing Boracay Island rehabilitation by adopting and reviving the one-hectare Boracay Wetland 4.





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**IPINAKITA** ni Sabin Aboitiz (kanan), Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer ng Aboitiz Equity Venture, kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Sec. Roy Cimatu ang map ng kanilang nationwide environmental initiatives bilang suporta sa sustainability agenda ng DENR matapos ang paglagda sa memorandum of agreement (MOA) para sa rehabilitasyon ng San Juan River na idinaos sa DENR main office sa Quezon City. Ang San Juan River ay may habang halos 11 kilometers mula Quezon City hanggang Manila, at itinuturing na most polluted waterway sa Metro Manila.  
**(PNA photo by Ben Briones)**



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## DENR, Aboitiz group tulungan sa San Juan River rehabilitation

Makikipagtulungan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa Aboitiz Group, para sa rehabilitasyon ng San Juan River, isa sa mga main river system sa Metro Manila at major tributary ng Pasig River.

Ang San Juan River na dumadaloy mula sa Quezon City hanggang sa mga lungsod ng San Juan, Mandaluyong at Maynila, ay itinuturing na isa sa mga pinakamaruming tubig sa metropolis.

Kamakailan ay lumagda si DENR Sec. Roy A. Cimatu ng isang memorandum of agreement (MOA) sa Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEVI) at Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (AFI) para sa pagbuo at pagpapatupad ng San Juan River Rehabilitation Plan.

Layunin ng MOA na bawasan ang antas ng polusyon sa ilog ng San Juan, na dumadaloy sa Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng mga aktibidad ng dredging at paglilinis.

"Today, we take a solid and resolute step towards winning the Battle for Manila Bay with the signing of a [MOA] among the DENR, Aboitiz Equity Ventures and Aboitiz Foundation for the sustainable clean up and rehabilitation of San Juan River," ayon kay Cimatu.

Bukod kay Cimatu, ang iba pang mga lumagda ay ang pangulo ng AEVI at CEO na si Erramon Aboitiz at tagapangasiwa ng AFI na si Sabin Aboitiz.

Ang MOA signing ay naganap isang

taon matapos ang DENR at ang Aboitiz Group na magkasama para sa rehabilitasyon at pag-unlad ng one-hectare na Wetland 4 sa Boracay, na inayos sa loob ng tatlong taon.

Ang rehabilitasyon ng 11-kilometrong San Juan River ay tatakbo sa loob ng tatlong taon at mababago para sa isa pang taon. Ito ay ipatutupad ng AFI, ang social arm development ng Aboitiz Group.

Ang planong rehabilitasyon ay magkakaroon ng hindi bababa sa tatlong bahagi: social preparation at mobilization na kinabibilangan ng mga local government unit dredging at cleanup; at regular na mga aktibidad sa pagsu-baybay sa kalidad ng tubig sa mga napiling punong punto ng ilog na kinilala ng DENR's Environmental Management Bureau.

Sa ilalim ng kasunduan, popondohan ng AEVI ang rehabilitasyon at clean up ng mga ilog at magbigay ng mga kinakailangang kagamitan at materyales na kinakailangan para sa pagsasagawa.

Sa parte ng Sabin Aboitiz ang Aboitiz Group ay natuwala na pinagkatiwala sa kanila ang paglilinis sa San Juan River.

Sinabi niya na ang pinakabagong pakikipagtulungan ng DENR-Aboitiz Group "ay ang benchmark program na maaaring mai-replicate para sa iba pang mga tributaries ng Manila Bay."

**(Riz Dominguez)**



# Aboitiz EVI to help DENR clean San Juan River

**THE rehabilitation of San Juan River, one of Metro Manila's main river systems and a major tributary of Pasig River, will soon start with the partnership of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with a big private company for the**

**endeavor.**

The DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEVI) and the Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (AFI) for the development and implementation of the San Juan River Rehabilitation

Plan.

San Juan River, which runs from Quezon City to the cities of San Juan, Mandaluyong and Manila, is considered as one of the most polluted waterways in the metropolis.

Cimatu said the MoA aims to lower the pollu-

tion levels in San Juan River, which ultimately drains into the Manila Bay, through dredging and cleanup activities.

Aside from Cimatu, other signatories in the MoA are AEVI president and CEO Erramon Aboitiz and AFI trustee Sabin Aboitiz.

Cimatu said the signing took place a year after the DENR and the Aboitiz Group teamed up for the rehabilitation and development of the one-hectare Wetland 4 in Boracay, transforming it into a linear urban park for a period of three years.

**Cory Martinez**





## PAGLILINIS NG BANGKULASI RIVER KAILANGANG MATAPOS SA DISYEMBRE -CIMATU

IPINAG-UTOS ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na hanggang Disyembre ngayong taon na lamang ang kanyang ibinibigay na deadline para linisin ang Bangkulasi River sa Navotas City na isa sa maraming ilog na dumadaloy patungo sa Manila Bay.

"Cleaning up the Bangkulasi River, which is part of the Malabon-Navotas River System, is an essential part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program because the river system directly empties into the historic bay," ayon kay Cimatu.

Inatasan na rin ng dating Armed Forces chief ang grupo ng DENR na nakatalaga sa naturang river system na magpakita ng malaking pagbabago sa ilog hanggang Disyembre upang mabawasan ang fecal coliform level sa Manila Bay sa katapusan ng taon.

Ayon naman kay DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda, target ng grupo na mahadlangan ang pagpasok ng basura sa nasabing ilog bago ito

tuluyang linisin.

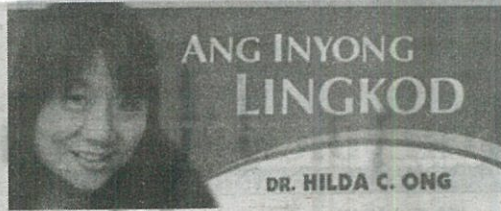
"We are planning to use some interventions to prevent wastes from coming back to the river," sabi ni Antiporda sa pakikipagpulong nito sa mga lokal na opisyal ng Navotas City noong Agosto 5.

Sinabi din ni Antiporda sa ginanap na pagpupulong na maglalabas ang DENR ng cease and desist orders laban sa mga establisyamentong hindi maayos ang sewage treatment plants o STPs.

Nilinaw ni Antiporda na ang kanilang ginagawa ay hindi panggigipit para masira ang ekonomiya ng syudad bagkus ito ay isang hakbang upang gisingin ang Navotas City upang ipaalala na sila ay isang modelong lungsod.

"The Inter-Agency Task Force will also be providing the businesses with technical assistance to help them come up with solutions on how to go about with their problems on STPs," dagdag pa nito.

Ayon pa kay Antiporda, kinakailangan lamang na ang mga negosyante sa Navotas City ay makipagtulungan sa mga service provider at magbigay ng kalutasan, kung kinakailangan, upang agad na



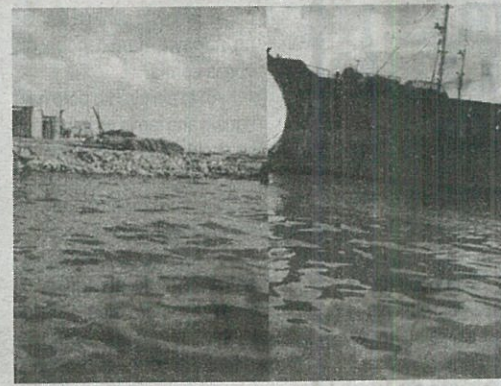
mabigyan ng solusyon ang kanilang problema. Sa gayon, hindi sila matutulad sa Boracay kung saan umabot ng buwan bago muling nakapagbukas ang mga establisimiyento dahil sa paglabag sa environmental laws.

"The DENR really means business when it comes to environmental protection. Once the DENR is able to effectively deliver its message, other establishments surrounding the area will take proactive steps to ensure they will not be affected by the issuance of cease and desist or-

ders," paliwanag pa ni Antiporda.

Aniya, maglalagay rin ng one-stop-shop para sa mga business owners sa Navotas City upang madali silang makapagpasa ng mga dokumento na kinakailangan ayon sa mga environmental laws.

Tutulung naman ang Environmental Management Bureau-National Capital Region Office at ang DENR North Field Office upang mapabilis ang pagproseso ng environmental permits ng mga negosyo sa Navotas City.





# DENR to LGUs: Set up landfills or face sanctions

**Cordillera execs say finding suitable areas for dumps hard**

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET— More than 30 local government units (LGUs) in the Cordillera were asked to fast-track efforts to put up waste disposal facilities or face sanctions for failure to comply with environmental law.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda last week warned officials of these towns against ignoring the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 9003) mandating local governments to shut down existing dumps and set up their sanitary landfills.

"We can suspend them (local officials), and realize this could be their worst dream," said Antiporda, who chairs the National Solid Waste Management Commission. He did not set a deadline for local officials to comply with the law.

## 10-year plan

Under RA 9003, local governments are required to submit their 10-year solid waste management plans (SWMPs).

Records from the Environmental Management Bureau in the Cordillera showed that only 44 of 77 towns in the region have SWMPs.

But forester Severino Balangcod said the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act (RA 7586) had prevented some towns in Benguet province from complying with RA 9003.

The towns of Bokod, Itogon



**SOLVING TRASH WOE** The closure of Irisan dump in Baguio City seven years ago has prompted the local government to look for solutions to its garbage problem, including a sanitary landfill and a waste-to-energy project. —KARLSTON LAPNITEN

and Kabayan have been declared protected areas under Proclamation No. 268 issued by former President Joseph Estrada in accordance with RA 7586.

Located southeast of the province, the three towns occupy the 77,561-hectare Upper Agno River basin resource reserve that traverses five other Benguet towns, two towns in Ifugao province and Kayapa town in Nueva Vizcaya province.

## Compliance

Converting protected areas into solid waste disposal facilities, such as engineered sanitary landfills, is prohibited under RA 7586.

Itogon Mayor Victorio Palangdan said they had been asking the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to exclude several areas identified as

potential areas for sanitary landfills but their proposal had been turned down by the agency.

In 2015, the Itogon town council passed a resolution urging the DENR to facilitate the exclusion of Barangay Tinongdan, Loacan, Gumatdang, Ampucaoc and Dalupirip as protected areas.

"We want to comply with the law, but it is another law that is hindering us," Palangdan said.

According to Ralph Pablo, DENR Cordillera director, excluding parts of the protected areas from the coverage of RA 7586 is possible as long as these areas do not affect bodies of water.

If there are no feasible areas, the affected towns can enter into an agreement with nearby towns that have solid waste disposal facilities, he said. —KARLSTON LAPNITEN INQ



## #nationataglance



BAGUIO CITY PIO/GPAT-OGAN

**ORGANIC** waste being converted into compost fertilizer at the former Irisan dump site.

CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION: BAGUIO CITY

### **P18M budget planned for Irisan eco-park development**

THE BAGUIO City government will be allocating P18 million to convert a portion of the former Irisan dumpsite into an eco-park by late 2020 or early 2021. Mayor Benjamin B. Magalong, in a statement last week, said the eco-park project would start after the ongoing processing of over 40,000 cubic meters of raw compost into fertilizer. Two Environmental Recycling System (ERS) machines are at the site for the compost production. City General Services officer Eugene Buyucan said the budget proposal for the eco-park will soon be submitted to the city council for review and approval. Mr. Magalong, earlier this month, also Mayor Benjamin Magalong called on residents and business owners to adopt their own backyard composting methods to lessen the city's biodegradable waste production. "Every business especially restaurants should have their own composting facility," the mayor said as he directed the General Services Office to disseminate information on simple composting methods that can be used by establishments.

## PRRC clears Baseco's 'dagat ng basura'

THE Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) finished clearing a "dagat ng basura" formed at Baseco — the confluence of Pasig River and Manila Bay — this weekend.

According to PRRC's river warriors, it took them 10 days, including weekends, to collect more than 30,000 kilograms of garbage.

