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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR Secretary Cimatu, naniniwalang nasapawan na ng sobrang suporta ng publiko at ni Pangulong Duterte ang kritisismo sa Manila Bay beach nourishment project

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) -Sep. 23, 2020 at 1:38pm



Naniniwala si Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu na nasapawan na ng suportang ibinigay ng publiko at ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang mga kritisismo sa beach nourishment project na isang mahalagang bahagi ng Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

Pinasalamatan ni Cimatu ang publiko at ang Pangulo sa ibinigay na pagkilala sa mga pagsisikap ng Manila Bay Task Force na linisin ang bahagi ng Baywalk.

Sinabi pa ni Cimatu na ang pagdagsa ng mga tao sa Manila Bay noong nakalipas na weekend upang masulyapan ang white sand beach ay isang malakas na indikasyon na ang proyekto ay labis na sinusupportahan ng publiko.

Nalungkot nga lamang ang environment chief nang hindi naipatupad ng maayos ang physical distancing dahil na rin sa kagustuhan ng mga tao na makita ang white sand beach.

Ibinabahagi naman ni Cimatu ang mga papuri at pagkilala na natatanggap ng DENR dahil sa beach nourishment project sa iba pang mga mandamus agency.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/denr-secretary-cimatu-naniniwalang-nasapawan-na-ng-sobrang-suporta-ng-publiko-at-ni-pangulong-duterte-ang-kritisismo-sa-manila-bay-beach-nourishment-project/?fbclid=IwAR07KAQFXAa8pSviUpuZkgdIscSekOaBavQaSp4kYKtjLp3lO57cSMQX2hA>



Brush up on math, DENR exec tells Ridon

Published September 24, 2020, 10:17 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

An executive of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has told a non-government organization leader to brush up on math amid continuous allegations that the Manila Bay beach nourishment project is “overpriced.”



DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGU Concerns Benny Antiporda


DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGU Concerns Benny Antiporda said he had reached out three times to Infrawatch PH convenor Terry Ridon to enlighten him that the overlaying of dolomite sand was not overpriced as he thought.

“This gentleman has been criticizing the project, claiming it was ‘overpriced.’ In the spirit of fairness, I took it upon myself to call him on the phone, not once but thrice on different occasions,” Antiporda said in a statement.

On his first call, the DENR official explained to Ridon that the project is estimated to cover 30,000 square meters, with the length of 500 meters by 60 meters width.

“To make it look overpriced, Ridon divided the project cost, which is P389 million, by 500 meters, instead of the number of square meters. This erroneous formula led him to conclude that the project costs P778,000 per meter. But if he divided P389 million by 30,000 square meters, the result would be P12,267 per square meter, which is quite reasonable. He certainly got a lecture on Math 101,” Antiporda said.

“I also explained to him that only P28 million was used to emplace the crushed dolomite rocks. Moreover, the amount covers not only the price of the crushed dolomites, but the whole package which includes the delivery cost from Cebu to Manila Bay,” he added.

Antiporda also criticized Ridon as he also once served under the Duterte administration as chair of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor. 

“He merely shrugged and told me that we should just explain it to the public, which is actually what we have been doing all along,” he said.

He pointed out that he tried to reach out again to Ridon on the second occasion to reiterate his response to the allegation of overpricing, “but my call fell on deaf ears and he continued with his unfounded criticisms against the project.”



On the third time that Antiporda called Ridon, “he kept on insisting that the project was overpriced despite my repeated explanation,” which out of his frustration blurted “bobo ka (Ridon) sa Math (you are stupid in Math).”

“In all these circumstances, I tried to reach out to him in the hope that he would listen with an open mind about our mission to bring Manila Bay back to its former glory. But his actions speak that whatever this government undertakes, will only get flak from him and his group,” Antiporda said.



You have done nothing for Manila Bay: DENR exec to Akbayan

By Marita Moaje September 24, 2020, 6:57 pm



DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda

MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday hit back at Akbayan after the group filed a motion urging the Supreme Court to cite the agency in contempt over the dumping of crushed dolomites along Manila Bay.

“Our message is, *nasaan kayo nang kasalukuyang puno ng basura ang Roxas Boulevard at Manila Bay* (Our message is, where were you when Roxas Boulevard in Manila Bay was full of trash and garbage)?” DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said in a statement.

Long before current officials of the DENR were assigned in the agency, Antiporda said Akbayan has done nothing concrete in saving the degrading status of the bay, once known for its beauty and breathtaking sunsets.

“If they call the dolomite overlaying as ‘dumping’, what do we call the pile of garbage and silt that was recovered in that area? Can we call it ‘caring’ for Manila Bay?” Antiporda said.

Akbayan chair emeritus Etta Rosales urged the high court to cite DENR in contempt for dumping the controversial dolomite in the area.

The group is asking the SC to declare the action of the DENR as a direct violation of its continuing mandamus judgment and contemptuous to its lawful order.

Antiporda said Akbayan has “no moral ascendancy of dipping even their smallest finger in this issue because they came before us in this government and they have done nothing to come up with a concrete action to save Manila Bay”. **(PNA)**



Akbayan sinopla ni Antiporda



September 24, 2020 @ 4:52 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Sinopla ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda ang grupong Akbayan na naghain ng mosyon sa Korte Suprema laban sa isinasagawang Manila Bay white sands project.

Sinabi ni Antiporda na wala silang moral ascendancy para sumawsaw sa naturang isyu dahil matagal na sila sa pwesto subalit wala silang konkretong ginawa para isalba ang Manila Bay na ginawang tambakan ng sangkaterbang basura.