"The horrifying sight of the 'dagat ng basura' formed at BASECO right after a massive cleanup operation at Parola proved that we also need to empower our communities to manage their wastes so they can also be a part of the solution in rehabilitating the Pasig River and Manila Bay," said PRRC Executive Director Jose Antonio Goitia.

Goitia called for the local govern-



ment units to supply their communities with enough segregated trash bins and to intensify their garbage collection to supplement their ecological solid waste management educational campaigns.

The PRRC thanked City of Manila Mayor Isko Moreno for helping transport the collected garbage to a sanitary landfill.



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# PH LOSING P50B YEARLY TO ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

SPECIAL REPORT BY JHESSET O. ENANO

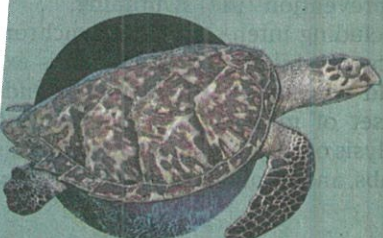
**In a country rich in fauna and flora, wildlife traffickers and illegal traders exploit poverty in communities and the rising demand for the rare to fuel an underground trade where losses go beyond monetary value.**

A12



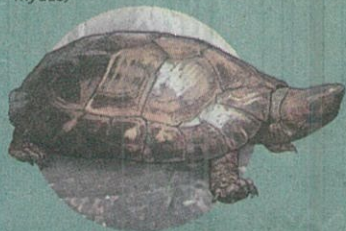
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**HAWKSBILL TURTLE**

• Five of 7 marine turtle species are found in the Philippines, including the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)



**PHILIPPINE POND TURTLE**

(*Siebenrockiella leytensis*)  
• Endemic in the Philippines  
• Classified as critically endangered under the IUCN Red List  
• Poached due to high demand and value in pet trade and as food



**PALAWAN PANGOLIN**

(*Manis culionensis*)  
Endemic in Palawan province. Classified as critically endangered through the issuance of a resolution of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development and vulnerable under an administrative order of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

**OTHER SPECIES ILLEGALLY TRADED IN THE PHILIPPINES**

Philippine slow loris (*Nycticebus menagensis*) found in Sulu archipelago andorneo, critically endangered

Philippine cockatoo (*Cacatua leucorhoa*) found in Palawan, critically endangered

Visayan Tarsier (*Haplorhina*) found in Panay and other offshore islands in Visayas, endangered

Philippine hanging parrot (*Loriculus philippensis*) found in various islands in the Philippines, endangered



**PALAWAN HILL MYNAH**  
(*Gracula religiosa palawanensis*)  
• Found in Palawan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi provinces  
• Classified as vulnerable under a DENR administrative order  
• Poached for local pet trade



**BLUE-NAPED PARROT**  
(*Tanygnathus lucionensis*)  
• Near endemic, but numerous in Palawan and Tawi-Tawi provinces; also found in islands in Indonesia and Malaysia  
• Poached for local pet trade



**MONITOR LIZARD**  
• Different species found in the Philippines, but critically endangered under DENR administrative order is Panay monitor lizard (*Varanus mabitang*), which is also classified as endangered under IUCN's Red List

**MULTIBILLION-PESO UNDERGROUND INDUSTRY**



26,743

NUMBER OF CONFISCATED WILDLIFE FROM ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS FROM 2013 TO 2018



228

APPREHENDED VIOLATORS OF THE WILDLIFE LAW FROM 2013 TO 2018



P184.9M

ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE OF SEIZED WILDLIFE FROM 2013 TO 2018



64%

OF CONFISCATED WILDLIFE FROM 2013 TO 2018 WERE REPTILES, OR 17,175 OUT OF 26,743



**SPECIAL REPORT**

# PH LOSING P50B YEARLY TO ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

**FROM A1**

By **Jhesset O. Enano**  
@JhessetEnanoINQ

(First of three parts)

When, early this year, the tip came that certain animals were to be smuggled into the country through southern Mindanao, Rogelio Demelletes Jr. was ready.

A wildlife law enforcer with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Demelletes immediately flew to Davao Oriental province, more than 1,500 kilometers south of Manila, to get the job done.

After all, this single piece of information was the fruit of painstaking monthslong surveillance and intelligence-gathering by tipsters and law enforcers.

And their effort was not wasted. In a forest at Barangay Dahican in Mati City, enforcers from the DENR and the National Bureau of Investigation arrested two men for illegal possession and sale of wildlife, after they sold a bird to an officer who had posed as a buyer.

The agents later discovered the targets of their operation crammed in crates and cages: some 450 animals, including different species of endangered birds, lizards and mammals that were poached from the jungles of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

The animals were worth P50 million in the local market, Demelletes said. In underground and black markets, that price could increase by as much as five times.

If the arrested men, who claimed to be mere caretakers, made even just a portion of the estimated price, it was still considerable profit worth the risk to their lives and freedom.

**Against poachers, time**

The Philippines, with its strategic location and rich flora and fauna, plays a complex role in the illegal trade in wildlife. Not only is it a source of endemic and endangered species, it is also increasingly becoming a destination for trafficked animals and their parts. The animals end up as pets, and their parts as food, ornaments or ingredients for traditional medicine.

Porous boundaries and largely understaffed enforcement units also make the Philippines an ideal transit point for wildlife stolen from neighboring Southeast Asian countries, or, as shown recently, from as far as Africa and Europe. The animals are shipped to other countries, including the United States, China and Japan, using the Philippines as a stopover.

It's a complicated picture, with the government playing catch-up to traffickers who are working faster and getting smarter.

"We are running against time," said Demelletes, who works with the task force known as the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade, or "Pogi."

"We cannot police the entire country. We lack manpower, resources, vehicles, assets, funds ... And we know we cannot do it alone," he said.

**No small venture**

Pogi's challenges are heightened by the crippling poverty that pushes communities to poaching for easy profit. It's a reality that pits the need for survival against the fate of animals and plants mistaken by many to be in infinite numbers in the wild.

Wildlife crime is considered the fourth most lucrative illegal business on the planet, after narcotics, human trafficking

and firearms, according to the World Bank's Global Wildlife Program.

In the Philippines, the trade is no small venture.

"We are losing \$1 billion—or P50 billion—every year due to the illegal wildlife trade," said Theresa Mundita Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity. As head of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) for nearly 15 years, Lim witnessed her fair share of confiscations and operations against wildlife traffickers.

Data from the DENR-BMB show that from 2013 to 2018, the value of confiscated wildlife reached P184.9 million—a figure based on the selling price in the market.

But this amount is largely conservative compared to the actual value of what the country is losing, particularly in terms of biodiversity, Lim said.

"These [amounts] often do not include the values of ecosystem services that these animals provide, especially if they become extinct," she said.

The Philippines is a biodiversity hot spot and is considered as a center of endemism, with a wide variety of wildlife found only here and nowhere else in the world. For instance, as many as 47 percent of terrestrial animals here are considered endemic, according to a

2016 assessment of the Biodiversity Conservation Society of the Philippines using data from the DENR and FishBase.

With nearly 110 million Filipinos depending on different ecosystems for food, shelter and livelihood, the collapse of even a single species can easily create a domino effect.

In 2011, for instance, it was reported that a surprisingly high demand for tokay gecko, locally known as "tuko," swept the country in the wake of false information that the reptile can cure asthma, tuberculosis and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or AIDS.

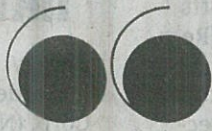
The massive hunt for tuko, although not classified as endangered, immediately drove its population down, Lim said.

She noted that the tuko craze coincided with the rise in the recorded cases of dengue, an illness caused by a virus carried by mosquitoes—insects that are part of the gecko's diet.

"Everything is interconnected," Lim said. "If we don't realize that now, it might be too late before we realize that some species have already been wiped out and human beings will soon follow suit."

**Decimated populations**

Widespread poaching in the past few years, as seen in official confiscation records, could



## It's easy to make a business out of the environment. You don't need capital; you just need a hunter or a gatherer

**Rogelio Demelletes Jr.**

Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Wildlife Law Enforcer

soon push vulnerable species, including those endemic to the country, further into extinction, experts said.

Between 2013 and 2018, authorities confiscated over 26,700 different animals from wildlife traffickers. The volume could mean the decimation of certain species, including those that have not yet been thoroughly studied. Topping the list are reptiles such as turtles, snakes and lizards, at a whopping 17,175 in just five years.

While some seizures came only in pairs, large-scale collections by poachers and traffickers were also evident.

In November 2013, authorities arrested two Malaysians on Mangsee Island in Balabac, Palawan province. They had with them more than 9,200 marine turtle eggs, two sacks of marine turtle meat, and three sacks of clam meat.

A year and a half later, a raid on a warehouse in Palawan yielded Philippine pond turtles that were to be shipped to China. Of the 4,402 turtles, classified as critically endangered, 322 were already dead.

"[Enforcers] need to move

faster," said wildlife lawyer Edward Lorenzo. "It's scary because the rate of extraction versus the rate of apprehensions may not match anymore."

### Driven by demand

Even with stiff regulations and stronger enforcement, poaching persists mainly due to the growing demand for the exotic and the rare. This demand, both in local and international markets, is fueled by desire, tradition, or misinformation, as seen in the tuko craze.

The more endangered the animal, the higher the price—and the bigger the demand from collectors and consumers.

Charismatic wildlife, such as birds and small reptiles, are often traded as pets. The Palawan hill mynah, which used to be sold openly in the streets, can fetch as much as P6,000 in the country.

Those poached from Indonesian forests and smuggled into the country, like sulphur-crested cockatoos, palm cockatoos and black-capped lorries, command even steeper prices.

Exotic animals, like monitor

lizards, are also a favorite among collectors and are sold for thousands of pesos each.

The high price tags for rare flora and fauna easily attract poachers and smugglers, many coming from poor communities where hunting methods have been passed down for generations.

"It's easy to make a business out of the environment. You don't need capital; you just need a hunter or a gatherer," Demelletes said.

Smuggling live animals in large batches, while easier to pull off, have forced traders to be more crafty.

According to enforcers, some handovers are now being done offshore, in open waters. When traveling inland, smugglers blare loud music from their vans to muffle the squawks and cries of live animals stowed in brutal conditions. Many die in transit due to stress, starvation and dehydration.

### Murdered for parts

Some animals are immediately slaughtered for their parts. Turtles and tortoises, for instance, are killed for their carapaces or shells that are used for ornaments. Their meat is considered a delicacy, especially in East Asia.

Traditional Chinese medicine has decimated populations of pangolins, considered the most trafficked mammal worldwide. Pangolin scales are believed to have healing properties, though this has not been scientifically proven.

In June, 10 Philippine pangolins taken from the forests of Palawan were rescued from three traffickers at a checkpoint in Tagaytay City. The carriers reportedly told authorities that they were going to sell the scaly mammals in Binondo, popularly known as Manila's Chinatown. Despite the rescue, the stress and starvation from the smuggling attempt killed seven pangolins.

According to Emerson Sy of the Philippine Center for Terrestrial and Aquatic Research, the influx of Chinese and South Korean nationals into the country since 2010 has led to the increased demand for pangolins, which can be ordered as an "off the menu" dish in some restaurants for P40,000.

Experts said curbing supply and demand would require herculean efforts from both the government and the public.

Stopping the illegal trade cannot depend on enforcement alone, Lim said.

"In some communities, even if they know there are stiff penalties, they will continue to illegally collect [the animals] because they don't have an alternative livelihood," she said. "So we need to address poverty, specifically in areas where we find the most species that are in demand." INQ

(To be continued)





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**CRAMMED IN CRATES AND CAGES** Endangered birds of different species are among some 450 animals poached from the jungles of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea that were rescued by agents of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the National Bureau of Investigation after being smuggled into the Philippines through southern Mindanao. —PHOTOS COURTESY OF DENR-BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT BUREAU



**RARE BIRD** A young cassowary usually found in the tropical forests of Papua New Guinea.



STRATEGIC  
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PHILIPPINE DAILY  
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS  
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**CURLED CAPTIVES** The 10 Philippine pangolins intercepted from three smugglers in Tagaytay City in June are curled up in fishnet bags when they were rescued by authorities.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Strategic Communication Initiatives Service

TYPE EXHIBIT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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# MANILA BULLETIN

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**RIVER CLEAN-UP** – An all-terrain vehicle or ATV hauls trash collected from the Guadalupe River in Cebu City as part of the city government's clean-up campaign. (Juan Carlo de Vela)



## 35 years of Asean Heritage Parks to be celebrated through a confab in Oct.

**T**HE Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) will hold the Sixth Asean Heritage Parks Conference from October 21 to 24 to discuss national and regional efforts in protected area management and to celebrate the milestones of the AHP Programme in its 35 years of existence.

Policy-makers, protected area managers, biodiversity experts, representatives from various international organizations, businesses, indigenous peoples and local communities, academia, and the youth will convene in Pakse, Champasak Province, Lao PDR.

The conference is organized by the ACB and the Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Lao PDR, with support from the European Union and the German Development Cooperation through the KfW.

With the theme "Sustainability and Innovation for Parks and People," the conference will facilitate the sharing of good and innovative protected area management practices and challenges being faced by the AHPs.

It will also serve as a venue for the AHPs to showcase their biodiversity-based products through the AHP6 Marketplace and Exhibits.

On the first day of the conference, an Asean-EU Policy Dialogue on Protected Areas and Wildlife will be held.

This aims to bring together members of the Asean Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity, Asean Working Group on Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and Wildlife Enforcement, the EU Delegations in Asean and other

development partners.

It will be spearheaded by the ACB and the EU as part of the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean Project.

Parallel sessions will focus on the following: accelerating progress on Aichi Biodiversity Target 11; species and wildlife conservation; innovative financing; business and biodiversity; women, youth and indigenous peoples and local communities; sustainable livelihood and biodiversity-based products; and ecosystem-based solutions.

The AHP Program is a flagship program of the Asean that was established to recognize national parks and nature reserves with outstanding wilderness and biodiversity values. It offers opportunities to strengthen regional connectivity and cooperation, as ecosystems and their services transcend national borders. The ACB serves as the secretariat of the AHP Programme.

"To date, there are 44 AHPs in the Asean region," said Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim, executive director of the ACB.

Lim said five protected areas from Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam were nominated to join the growing network of AHPs. They are Hat Chao Mai National Park and Mu Ko Libong Non-hunting Area (Thailand); Mu Ko Ang Thong National Park (Thailand); Lo Go-Xa Mat National Park (Vietnam); Ngoc Linh Nature Reserve (Vietnam); and Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary (Myanmar).

The AHPs are the best protected areas in the Asean region in terms of ecological completeness, biodiversity richness and conservation importance.



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## 5K tree seedlings planted at Ecija dam watershed area

**GENERAL TINIO, Nueva Ecija** — Some 5,000 narra and mahogany seedlings were planted on Friday at the watershed area of the P787-million Upper Tabuating Irrigation Project (UTIP) during the 8th leg of the launching of the "Three Million Trees in Five Years, Adopt A Mountain" program by the municipal government here.

Spearheaded by Mayor Isidro T. Pajarillaga, the massive tree-planting activity was held in partnership with the National Irrigation Administration-Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation Systems, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, other government agencies, the military, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

Pajarillaga said this united front to reforest a part of the town's Sierra Madre mountain range has already succeeded in plant-

ing over 40,000 seedlings during the first half of the program.

During last Friday's activity, at least 5,000 seedlings were planted by some 800 participants in the tree-planting event, he said.

Engr. Rosalinda B. Bote, NIA-UPRIIS department manager, said the event's highlight was the forging of a memorandum of agreement to plant three million trees within five years in line with the government's Sierra Madre Greening program and Mayor Pajarillaga's advocacy and plan to convert the area into a "Centennial Sanctuary Part 2," similar to a reforestation showcase project which he started in Bgy. Rio Chico, way back in 2004 when he first won as mayor.

Aside from Pajarillaga, among the signatories to the MOA were the respective heads and representatives of the NIA-UPRIIS, the DENR, the Rotary Clubs of Manila and

Makati, and the 7th Infantry Division.

With UPRIIS forging this MOA with the LGU, Engr. Jose Ariel G. Domingo, UPRIIS Division 3 manager said: "We basically adopted 'Institutionalized Tree Planting' or ITP (initials of the mayor) as an Agricultural Resolution to save Irrigation from Environmental Loom which stands for Ariel."

Domingo said it was the project's 8th tree-planting activity at the watershed area of the UTIP, which commenced last June 14. He said it was actually part of the agency's plan to green the Philippines the NIA way in accordance with the directives of NIA Administrator Ricardo R. Visaya, who was represented here by retired general Ralph Villanueva, a former 7th ID commander, now-assigned as NIA management and security consultant for Region 3, UPRIIS and the Balog-Balog project.

By **STEVE A. GOSUICO**



# Agricultural biodiversity as a way of life

STORY & PHOTOS BY

JONATHAN L. MAYUGA [@jonlmayuga](https://twitter.com/jonlmayuga)

**E**ARLY in the morning everyday, a loud familiar voice could be heard at a small village in General Trias, Cavite. On top of her voice, she calls out her regular customers who are eagerly waiting for her.

The voice belongs to Marilou Panganiban, 33, a vegetable vendor, who goes house-to-house in the half-developed village in Barangay Buenavista I.

Panganiban has been selling assorted vegetables in the last six years, targeting small villages in the barangay.

Sometimes, she would bring *okra* (ladies fingers) and *talong* (eggplant). One time, it was a bunch of *patola* (sponge gourd) and the last time, *pipino* (cucumber).

## Natural, nature-based food

WHAT makes this vegetable special? They are organically grown by village residents who opt to produce food their way—whether in a small farm or a backyard vegetable garden.

"There are a variety of vegetables to choose from. Just outside the village, my friend is growing *okra*. In another village, there are eggplants. I just buy and sell vegetables," Panganiban said.

Within the same village there is a farming family that owns more than a dozen carabaos.

Besides planting rice, vegetables or cash crops, like banana and cassava, Alonzo Reyes, 59, is a dairy farmer—producing at least a gallon of carabao milk every day, which he sells to health buffs and joggers passing by his small variety store, before the van of a dairy cooperative he leads as its chairman arrives to pick up the day's produce.

The cooperative packs the fresh carabao milk and sells them in the market and selected grocery stores in General Trias.

Inside the same village, teenagers passing by often take the opportunity to pick mushrooms, which are abundant during the rainy season.

"There are lots of mushrooms these days. But it is not easy to get them," Reyes said.

Along Governor Ferrer Road, vendors man makeshift stalls, selling assorted fruits and vegetables—from mangoes to guava, banana, and lately, santol.

Sometimes, an ambulant vendor selling mud crabs can be seen

comfortably sitting under a tree along the highway.

Whether they are fruits, vegetables, milk or mud crabs, although produced in small quantities, these natural and nature-based food help fill the country's food basket.

## Commercial production

BEFORE agriculture, people rely on natural and nature-based food, fruits and vegetables, including meat and dairy and eggs.

But because of the increasing demand for food brought about by the ever-growing number of mouths to feed, agriculture—or the process of producing food on a massive and the commercial-scale—was conceived.

While the traditional-food production practice paved the way for industrialization, it has also caused environmental degradation with the massive conversion of forest, coastal and marine areas, including lakes and other ecosystems.

The excessive use of agrochemicals, on the other hand, caused various environmental problems—soil and water pollution—further destroying sources of natural or nature-based food.

## Massive land conversion

WITH farming becoming unprofitable and farm lands becoming unproductive, more and more farms are targeted for land conversion for residential, commercial and industrial development.

"You can't blame the landowners for selling their lands. Capitalist interests always prevail," Reyes said in Filipino.

Reyes, who has been a farmer all his life, witnessed how vast tracts of agricultural lands, including irrigated lands, are turned into residential villages, commercial and industrial complexes, undermining agricultural productivity.

"There are irrigated lands here that were converted [to other uses] because the proponents have connections [with influential people]," he explained.

He said even barangay officials have learned the trade of land conversion, playing real-estate agents



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## Agricultural biodiversity as a way of life

and paving the way for land developers to do their thing.

Nonetheless, farming continues in their village. "Sometimes, I plant on a vacant property if the owner allows me. But it's now more for the family's consumption. We have a big family. I give whatever I produce to my brothers," he said.

### Agricultural biodiversity

NATURAL and nature-based food production can be considered part of the more encompassing agricultural biodiversity, or agrobiodiversity.

In the book, *Mainstreaming Agrobiodiversity in Sustainable Food Systems: Scientific Foundations for an Agrobiodiversity Index*, agricultural biodiversity is defined as the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms that are used directly or indirectly for food and agriculture, including crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries.

It comprises the diversity of genetic resources (varieties and breeds) and species used for food, fodder, fiber, fuel and pharmaceuticals.

Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim said the promotion of natural and nature-based food is part of the ACB's advocacy under the agrobiodiversity program in Southeast Asia, a region that helps feed the world's human population.

"An intact, well-protected biodiversity is a healthy, balanced natural ecosystem that can provide diverse, pesticide-free, natural and nature-based foods," Lim, a former director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

However, she said the environment has already been exposed to a lot of contaminants, such as harmful chemicals, invasive alien species, microtechnologies and "diminishing natural environment," coupled with the growing

population and increasing demand for food and feeds.

She said it is no longer practical to rely only on natural food and nature-based food these days.

"We also still need agri-food. The key element, however, that must be present in either natural or nature-based food and agri-food is sustainability. If the food is from the natural environment or nature-based, harvesting should still be done in such a way that you do not over-extract or create an imbalance in the natural ecosystem," Lim said.

She said people can produce their own food. However, harmful chemicals or overuse of fertilizers or feeds should be avoided, and proper waste management must be adopted.

"Other technologies that are more environment-friendly can also be adopted, such as integrated multi-trophic farming systems or closed-loop agriculture," she added.

### Cheaper, healthier food

ACCORDING to Lim, a biodiversity expert, the advantage of nature-based and natural foods is that it is cheaper and healthier if it was sourced from a healthy, natural ecosystem.

"Your only investment is protecting the habitat where it thrives and ensuring that you allow it to replenish itself and not harvest faster than it can reproduce or propagate. Natural foods also encourage diversity, and since it evolves with nature, it can contain the genes that make it resistant in its native environment," Lim said.

She said there's a need to complement agri-food with nature-based and natural foods.

"The diversity and nutrients that can be found in natural foods are very difficult, if not impossible to replicate. Technologies to approximate the characteristics of natural foods could be very expensive or may not be available at all. In particular, characteristics

that add value to protecting biodiversity and that contribute to human welfare as well. Natural foods are more accessible to indigenous peoples and local communities. For most indigenous peoples, these foods are an important part of their traditional diet and their cultural practices, as well," she explained.

Gia Glarino, Research and Communications officer and Public Health campaigner of the environmental group Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment, agreed.

Glarino said through e-mail that there is a notion that natural food and nature-based food are healthier than agricultural food, as natural foods have much more vitamins, antioxidants that provide nutrition for people, as opposed to agricultural food that contains harmful chemicals.

More than that, natural food preserves the environment and the biodiversity, Glarino said.

"Nonetheless, it is important to note that agriculture, particularly in the Philippines, remains mainly for importation and the profit motive, and not mainly for feeding the domestic population, especially the poor and the hungry," she said.

### Aided by science, technology

ACCORDING to Glarino, ideally, agriculture has the advantages of having science and technology to improve its products in terms of quality and quantity, and the capacity to study on how to balance its effects on our environment.

"Its improvement should be based on the needs of the population, and its nutrition should not degrade but rather enhanced," she said.

She explained that other countries have done studies and practices of better agricultural farming, such as organic farming and ecological agriculture methods, where there is no or minimal use of chemicals, and the management of



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## Agricultural bio diversity as a way of life

high-crop yield is naturally done.

Furthermore, she said there are researches on landscape-level scenarios where biodiversity is preserved, while food is still largely produced.

"Therefore, the current notion of natural food's advantages should be integrated to agricultural farming in order to respond to both preserving our environment and natural resources and producing enough nutritious food for the population," she said.

### Ancient food production

GLARINO said natural foods are still available in spite of large monocrop plantations around the globe.

"There are indigenous tribes who are wholly dependent on their ancestral lands, where they get their food, and no or minimal chemicals were used for growing their harvest," she pointed out.

However, she stressed that there are now studies and practices where organic farming methods are used for agricultural farming, where the improvement of food products are naturally done, citing, for example, the use of compost as fertilizer as opposed to chemical fertilizers.

"There are even farms that use different kinds of crops to keep a high biodiversity on a certain area. There are people who also produce organic food in their backyards, while there are also businesses that produce organic food to provide healthier and environment-friendly options to consumers," she elaborated.

### Subsistent micro-economy

ACCORDING to Glarino, for the longest time until now, natural and nature-based food is actually the subsistent micro-economies of indigenous and rural communities.

"A network of community-based cooperative farming across the world helps counter the unsustainable agrochemical industry that depletes the quality of soil and pollutes irrigation," she said.

However, there are serious threats to natural and nature-based food production systems.

"Threats to natural food would be the continuous destruction of our natural ecosystems. That would be the continuous construction of infrastructures, such as mining and monocrop plantation in our forests, reclamation in our bays and others," she ended.

For Panganiban and Reyes, whether on farms or just a backyard vegetable garden or just some vacant lot in an underdeveloped village, natural or nature-based food production is a way of life.



MARILOU PANGANIBAN shows the organically grown vegetables she is selling.

ALONZO REYES milks a carabao as his father feeds it with grass beside their house in Barangay Buenavista, General Trias, Cavite.







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# US govt weakens application of Endangered Species Act

**W**ASHINGTON—The Trump administration moved last week to weaken how it applies the 45-year-old Endangered Species Act, ordering changes that critics said will speed the loss of animals and plants at a time of record global extinctions.

The action, which expands the administration's rewrite of United States environmental laws, is the latest that targets protections, including for water, air and public lands.

Two states—California and Massachusetts, frequent foes of President Donald J. Trump's environmental rollbacks—promised lawsuits to try to block the changes in the law. So did some conservation groups.

Pushing back against the criticism, Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and other administration officials contend the changes, improve efficiency of oversight, while continuing to protect rare species.

"The best way to uphold the Endangered Species Act is to do everything we can to ensure it remains effective in achieving its ultimate goal—recovery of our rarest species," he said in a statement. "An effectively administered Act ensures more resources can go where they will do the most good: on-the-ground conservation."

Under the enforcement changes, officials for the first time will be able to publicly attach a cost to saving an animal or plant. Blanket protections for creatures newly listed as threatened will be removed.

Among several other changes,

the action could allow the government to disregard the possible impact of climate change, which conservation groups call a major and growing threat to wildlife.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said the revisions "fit squarely within the president's mandate of easing the regulatory burden on the American public, without sacrificing our species' protection and recovery goals."

The Endangered Species Act is credited with helping save the bald eagle, California condor, and scores of other animals and plants from extinction since President Richard Nixon signed it into law in 1973.

The act currently protects more than 1,600 species in the US and its territories.

While the nearly half-century-old Act has been overwhelmingly successful in saving animals and plants that are listed as endangered, battles over some of the listings have been years long and legendary.

They have pitted northern spotted owls, snail darters and other creatures and their protectors against industries, local opponents and others in court and political fights. Republican lawmakers have pushed for years to change the law itself.

John Barrasso, a Wyoming

Republican who leads the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said last week's changes in enforcement were "a good start" but he would continue working to change the act.

Previous Trump administration actions have proposed changes to other bedrock environmental laws—the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts. The efforts include repeal of an Obama-era act, meant to fight climate change by getting dirtier-burning coal-fired power plants out of the country's electrical grid, rolling back tough Obama administration mileage standards for cars and light trucks, and lifting federal protections for millions of miles of waterways and wetlands.

The changes "take a wrecking ball to one of our oldest and most effective environmental laws, the Endangered Species Act," Sen. Tom Udall, a New Mexico Democrat, said in a statement. "As we have seen time and time again, no environmental protection—no matter how effective or popular—is safe from this administration."

One of the changes includes allowing the federal government to raise, in the decision-making process, the possible economic cost of listing a species.

That's even though Congress has stipulated that economic costs not be a factor in deciding whether to protect an animal. The prohibition was meant to ensure that the logging industry, for example, would not be able to push to block protections for a forest-dwelling animal on economic grounds.

Gary Frazer, an assistant director at the US Fish and Wildlife Service, told reporters that the government would adhere to that stipulation by disclosing the costs to the public without it being a factor for the officials, as they consider the protections.



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US govt weakens application of Endangered <sup>P-2</sup> Species Act

Price tag or no, Frazer said, federal officials would keep selecting and rejecting creatures from the endangered species list, as Congress required, "solely on the basis of the best available scientific information and without consideration for the economic impacts."

"Nothing in here, in my view, is a radical change for how we have been consulting and listing species for the last decade or so," Frazer added.

But Brett Hartl, a government affairs director for the Center for Biological Diversity conservation group, contended any such price tag would be inflated, and "an invitation for political interference" in the decision whether to save a species.

"You have to be really naive and cynical, and disingenuous to pretend" otherwise, Hartl said. "That's the reason that Congress way back...prohibited the Service from doing that," he said. "It's a science question: Is a species going extinct, yes or no?"

A United Nations report warned in May that more than 1 million plants and animals globally face extinction, some within decades, owing to human influence, climate change and other threats. The report called the rate of species loss a record.

In Washington state, Ray Entz, wildlife director for the Kalispel tribe, spoke of losing the struggle to save the last wild mountain caribou in the lower 48 states, despite the creature's three decades on the endangered species list.

With logging and other human activities, and predators driving down the numbers of the south Selkirk caribou, Canadian officials captured and penned the last surviving members of the species over the winter for their protection.

"There were some tears shed," Entz said, of the moment when tribal officials realized the animal had dwindled in the wild, past the point of saving. "It was a tough pill to swallow."

Despite the disappearance of the protected caribou species from the contiguous United States, Entz said, "We don't want to see a weakening of the law."

"There's times where hope is something you don't even want to talk about," he said. But, "having the Endangered Species Act gives us the opportunity to participate in that recovery."

In Idaho, meanwhile, officials reported that the state's sage grouse population has dropped 52 percent since the federal government decided not to list the birds under the Endangered Species Act in the fall of 2015.

Wildfires, as well as oil and gas exploration and farming, have cut into the grouses' habitat, so that as few as 200,000 are believed to remain out of as many as 16 million a century ago. AP

**LAURA MOORE** displays a newly emerged monarch butterfly on her finger in her Greenbelt, Maryland yard, on May 31. Despite efforts by Moore and countless other volunteers and organizations across the United States to grow milkweed, nurture caterpillars, and tag and count monarchs on the insects' annual migrations up and down America, the butterfly is in trouble. AP/CAROLYN KASTER





SEAFOOD AND 'BIOINDICATORS'

# MUSSELS USED TO GAUGE HEALTH OF RIVERS

PARIS—Seafood lovers who prize the mussel for its earthy taste and succulent flesh may be unaware of its growing potential in the fight against water pollution.

The mussel is the hoover of the sea, taking in phytoplankton for nourishment along with microplastics, pesticides and other pollutants—which makes it an excellent gauge.

One day, it may also be pressed into service to cleanse water.

### Marine superfilter

"It's a superfilter in the marine world, filtering up to 25 liters of water a day," marine biologist Leila Meistertzheim said. "It's a real model of bioaccumulation of pollutants generally speaking."

As they pump and filter the water through their gills in order to feed and breathe, mussels store almost everything else that passes through—which is why strict health rules apply for those destined for human consumption.

Like canaries in a coal mine, mussels have long been used as "bioindicators" of the health of the seas, lakes and rivers they inhabit.

Little-known pollutants can turn up to join the usual suspects, with increasing attention paid to microplastics containing bisphenol A and phthalates, both thought to be endocrine disruptors.

Meistertzheim heads a study for France's Tara Ocean Foundation using mussels to gauge the health of the estuaries of the Thames, Elba and Seine rivers.

The mussels, placed in fish traps, are submerged in the waters for a month before researchers dissect them to determine what chemical substances lurk in their tissues.

The idea of deploying mussels across the oceans to absorb ubiquitous microplastics is just a dream for now, but for other pollutants, the bivalves are already at work.

"In some places, mussels are used, as well as oysters, to cleanse the sea of pesticides, for example," Meistertzheim said.

### E. coli busters

Richard Luthy, an environmental engineer from California's Stanford University, said that, in most cases, mussels harvested from contaminated waters should not be eaten.

But if the contaminant is E. coli, mussels can be thanked for the "removal and inactivation" of the fecal material, he said, calling the service a "public health benefit."

The mussels are edible because they "excrete the bacteria as feces or mucus," he said.

Mussels living in waterways affected by eutrophication—often marked by abundant algae—are also fit for human consumption, researchers say.

The phenomenon is often the result of waste dumped into the waterway containing phosphates and nitrites, such as detergents, fertilizers and sewage.

The nutrients in these substances encourage the proliferation of algae, which in turn starves the water of oxygen, upsetting the ecosystem.

Mussels "recycle" these nu-

trients by feeding on the algae, said Eve Galimany, a researcher with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Milford Laboratory who has experimented with mussels in the Bronx River in New York.

The recycling principle is already at work in a pilot project titled Baltic Blue Growth in Sweden, Denmark and the Baltic countries that grows mussels to be fed to animals such as poultry, fish and pigs.

### Eutrophication

"Eutrophication ... is the biggest problem of the Baltic Sea, the most urgent one," project head Lena Tasse said. Mussels "could be part of a solution."

Why feed them to animals if they are safe for humans? Because Baltic mussels are too small to be of interest to seafood lovers, Tasse said, adding: "Swedes like big mussels."

Meanwhile, the jury is still out on the effects of microplastics on human health.

A recent report by World Wide Fund for Nature said that humans ingest an average of five grams of microplastics a week—about the weight of a credit card.

A 2018 study published in the journal Environmental Pollution, based on samples from British coastlines and supermarkets, estimated that every 100 grams of mussels contained 70 tiny pieces of plastic.

Should we be worried? Meistertzheim thinks not.

"I eat them," she said. "A dish of mussels is not necessarily worse than organic hamburger meat wrapped in plastic." —AFP



THE EXPORT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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## Mussels: 'Super-filters' that can help beat water pollution

PARIS (AFP) — Seafood lovers who prize the mussel for its earthy taste and succulent flesh may be unaware of its growing potential in the fight against water pollution.

The mussel ("tahong" in Filipino) is the Hoover of the sea, taking in phytoplankton for nourishment along with microplastics, pesticides, and other pollutants — which ▶ 11

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to be endocrine disruptors.

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But if the contaminant is E. coli, mussels can be thanked for the "removal and inactivation" of the fecal material, he says, calling the service a "public health benefit."

The mussels are edible because they "excrete the bacteria as feces or mucus," he says.

Mussels living in waterways affected by eutrophication — often marked by abundant algae — are also fit for human consumption, researchers say.

The phenomenon is often the result of waste dumped into the waterway containing phosphates and nitrites, such as detergents, fertilizers, and sewage.

The nutrients in these substances encourage the proliferation of algae, which in turn starves the water of oxygen, upsetting the ecosystem.

Mussels "recycle" these nutrients by

feeding on the algae, says Eve Galimany, a researcher of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Milford Laboratory who has experimented with mussels in the Bronx River in New York.

The recycling principle is already at work in a pilot project titled Baltic Blue Growth in Sweden, Denmark and the Baltic countries which grows mussels to be fed to animals such as poultry, fish, and pigs.

"Eutrophication... is the biggest problem of the Baltic Sea, the most urgent one," says project head Lena Tasse. Mussels "could be part of a solution."

Why feed them to animals if they are safe for humans? Because Baltic mussels are too small to be of interest to seafood lovers, says Tasse, adding: "Swedes like big mussels."

Meanwhile, the jury is still out on the effects of microplastics on human health.

A recent report by WWF said that humans ingest an average of five grams of microplastics a week — about the weight of a credit card.

A 2018 study published in the journal Environmental Pollution, based on samples from British coastlines and supermarkets, estimated that every 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of mussels contained 70 tiny pieces of plastic.

Should we be worried? Meistertzheim thinks not. "I eat them," she says. "A dish of mussels is not necessarily worse than organic hamburger meat wrapped in plastic."



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## Mussels fight water pollution

PARIS—Seafood lovers who prize the mussel for its earthy taste and succulent flesh may be unaware of its growing potential in the fight against water pollution.

The mussel is the Hoover of the sea, taking in phytoplankton for nourishment

*Next page*

along with microplastics, pesticides and other pollutants—which makes it an excellent gauge.

One day, it may also be pressed into service to cleanse water.

“It’s a super-filter in the marine world, filtering up to 25 liters of water a day,” says marine biologist Leila Meistertzheim.

“It’s a real model of bioaccumulation of pollutants generally speaking.”

As they pump and filter the water through their gills in order to feed and breathe, mussels store almost everything else that passes through—which is why strict health rules apply for those destined for human consumption.

Like canaries in a coal mine, mussels have long been used as “bio-indicators” of the health of the seas, lakes and rivers they inhabit.

Little-known pollutants can turn up to join the usual suspects, with increasing attention paid to microplastics containing bisphenol A and phthalates, both thought to be endocrine disruptors.

Meistertzheim heads a study for France’s Tara Ocean Foundation using mussels to gauge the health of the estuaries of the Thames, Elba and Seine rivers.

The mussels, placed in fish traps, are submerged in the waters for a month before researchers dissect them to determine what chemical substances lurk in their tissues.

The idea of deploying mussels across the oceans to absorb ubiquitous micro-

plastics is just a dream for now, but for other pollutants, the bivalves are already at work.

“In some places, mussels are used, as well as oysters, to cleanse the sea of pesticides, for example,” Meistertzheim notes.

### **E. coli busters**

Richard Luthy, an environmental engineer from California’s Stanford University, says that, in most cases, mussels harvested from contaminated waters should not be eaten.

But if the contaminant is E. coli, mussels can be thanked for the “removal and inactivation” of the faecal material, he says, calling the service a “public health benefit.”

The mussels are edible because they “excrete the bacteria as faeces or mucus,” he says. **AFP**



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## Bidding for Kaliwa Dam project questioned

BY PETER TABINGO

THE Commission on Audit has required the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to explain several procedural issues on the bidding process among three nominated Chinese contractors for the P12.19 billion Kaliwa Dam project.

In an Audit Observation Memorandum (AOM) dated June 10, 2019 addressed to then MWSS Administrator Reynaldo Velasco and deputy administrator for Engineering and Technical Operations Leonor Cleofas, the COA noted "the criteria for competitiveness was not achieved" even if three contractors joined the selection process and underwent evaluation by the MWSS Technical Working Group.

The AOM was signed by OIC Audit team Leader Rency Meryl P. Marquez and OIC Supervising Auditor Ma. Nancy J. Uy.

The audit findings showed that the three firms that were nominated, Consortium of Guangdong Foreign Construction Company

See BIDDING > Page B3

## BIDDING

Limited – Guangdong Yuantian Engineering Co. (CGFCCL-GYEC); Power Construction Corporation of China Limited (PCCCL); and China Energy Engineering Corporation Limited (CEEC) all submitted eligibility requirements.

But during the opening of bids and review of minimum eligibility requirements, the first firm (CGFCCL-GYEC) immediately failed because of several deficiencies, including the lack of Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) license, absence of Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) platinum certificate and having no valid Single Largest Completed Contract (SLCC).

On the next level of evaluation, the PCCCL was eliminated after it submitted a bid of P13.043 billion which was P842.74 million or 6.91 percent above the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), leaving CEEC the only bidder left.

The audit team found the submission of a bid higher than the ABC "surprising" and said this "raises doubt" since all three bidders were already informed beforehand of the project cost.

The Invitation to Bid even clearly cautioned them that "Bids received in

excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening."

"As a result, only the China Energy Engineering Corporation Limited qualified which is questionable considering that the two bidders were disqualified in the 1st and 2nd stages of the procurement process due to seemingly intentional purpose of the bidders not to comply with the TWG requirements," auditors pointed out in the AOM.

"In summary, it can be deduced that the two bidders/contractors were included merely to comply with the 'at least three bidders requirement' as stated under the Procurement law," they added.

However, the same AOM cited the failure of all three contractors to comply with the MWSS requirements that all must have a minimum of 20 years track record in design and engineering specifically in dam and tunneling works; and the same length of experience as principal contractor in the construction and commissioning of dams and projects of comparable complexity.

The CEEC and the CGFCCL-GYEC listed several projects including hydro-electric projects but both did not state the dates of completion.

Power China Limited on the other hand listed projects that were completed between 2010 and 2016.

"Notwithstanding these noted ma-

terial deficiencies, the TWG still concurred and recommended to the MWSS Board that these contractors have passed the minimum technical requirements," the auditors said.

The Notice of Award was already issued to CEEC on December 11, 2018 but the Notice to Proceed remains pending.

Based on the AOM, the company's application for an Environmental Compliance Certification has been submitted to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources but the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has yet to issue the Letter of Guarantee.

But auditors said the project manager informed them that CEEC Limited has already deployed "some technical equipment and construction assets in the project site" and likewise conducted "preliminary construction activities including topographic and geologic surveys."

The COA emphasized that the validity of the loan agreement between the MWSS and the China Eximbank for the dam project remain ineffective and that no liability shall attach to the MWSS until this comes into force.

The Kaliwa Dam project is the government's big-ticket solution to solve Metro Manila's water shortage problem that hit residents earlier this year when Angat Dam reached critical water level early.



# Pedaling the Philippines backwards

**A** President who personally gifts the police with the discretion to accept “gifts,” throwing in the corrosive video-*karera* as a professional niche, is really bribing the whole police organization. He is cutting them loose to augment their income the “*sariling sikap*” (self-help) way. In wartime, this is like a commander not only turning a blind eye on pillage by his troops. It is also a corrupt act of personal benevolence at the expense of the hapless people of an occupied territory.

Occupied territory? That seems to be a fitting description for Filipinos under Mr. Duterte.

In 2005, I was among 10 Filipinos from the COA, CSC, OMB, CHR, PCGG and other organizations who were sent by the USAID to attend a monthlong postgraduate certificate course on corruption studies at Hong Kong University. Other Filipino batches attended the course headed by Hong Kong’s anticorruption czar Tony Kwok. We were joined by 30 other participants from all over the world, especially Africa and Latin America, to imbibe the effective anticorruption principles and practices Hong Kong was known for.

We learned that Hong Kong was more corrupt than many of our countries before the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was formed in 1974. We learned that at the height of corruption in Hong Kong, foreigners (British) in positions of authority were among the masterminds. The ICAC reduced corruption by cracking down repeatedly on police involvement in “victimless crimes”—prostitution, gambling and drugs. We learned that the police could be honed into an effective and clean law enforcement organization. However, anticorruption work should never be entrusted to the police.



## ON THE MOVE

SEGUNDO ECLAR ROMERO

We learned that while in many countries people think corruption is only in government offices, corruption is actually the use of office, public or private, for private gain.

Receiving unsolicited gifts is corruption because it constitutes “sweetening the pot,” a form of injecting creeping influence on a person in authority. Anything that makes a public official beholden to another person, even a relative, is corruption. If you owe your mother-in-law the money you built your house with, not a bank, that makes you “pecuniarily embarrassed.” Our relations are more likely to plunge us into corruption rather than help us avoid it.

If you are charged with corruption and you commit suicide, that is an admission of guilt, and the property in question will be seized by the state. The best way to teach kids against corruption is to make them go visit the museum of corruption while in high school, so they know what corruption is and how society punishes the corrupt. The best way to promote corruption is to anticipate and prevent it and focus on community education.

Learning from these lessons, the Office of the Ombudsman established a set of anticorruption systems—the Integrity Development Review (IDR) and the Corruption Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) that it applied to critical government institutions in 2006 (BIR, BOC, DPWH, LTO, PNP) and in 2007 (AFP-PN, BuCOR, BFP, DAR, DENR, DOH, NIA, LRA, LRTA, PS, PVAO). The IDR found that the weakest link across these participating agencies in corruption resistance mechanisms are their gifts policy, whistleblowing and internal reporting policies, and corruption risk management.

The IDR and the CVA applied to the police yielded reform documents like the PNP Patrol Plan 2030 and MC 2008-04 (“Policy in Accepting, Receiving and Giving of Gifts and Mementos”), designed to help reduce corruption in the police. These were critical systemic measures. But their sustainability depends on the President’s moral compass, personal integrity and actual behavior to set the pathway for the government and the police to emulate. Many police and military officers, nurtured by poor but proud families, can be patriotic and honest if their institutions provide the proper systems.

So, it is rather appalling that the system of anticorruption in the Philippines already beleaguered as it is, no less than the President releases the police from the ethical and moral moorings that just very tenuously keep this country together. Sad. It is as if the President is trying to win in a game of *perdigana*—the more he pedals the country backwards, the more he thinks he wins.

Comments welcome at [doyromero@gmail.com](mailto:doyromero@gmail.com)



NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP

# Sustainability at the core of JG Summit's future

IN May 2018, JG Summit Holdings Inc. announced the appointment of Lance Y. Gokongwei as the conglomerate's President and Chief Executive Officer. This development marks a new generation of leadership that will take JG Summit to even greater heights, but one that requires strategically transforming the enterprise, to include focus on key areas—one of which is the adoption of a formal Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) program.

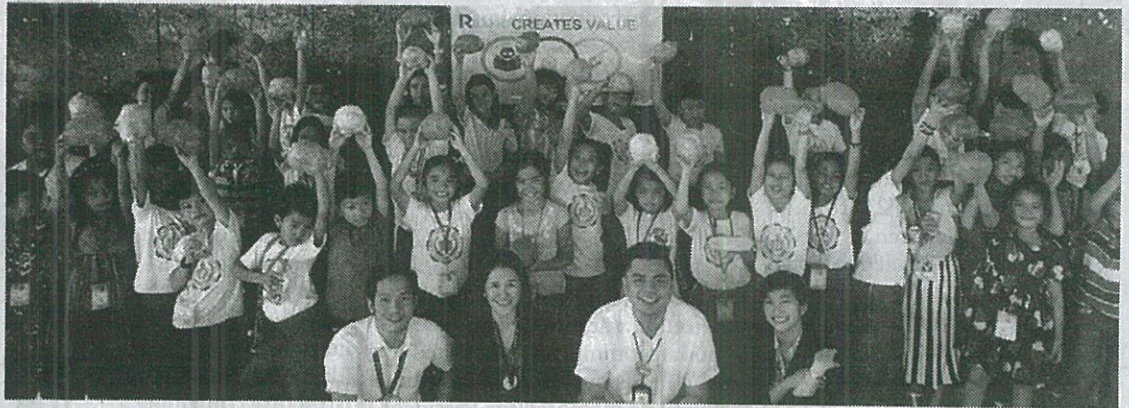
"The move towards greater sustainability is strategic for us in aligning our business strategies with all our corporate social responsibility efforts on empowering communities, elevating people's lives, and protecting our planet," says Gokongwei.

With the combined strengths and competencies of its strategic business units (SBUs)—Cebu Pacific, Robinsons Land Corporation, Universal Robina Corporation, JG Summit Petrochemicals Group and Robinsons Bank—JG Summit has carved for itself an essential role in nation-building, a mission reflected in the three pillars of its sustainability framework: Pulling for Progress, Raising People Up, and Caring for the Environment.

Pulling for Progress means creating a business and social environment that inspires, empowers and enables others to achieve success—setting the stage for the right ideas to incubate and seeking like-minded partners both public and private to synergize with and leverage on each other's strength.

The Flourish Filipinas program of Universal Robina Corporation (URC)—Flour & Pasta Division is a prime example of capacity-building initiatives specifically targeted toward the youth. Developed in collaboration with the Department of Education, the program created and distributed a strategically designed multimedia teachers' toolkit for bread and pastry production under the SHS Technical-Vocational-Livelihood track. In pilot stage, URC Flour engaged 11 public schools in Metro Manila and Davao, benefitting 1,109 senior high school students.

Raising People Up, meanwhile, pertains to practical and tangible positive impact in the daily lives of all stakeholders—customers, suppliers, society at large and employees as well. This can be as simple as enhancing access to basic needs and

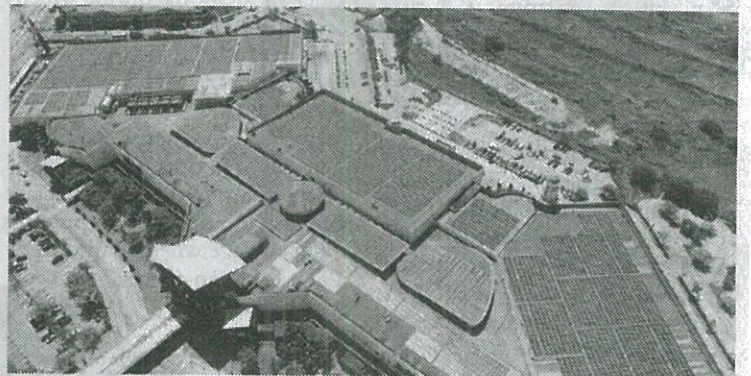


**Coin banks.** Robinsons Bank helps improve the lives of Filipinos through financial literacy in the grassroots level, such as in this class of young students at the Andres Bonifacio Elementary School, Bacolod, Negros Occidental where pupils also received coin banks to jumpstart their savings.

government services especially concerning healthcare, livelihood and education especially during difficult times of natural disasters.

This is especially evident with JG Summit Petrochemicals Group in Batangas, where the company and its employees conduct educational outreach activities under their flagship and primarily employee-driven "AbotKamay" program. Since 2000, JGSPG through AbotKamay has been regularly supporting academically-qualified high school and college students within its host barangays with scholarships, covering expenses like tuition, books, uniforms, and monthly stipends. One of the beneficiaries of the program is now a mechanical engineer employed by the company. JGSPG has also been actively supporting the needs of the nearby public schools, with annual school clean-up drives, donations of school and office supplies, furniture and equipment, as well as regular feeding and outreach programs, which has now benefited over 9,500 students of nearby barangays since the start of the program.

For Robinsons Bank, elevating people's lives is achieved through the promotion of financial literacy. Under its flagship CSR program, RBank Creates Value, volunteers of Robinsons Bank adopt schools where financial awareness activities are conducted for the pupils and their parents. This CSR program's guiding principle is to engage the whole Filipino household through a 3-year roadmap. On the first year of the program, 263 RBankers volunteered to teach the "Value of Saving" to pupils of 15 schools nationwide. On the second year, almost 300 RBank employees visited



**Solar rooftop.** Robinsons Starmills in Pampanga hosts the world's largest solar rooftop installation in a mall—proof of the company's commitment to energy efficiency and sustainability.

17 schools nationwide and impacted a total of 1,288 beneficiaries, composed of mothers of the pupils. To complete the third leg of the Roadmap, the focus of the initiatives this year will be on the fathers of the children of adopted schools.

Finally, Caring for the Environment ensures only positive impact of business operations and prudent use of natural resources. Waste management and energy efficiency are only among the most important areas of environmental concern that need to be highlighted in this time of climate awareness.

A most recent pioneering initiative in this area is the "Juan Effect" project of Cebu Pacific in collaboration with the Department of Tourism (DOT), the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). The campaign engages travelers on their responsibilities as tourists and encourages them to proactively save the environment in three easy ways—by bringing their own reusable water bottles, bringing their own eco bags, and by disposing of trash properly. Its goal

is to mitigate the impact of tourism on the environment. As of July 2019, the total pledge count on the Juan Effect website has reached more than 17,500.

Robinsons Land Corporation's (RLC) focus on sustainability means helping to address the depletion of natural resources. Its buildings are designed to make efficient use of energy, water, and resources. RLC has invested on solar installations in 14 Robinsons Malls to reduce the demand for fossil fuels and limit greenhouse gas emissions. Worth mentioning is Robinsons Starmills in Pampanga, which hosts the world's largest solar rooftop installation in a mall. A good number of Robinsons Malls are also designed with a rainwater collection system and a wastewater and treatment and recycling facility to reuse water for non-potable use. Green building practices also help mitigate climate change and the environmental impact of operations, with three of RLC's office buildings being certified by LEED, an internationally recognized green building certification system.





THE EXPORT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS  
SINCE 1900

# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER



19 AUG 2019

DATE

## SPEAKING OUT

# Ayala's Sustainability Blueprint



By **IGNACIO R. BUNYE**

**O**VER many years now, the Ayala Group has been, in many ways, sensitive to issues relating to improving human lives and protecting the environment.

When the United Nations came up four years ago with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Ayala group institutionalized its own blueprint aligning itself to the global framework that is fast changing the face of capitalism.

Recall that the United Nations identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), "17 very interdependent goals which," according to Peter Bakker of World Business Council for Sustainable Development or WBCSD, "describe the future that we want."

The SDGs, as generally understood, "show the way to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs."

The SDGs are:

- 1) No poverty. 2) No hunger. 3) Good health and well-being. 4) Quality education. 5) Gender equality. 6) Clean water and sanitation. 7) Affordable and clean energy. 8) Decent work and economic growth. 9) Industry innovation and infrastructure. 10) Reduced inequality. 11) Sustainable cities and communities. 12) Responsible consumption and production. 13) Climate action. 14) Life below water. 15) Life on land. 16) Peace and justice and strong institutions. 17) Partnerships to achieve the goal.

Ayala Chairman and CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala (JAZA) explains the conglomerate's own initiative which dovetails with the UN SDGs.

"We designed our long-term sus-

tainability blueprint that laid out actionable and measurable targets as we address critical environment and development gaps that our country faces today."

JAZA identified three areas where Ayala believes its businesses (across real estate, banking, telecommunications, water, power, industrial technologies, infrastructure, health care, and education) can generate the most significant and lasting impact.

These are: 1) marginalization, 2) large untapped potential for our human capital, and 3) irresponsible growth leading to long-term environmental damage.

"The Ayala Sustainability Blueprint will enable us to be more deliberate in monitoring and evaluating our sustainability targets and help us allocate resources to these initiatives," JAZA added.

Recently, Ayala was invited to join the Geneva-based World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

WBCSD is a global, CEO-led organization of over 200 leading businesses working together to accelerate the transition to a sustainable world.

Its member companies come from all business sectors and all major economies, representing a combined revenue of more than \$8.5 trillion and with 19 million employees.

Ayala recently stepped up its efforts to cascade its sustainability blueprint and get all its business units and stakeholders all on the same page.

Last week, Ayala convened a milestone gathering – its First Integrated Corporate Governance, Risk Management and Sustainability Summit.

TG Limcaoco, the Ayala group's CFO and Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), said the summit was specially designed for board directors, senior leaders, and employees across

Ayala's various business units, as well as guests from its business partners, guests from government, civil society and the academe.

"We have to get them to buy in to what the Ayala group is trying to achieve," Limcaoco said.

Fernando Zobel de Ayala (FZA), President and COO, summarized the key messages to Ayala group executives and stakeholders:

- These interconnected disciplines – governance, sustainability, and risk management – should now be part and parcel of the group's strategic planning, decision-making, and investment processes.

- There is a strong correlation between sustainability, and financial performance.

- A board's responsibility now goes beyond fiduciary duty and should encompass environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations.

- The board must now be held accountable for its sustainability performance and not just financial returns.

- "Impact investing" has gained so much traction in recent years, driven by market dynamics such as technological disruption and customers rewarding sustainable practices.

- Going forward, creating a separate P&L for environmental metrics is something Ayala will look into.

- The new rule from the SEC mandating the submission of sustainability reports must be considered as another opportunity for listed companies, such as Ayala, to communicate their sustainability performance properly.

- ESG must not be just a buzzword. It must become a way of life.

**Note: Please feel free to share the foregoing via Facebook, Twitter and/or Linked-in.**



# One-year extension of 2019 budget sought

By DJ Yap  
@deejayapINQ

To avoid further delays in government projects and operations, Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda has sought a one-year extension of the 2019 budget for capital outlays and operating expenses.

Legarda, former chair of the Senate finance committee, filed proposed Joint Resolution

No. 9, extending the availability of the current P3.7-trillion budget until Dec. 31, 2020.

Legarda said she wished to avoid a scenario in which unreleased appropriations would automatically revert to the national treasury as surplus or savings once the validity of the budget lapses at the end of 2019.

This could mean zero funds for priority projects, medical assistance and relief activities,

as well as maintenance, construction or repair of school buildings, hospitals, roads, bridges and other essential government facilities, she said.

Certain government programs, she said, had not been implemented because of the monthslong delay in the passage of the 2019 budget and the mandatory ban on infrastructure projects and social services during the May elections. INQ



## House vows to hold hearings to expedite 2020 budget

By **DELON PORCALLA**

The leadership of the House of Representatives under Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano will hold budget hearings even on Friday starting Aug. 22 when the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) submits the P4.1-trillion national budget for 2020.

"We will do our best to approve the budget on time and exercise our constitutional duty to scrutinize the budget to make sure that every peso that we appropriate will contribute to the overall growth and development of the country," Davao Rep. Isidro Ungab said.

Ungab, chairman of the House committee on appropriations, made the promise as Congress awaits the scheduled submission of the annual outlay to lawmakers tomorrow through acting Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado.

Ungab said the hearings would be done after the formal submission of the National Expenditure Program, the basis for the General Appropriations Bill, of fiscal year 2020 to House members.

The target date for passage of the General Appropriations Bill (GAB) is on Oct. 4 before the congressional recess, he said.

House Press and Public Affairs Bureau executive director Ma. Bernadette dela Cuesta has announced that the budget submission will be video streamed live to enable public viewing of the event.

Ungab said the appropriations committee hopes to finish the budget hearings by the second week of September and start plenary deliberations as soon as the panel approves its committee report.

The budget hearings will kick off on Thursday at 9 a.m. with a briefing of the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), the inter-agency body that determines the overall economic targets, expenditure levels and budget of the government.

The DBCC is composed of the DBM, National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Finance and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

On Friday, the appropriations committee will review the budget proposals of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation.

In its earlier media releases, DBM said the 2020 national budget has the theme "Continuing the journey to a more peaceful and progressive Philippines" as it aims to "sustain the tremendous progress that the Philippines has made as a nation during the administration of President Duterte."

House leaders led by Majority Leader Martin Romualdez, along with Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante, assured the public that the 2020 national budget would be passed on time, unlike this year, when it was delayed by about four months.



**MOUNTAIN garbage in a municipal landfill for household waste in Australia.** WWF.ORG.AU

## AUSTRALIA PLANS TO SET DATE TO BAN EXPORTING PLASTIC WASTE

**C**ANBERRA, Australia—Australian government leaders last week agreed to set a timetable for banning exports of waste plastic, which is now shipped to regional neighbors, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Federal, state and territory leaders agreed at a meeting at the Great Barrier Reef city of Cairns to task their environment ministers with setting a timetable to end

the cross-border disposal of waste plastic, paper, glass and tires.

Waste disposal has become an increasingly pressing problem since 2017 when China, previously its main destination, barred imports of almost all foreign plastic waste.

Australian leaders agreed their strategy must seek to reduce waste, especially plastics, decrease the amount of waste

going to landfill and maximize the capability of Australia's waste management and recycling sector to collect, recycle, reuse, convert and recover waste, the meeting's communique said.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said only 12 percent of waste that Australians place in recycling bins was recycled.

"There will be no exports of plastics and paper and glass to other countries where it runs the risk of ending up floating around in our oceans whether off the Great Barrier Reef—which we know there's strong evidence of that—or anywhere else," Morrison said.

Morrison added he wanted the export ban implemented as soon as practicable, and did not expect the change to take years.

Australia spends Aus\$2.8 billion (\$1.9 billion) a year exporting 4.5 million metric tons (5 million US tons) of recyclable waste, 80 percent of which is shipped to Asian ports.

Environmentalists have protested outside the Australian consulate in the Indonesian city of Surabaya, against tons of Australian waste plastic and paper that they say is shipped to Indonesia, burnt and dumped in waterways. **AP**

# Climate change eats up glacier

**REYKJAVIK:** Iceland on Sunday honored the passing of Okjokull, its first glacier lost to climate change, as scientists warn that some 400 others on the subarctic island risk the same fate.

A bronze plaque will be unveiled in a ceremony around 2 p.m. Tuesday (10 p.m. in Manila) to mark Okjokull — which translates to “Ok glacier” — in the west of Iceland, in the presence of local researchers and their peers at Rice University in the United States, who initiated the project.

Iceland’s Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir, Environment Minister Gudmundur Ingi Gudbrands-son, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson are also due to attend the event.

“This will be the first monument to a glacier lost to climate change anywhere in the world,” Cymene Howe, associate professor of anthropology at Rice University, said in July.

The plaque bears the inscription “A letter to the future,” and is intended to raise awareness about the decline of glaciers and the effects of climate change.

“In the next 200 years all our glaciers are expected to follow the same path. This monument is to acknowledge that we know what is happening and what needs to be done. Only you know if we did it,” the plaque reads.

It is also labelled “415 ppm (parts per million) CO<sub>2</sub>,” referring to the record level of carbon dioxide measured in the atmosphere last May.

“Memorials everywhere stand for either human accomplishments, like the deeds of historic figures, or the losses and deaths we recognize as important,” researcher Howe said.

AFP



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## Iceland honors first glacier lost to climate change

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AFP) – Iceland on Sunday honors the passing of Okjokull, its first glacier lost to climate change, as scientists warn that some 400 others on the subarctic island risk the same fate.

A bronze plaque will be unveiled in a ceremony starting around 1400 GMT to mark Okjokull – which translates to "Ok glacier" – in the west of Iceland, in the presence of local researchers and their peers at Rice University in the United States, who initiated the project.

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TITLE:

DATE

**NAPAKAHALAGA** ang kautusan ng pamahalaang Duterte sa mga recruitment o placement agency na nagpadala ng mga overseas Filipino worker sa Hong Kong na bigyan ang pamahalaan ng kopya ng lahat ng mga kinakailangang dokumento ukol sa mga OFW sa nasabing lugar.

Kabilang sa mga dokumento ang naglalaman ng ngalan, tirahan sa Hong Kong, telepono, employer, email address at iba pa upang masubaybayan ng pamahalaan ang kalagayan ng mga OFW at maprotektahan ang mga ito kung may mangyaring masama.

Tatandaan na may isa nang OFW ang hinuli ng Hong Kong police sa suspetsang sumasama ito sa mga nagpoprotesta laban sa pamahalaang Hong Kong at Tsina.

Sa halip na dalhin ito sa pinakamalapit na istasyon ng pulisya sa lugar ng pang-aaresto, dinala ito sa malayo at nagkaroon ng pangamba na baka mawala na lang ito.

Mabuti at natulungan ang OFW ng mga kinauukulan at sa huli, pinalaya rin ito at pinauwi sa kanyang tinitirhan sa Hong Kong.

### GIRIAN NG PRO, ANTI

Umaabot mula libo hanggang milyon ang nagpoprotesta na taga-Hong Kong laban sa unti-unti umanong paghina ng mga karapatan nilang maging malaya sa ilalim ng patakaranang One Country-Two Systems.

Nabuo ang prinsipyong ito sa kasunduan ng Tsina at Britanya na pagbabalik ng huli ng Hong Kong sa Tsina.

Bagama't komunismo ang sistemang pamahalaang pinairal sa Mainland China, mananatili ang Hong Kong sa umano'y Malaya o demokratikong pamahalaan.

Ang kalayaan atdemokrasya umano ang inot-inot na nawawala sa Hong Kong at naging mitsa ng kaguluhan ang panukala sa pinaka-Kongreso ng Hong Kong na magpasa ng extradition treaty ng mga itinuturing na criminal.

Sa extradition treaty, gusto ng Mainland China na madala ang isang "criminal" upang doon litisin.

Nangamba ang mga taga-Hong Kong na ma-



## ULTIMATUM

Ni BENNY ANTIPORDA

### 250,000 OFWs SA HONG KONG BANTAYAN

giging biktima sila sa tradong ito at maaaring masama sa mga "criminal" ang mga aktibista pabor sa umano'y kalayaan at demokrasya na Hong Kong style.

#### PINAPARALISA

Ngayon ay pinaparlisa ng mga protester mismo ang Hong Kong para mapwersa ang pamahalaang Mainland China at Hong Kong na respetuhin ang kalayaan at demokrasya at ganap nang ibasura ang extradition treaty.

Sa mga rally, nakikitang iwinawagayway ang mga bandilang Amerikano at British at nangahulugan ito ng paghiling ng mga raliyesta na tulungan sila ng Amerika at Britain.

Nagbubunga naman ito ng reaksyon mula Mainland China at nitong huli, pinagbawalan nilang makapasok sa Hong Kong ang dalawang military ship ng mga Kano na gustong dumaong sa pier.

Nagbababala rin ang Mainland China na kung magpapatuloy ang pagpaparlisa sa Hong Kong, maaaring gagawa na ito ng hakbang para maprotektahan nito ang sariling teritoryo sa pakikialam ng mga dayuhan.

At naghahanda na ito ng libo-libong pwersang paramilitary para alalayan ang ilang libong pwersa ng People's Liberation Army na nakaistasyon sa loob ng Hong Kong.

#### EKONOMIYA

##### BAGSAK

Sinasabing bagsak ang ekonomiya ng Hong Kong ngayon.

Marami ang nagsasarang kompanya tuwing may malalaking rally gaya ng mga mall na pinapasok ng mga raliyesta.

Bangko, restoran at lahat ay nagsasara sa gitna ng mga rally na naging bayolente sa pagitan ng mga pulis at raliyesta at puno ng paggamit ng teargas, bato at iba pang bagay na inihahagis ng mga pulis at raliyesta sa isa't isa.

Pinaparlisa rin ng mga raliyesta ang mga biyahe ng mga bus at tren.

Maging ang Hong Kong International Airport ay kinakanti at marami

ang nakakanselang biyahe ng mga eroplano.

Bagsak na bagsak din ang turismo na nakaaapekto rin sa turismo sa Macao na nakararanas na rin ng pagliit ng kita mula sa mga turistang galing sa Hong Kong.

Dumarami na ring dayuhang mamumuhunan ang nag-iisip na ilipat na lang nila sa ibang mga bansa ang kanilang mga negosyo.

#### MALAKING PROBLEMA

Hindi biro ang pagprotekta at paglilingkod sa 250,000 OFWs sa lugar.

Dapat na ring paghandaan ang pag-uwi ng marami sa mga ito nang may problemang ligal sa mga kontrata at dahil sa takot na madamay sila sa mga kaguluhan.

Aanhin mo nga naman ang manatili sa bansang wala nang kasiguruhan sa usapin ng kaligtasan at pagdalang ng mapasukang trabaho?

Sa pag-uwi ng mga OFW, nariryan ang mga obligasyon nilang daratnan gaya ng kanilang mga utang para may panggastos sa pag-abroad.

Nasaan ang mga posibleng ayudang pinansyal na hingin ng mga ito sa pagkaudlot ng kanilang mga trabaho?

Paano rin ang mga gastusin kung lalala ang kaguluhan at libo-libo ang gustong umuwi, bukod pa sa posibleng may madigrasya at mamamatay?

Ang mahalaga ngayon, kumikilos na ang pamahalaan para sa proteksyon ng mga OFW pero dapat na ring tumulong mismo ang mga OFW na protektahan ang kanilang mga sarili at isang anyo nito ang hindi pagsali sa mga kilusang-pulitikal ng mga taga-Hong Kong.

Anomang reaksyon o reklamo, maaaring iparating sa 09228403333 o i-email sa bantiporda@yahoo.com.



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EDITORIAL

CARTOON

19 AUG 2013

DATE

Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Strategic Communication Initiatives Service

S. No. 2228  
H. No. 8441  
Republic of the Philippines  
Congress of the Philippines  
Metro Manila  
Seventeenth Congress  
Third Regular Session

[REPUBLIC ACT No. 11365]

AN ACT DECLARING THE BALANGA WETLAND AND NATURE PARK LOCATED IN BARANGAY TORTUGAS, CITY OF BALANGA, PROVINCE OF BATAAN AS A RESPONSIBLE, COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM ZONE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Responsible Ecotourism Act".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State is mandated to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable, and equitable for the local community. Towards this end, the Balanga Wetland and Nature Park (BWNP) is hereby

declared a special ecotourism zone. It shall be accorded priority development by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones provided in the national ecotourism strategy jointly issued by the DENR and the DOT.

SEC. 3. Objectives. - Pursuant to the above declaration of policy, the State shall endeavor to accomplish the following:

- (a) Develop and promote responsible, community-based ecological tourism as the core management strategy in the development of the BWNP;
(b) Ensure the conservation of the biodiversity and the preservation of the said ecotourism park;
(c) Develop ecotourism products and programs that will generate employment and livelihood for the local residents concerned, consistent with the preservation and maintenance of natural resources;
(d) Guarantee that the financial and economic benefits of the tourism industry are equitably shared by, and distributed among the local residents concerned by giving preference and support to community and home-based tourism enterprises, such as, but not limited to, micro and small businesses including local inns, lodges and homestays, restaurants, food and fruit stands, and other similar tourism oriented industries and businesses;
(e) Ensure that the quality of local ecotourism programs and activities are educational and enriching for tourists and visitors through the provision of orientation, educational and tour programs by local tour operators, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), the local government of the City of Balanga, the DENR, and the DOT; and

(f) Guarantee that in the development and promotion of the local tourism industry, the local government of the City of Balanga shall ensure that the needs of local residents for adequate water supply, food, energy and local construction materials are first secured and met.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act:

- (a) Buffer zone refers to identified area outside the boundaries of and immediately adjacent to the BWNP that needs special development control in order to avoid or minimize harm to the BWNP;
(b) Community-based ecotourism refers to a form of tourism where the local community and its residents have substantial control and involvement in the development and management of the local tourism industry and a greater portion of the economic gains remain within the community;
(c) Ecotourism refers to a form of sustainable tourism within a natural area where community participation, protection and management of natural resources, cultural and indigenous knowledge and practices, environmental education and ethics, as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and the satisfaction of visitors;
(d) Homestay refers to a system of tourist accommodation where a tourist stays with local residents and experiences the day-to-day life within the local community;
(e) Responsible ecotourism refers to a form of sustainable tourism in which both the tourism sector and the tourists take responsibility in the protection, respect, and conservation of the natural environment and the local culture and ways of life, and where community participation as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the well-being of the local people and visitors.

SEC. 5. Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Ecotourism Zone. - The BWNP located in Barangay Tortugas, City of

Balanga, Province of Bataan is hereby declared as a responsible, community-based ecotourism zone. It shall be accorded priority development by the DOT, DENR, DPWH, and the TIEZA and shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the development of ecotourism zones provided in the national ecotourism strategy jointly issued by the DENR and the DOT.

SEC. 6. Scope and Coverage. - The BWNP, which shall cover an area of one hundred fifty-three thousand five hundred seventy-eight (153,578) square meters of mangrove forest and one hundred eighty-seven thousand five hundred (187,500) square meters of foreshore land, is hereby declared an ecotourism zone. Its boundaries shall be as follows:

Table with 4 columns: (a) Mangrove Forest, Beginning at a point marked 1, being N 35°55' E, 335.73 meters from MBM 1, Balanga Cadastre, Bataan. The table lists 28 boundary points with bearings, distances, and corner numbers.





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thence	S 4° 3'0" W	26.47	meters to corner 29;
thence	S 14°22'0" W	31.53	meters to corner 30;
thence	S 32°51'0" W	24.32	meters to corner 31;
thence	S 8°20'0" W	33.87	meters to corner 32;
thence	S 17° 3'0" E	69.51	meters to corner 33;

thence	S 28°36'0" E	139.68	meters to corner 34;
thence	S 37°16'0" E	42.45	meters to corner 35;
thence	S 46°20'0" E	36.79	meters to corner 36;
thence	S 67°42'0" E	22.58	meters to corner 37;
thence	N 88°35'0" E	12.59	meters to corner 38;
thence	S 62°9'0" E	54.78	meters to corner 39;
thence	S 89°29'0" E	6.71	meters to corner 40;
thence	N 45°32'0" E	5.34	meters to corner 41;
thence	N 82°23'0" E	8.90	meters to corner 42;
thence	S 68°57'0" E	10.75	meters to corner 43;
thence	S 54°29'0" E	15.36	meters to corner 44;
thence	S 34°53'0" E	19.55	meters to corner 45;
thence	S 13°19'0" W	9.46	meters to corner 46;
thence	S 33°47'0" E	44.67	meters to corner 47;
thence	S 59°14'0" E	17.48	meters to corner 48;
thence	N 83°51'0" E	25.33	meters to corner 49;
thence	S 39°17'0" E	152.54	meters to corner 50;
thence	S 63°16'0" W	225.50	meters to corner 1.

to the point of beginning containing an area of one hundred fifty-three thousand five hundred seventy-eight (153,578) square meters, more or less.

(b) Foreshore Land

Beginning at a point marked "1" on the map, being N 46°59' E, 565.88 meters from MBM #1, Balanga Cadastre, Bataan.

thence	N 12°20'0" W	19.64	meters to corner 2;
thence	N 34°53'0" W	31.95	meters to corner 3;
thence	N 67°41'0" W	14.62	meters to corner 4;
thence	N 39°17'0" W	163.37	meters to corner 5;
thence	N 28°36'0" W	136.14	meters to corner 6;
thence	S 81°23'0" W	21.17	meters to corner 7;
thence	N 55°31'0" E	181.64	meters to corner 8;
thence	S 88°36'0" W	13.61	meters to corner 9;
thence	N 32°50'0" E	23.23	meters to corner 10;
thence	N 13°19'0" E	9.69	meters to corner 11;
thence	N 62°9'0" W	50.35	meters to corner 12;
thence	N 33°47'0" W	31.44	meters to corner 13;
thence	N 72°36'0" W	39.42	meters to corner 14;
thence	N 68°56'0" W	18.40	meters to corner 15;
thence	N 46°20'0" W	31.44	meters to corner 16;
thence	N 17°56'0" W	25.90	meters to corner 17;
thence	N 13°40'0" W	49.83	meters to corner 18;
thence	N 54°30'0" W	21.35	meters to corner 19;

thence	N 37°16'0" W	39.34	meters to corner 20;
thence	N 14°22'0" E	36.57	meters to corner 21;
thence	N 17°3'0" W	62.98	meters to corner 22;
thence	S 83°51'0" W	29.49	meters to corner 23;
thence	S 63°16'0" W	152.57	meters to corner 24;
thence	N 59°14'0" W	6.29	meters to corner 25;
thence	N 44°59'0" W	33.85	meters to corner 26;
thence	S 32°39'0" E	877.51	meters to corner 27;
thence	N 8°20'0" E	25.02	meters to corner 28;
thence	N 4°8' 0" E	31.40	meters to corner 1.

to the point of beginning containing an area of one hundred eighty-seven thousand five hundred (187,500) square meters, more or less.

The metes and bounds of the BWNP shall be indicated on maps and/or nautical charts. Any modification of the coverage of this Act due to such factors as changing ecological situation, new scientific or archaeological findings, or discovery of traditional boundaries not previously taken into account shall be made through an act of Congress, after consultation with the concerned government agencies.

SEC. 7. *Establishment of a Buffer Zone.* - There shall also be established buffer zones surrounding the BWNP for the purpose of providing extra protection around the area, where restrictions shall apply and communities can assist in repealing threats to the BWNP. Such buffer zones shall be managed according to the ecotourism development and management plan formulated pursuant to this Act.

Such buffer zone shall be included in the ecotourism development and management plan of the BWNP: *Provided,*

That no build up or reclamation detrimental to the biodiversity in the BWNP shall be done within the designated buffer zone. The Council shall exercise its authority over the designated buffer zone.

SEC. 8. *Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Ecotourism Development and Management Plan.* - The DENR and the DOT, in coordination with the DPWH and the TIEZA, shall jointly assist the Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Development Council, herein created, in the formulation of the ecotourism development and management plan for the BWNP that shall be complemented by a set of guidelines for a responsible, community-based ecotourism. The ecotourism development and management plan shall ensure the preservation of the eco-park and shall include the following components:

- Carrying capacity of the eco-park and its migratory birds;
- Specific site assessment;
- Identification of strategic priorities;
- Product development for local income generation;
- Capacity-building for the local community to allow residents therein to ably manage economically viable and responsible, community-based ecotourism business enterprises;
- Support for the formulation of local production groups and networks, including the marketing and pricing of products;
- Marketing strategies that reflect the natural, social and environmental integrity of the BWNP;
- Regular water quality monitoring of the Talisay River;
- Management and maintenance of the mangrove areas;
- Solid and liquid wastes management; and
- Solutions addressing the problem of the declining population of the waterbirds as reflected in the annual waterbird census.

The process of developing the ecotourism development and management plan for the BWNP shall be participatory, from the bottom up, with the framework to be provided by the DOT and the DENR, in consultation with the Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Development Council herein created.

In order to protect the mangrove forest in the BWNP, the foreshore areas shall not be leased to any private entity.

SEC. 9. *Formation of the Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Development Council.* - A multi-sectoral council to be known as the "Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Development Council", hereinafter referred to as the Council, shall be created. It shall be composed of the following members:

- The Mayor of the City of Balanga as Chairperson;
- The head of the City Tourism Office of the City of Balanga as Vice-chairperson;
- The head of the City Environmental and Natural Resources Office of the City of Balanga;
- The Provincial Government Environment and Natural Resources Officer of Bataan;
- The Barangay Chairman of Barangay Tortugas;
- The Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB);
- The Chief Operating Officer of the TIEZA;
- The Regional Director of DOT-Region 3;



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- (i) The Regional Director of DENR-Region 3;
  - (j) The Regional Director of DPWH-Region 3;
  - (k) The DENR-Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) of Bataan;
  - (l) The Chairman of the City Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council of the City of Balanga;

(m) One (1) representative from an academic institution, preferably from a university or college in the Province of Bataan, with proven track record in or related to wetlands and/or waterbird management;

(n) One (1) representative from the private sector, preferably a resident of the Province of Bataan, who is distinguished in a profession or field of interest relevant to wetlands and/or waterbird management; and

(o) One (1) representative from either NGO or people's organization (PO), duly accredited both by the DENR and the provincial government of Bataan. The NGO or PO represented should have been in existence for at least five (5) years with track record in or related to wetlands and/or waterbird management.

The *ex officio* members of the Council by virtue of their elective or appointive government positions as specified in the immediately preceding subparagraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), and (l) shall serve for the duration of their respective terms of office in their respective elective or appointive government positions.

The members of the Council specified under subparagraphs (m), (n), and (o) of this Section shall be elected by the *ex officio* members of the Council in a transparent and fair selection process. They shall each serve a term of three (3) years and may be reappointed for another term.

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The members of the Council shall serve without compensation, except for the actual and necessary travelling and subsistence expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, either in their attendance in meetings of the Council or in connection with other official business authorized through a resolution of the Council, subject to existing rules and regulations. Each member shall have the full capacity and accountability for decisions binding to the member's sector.

The members of the Council duly elected or appointed prior to the effectivity of this Act shall continue their term until the expiration of their term or appointment. Thereafter, members of the Council shall be appointed in accordance with the provisions of this Act: *Provided*, That at least forty percent (40%) of the members of the Council shall be women pursuant to Republic Act No. 9710 or "The Magna Carta of Women".

A member of the Council may be removed for any of the following grounds:

- (a) More than three (3) consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings of the Council;
- (b) Commission of acts prejudicial to the development and management of the BWNP as embodied in existing rules and regulations governing the BWNP;
- (c) Disassociation from the office or organization being represented;
- (d) Termination of relationship with the office or organization being represented; or
- (e) Conviction by final judgment of any criminal act.

The local government of the City of Balanga shall provide a Secretariat for the Council including the funding necessary to cover the expenses for the performance of its official functions and activities.

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**SEC. 10. Functions and Responsibilities of the Council.** – The Council shall be responsible for the following:

- (a) Formulation and implementation of the ecotourism development and management plan in consultation with the local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders;
- (b) Assessment and evaluation of the potential impact of the development to the environmental safety and well-being of the site, communities, and enterprises;
- (c) Provision of technical and financial assistance to the communities within the site;
- (d) Implementation of a monitoring plan for the waterbirds and their habitats to ensure their presence and well-being in the BWNP;
- (e) Formulation of the rules and regulations in relation to the maintenance and security of the ecotourism site; and
- (f) Performance of other functions as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

**SEC. 11. Formulation of Guidelines and Standards.** – The DENR and the DOT shall assist the Council in the formulation of local ecotourism standards ensuring that environmental protection is integrated in the development and management of the ecotourism plans.

The guidelines and standards shall:

- (a) Raise the capacity of all stakeholders and ensure that best practices are followed;
- (b) Ensure optimal use of water and energy;
- (c) Reduce waste and pollution through the encouragement of recycling and other environmentally-sound waste management reduction and disposal schemes;
- (d) Prevent vandalism in the facilities of the eco-park; and
- (e) Encourage the use of local produce and services, and support the employment of local people.

**SEC. 12. Coordination with National Agencies.** – The DENR and the DOT shall closely coordinate with the Council, as well as the relevant regional offices of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Philippine National Police (PNP), Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and other line agencies of the government in the implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DENR and the DOT, in consultation with the Council, other concerned government agencies, and stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper and effective implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 14. Appropriations.** – The Secretaries of the DENR, DOT, and DPWH and the Chief Operating Officer of the TIEZA shall include in their subsidy programs, support for the capital outlay requirements of the BWNP for the preliminary implementation of this Act and enhancement of the facilities of the ecotourism zone which shall be taken from the budget of their respective agencies for the current fiscal year.

The budgetary allocations for the succeeding years shall be included in the General Appropriations Act, subject to government audit.


**SEC. 15. Separability Clause.** – If, for any reason, any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

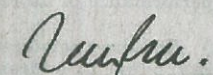
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**SEC. 16. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations and administrative regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

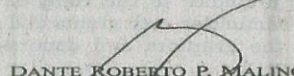
**SEC. 17. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation or in the *Official Gazette*.

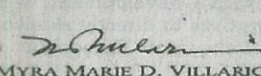
Approved,

  
GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO  
Speaker of the House  
of Representatives

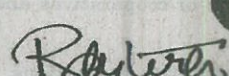
  
VICENTE C. SOTTO III  
President of the Senate

This Act was passed by the Senate of the Philippines as Senate Bill No. 2228 on May 27, 2019, and adopted by the House of Representatives as an amendment to House Bill No. 8441 on May 29, 2019.

  
DANTE ROBERTO P. MALING  
Acting Secretary General  
House of Representatives

  
MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA  
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: AUG 08 2019

  
RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE  
President of the Philippines