“Nasaan kayo nang kasalukuyang puno ng basura ang Roxas Blvd. at Manila Bay,” tanong ni Antiporda sa Akbayan.

Idinagdag pa ni Antiporda na kung “dumping” ang tawag ng Akbayan sa paglalagay ng dinurog na dolomite sands sa baybayin ng Manila Bay, matatawag kayang “caring” para sa Manila Bay ang sangkaterbang basurang narekober sa naturang lugar?

Ginawa ni Antiporda ang pahayag bilang tugon sa hirit nina Akbayan chair emeritus Etta Rosales, Akbayan Youth chairperson Dr. RJ Naguit at Akbayan-Manila Youth Leader Rafaela David sa SC na ideklara ang ‘dumping’ ng dolomite bilang direktang paglabag sa mandamus judgment nito noong 2008 na nag-aatas sa DENR at iba pang ahensya na protektahan at linisin ang Manila Bay.

Ipinaliwanag ni Antiporda na ang puting buhangin o dinurog na dolomite ay nagpapahiwatig ng kalinisan at nagsisilbing awareness campaign sa mga tao na pahalagahan ang kapaligiran.

Aniya, ginawa rin ang proyekto para sa mga taong hindi pa nakaranas o nakarating sa mga kilalang white sand beach sa Boracay, El Nido at Bohol at inaasahan na sa katapusan ng taon ay pwede nang paliguan ang Manila Bay.

Tiniyak din ni Antiporda na ginagamitan nila ng ‘engineering interventions’ ang Manila Bay beach nourishment project para protektahan at maiwasan ang pagguho ng dinurog na dolomite na inilatag sa naturang lugar.

Binanggit pa nito na tumugon din ang DENR sa panawagan ng Pangulo na ibalik sa Department of Budget and Management ang ilang bahagi ng badyet ng DENR para sa kampanya ng pamahalaan laban sa COVID-19 pandemic. **RNT**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/akbayan-sinopla-ni-antiporda/>



ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNICATION EXPERTS CLEAR UP MANILA BAY CONTROVERSY



Photo: Business Standard

The country's capital for economic activity from shipping, industrial, commercial, aquaculture and tourism activities – the Manila Bay – had been in hotspot since the government's white sand project at the bay.

The Department of Science and Technology-National Research Council of the Philippines, in collaboration with Geological Society of the Philippines (GSP) and University of the Philippines Los Baños School of Environmental Science and Management (SESAM), shed light on the issue of Manila Bay, not only on its beach enrichment, but also in the context of its environmental management through a whole of system approach last September 18, 2020 via a webinar.

Government Manila Bay Rehabilitation efforts

The webinar served its purpose of focusing not only on the beach enrichment aspect but also informed the public on the well-planned environmental management of the Manila Bay through its Rehabilitation Program.

This was supported by Atty. Jonas R. Leones, Undersecretary for Priority Programs, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as he said that the white sand project in some parts of the Manila Bay shoreline is a beach nourishment initiative.

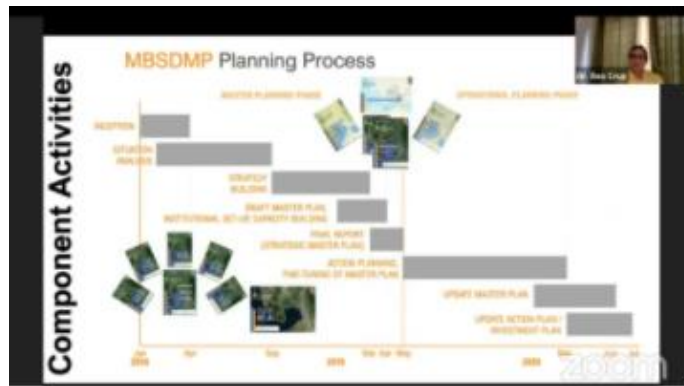
“This is to fast track our compliance to the Supreme Court Mandamus dated December 18, 2008, which directs 13 government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay, and restore and maintain its water to SB level”, said Undersecretary Leones.

To ease the public's concern and make them well informed on this government initiatives, Atty. Leones showed the designed geo-engineering interventions to make sure that the white sand will not be easily washed out, contrary to public's sentiments. To make it more valid, Usec. Leones shared that one resort in the Philippines which used dolomite, the Shangri-La beach front in Cebu, served as a model for the Manila Bay beach nourishment. He added that this aesthetic initiative does not require environment impact studies.

The Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program include clean-up/water quality improvement (phase 1); full rehabilitation and resettlement (phase 2); and protection and sustainment (phase 3). USec Leones also mentioned that the solar-powered Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) which was unveiled last July 30, 2020 along Roxas Boulevard is now operational. The STP is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day.

Development of the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master plan

For big projects as the Manila Bay, experts convened and gathered numerous times to detail and develop the masterplan for the success and sustainability of the project.



Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, former UPLB Chancellor shows the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan.

Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, former UPLB Chancellor, walked through the participants to the framework for the development of the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan. He mentioned the importance of institutional set-up options and detailed these options such as strengthening the existing Manila Bay structures, expanding Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) coverage and empowering its Manila Bay Task Force, and creating a new agency or authority similar to the LLDA.

‘Dolomite’ communication fiasco

Lack of transparency, according to Dr. Ma. Stella C. Tirol, Dean, UPLB College of Development Communication, is one of the fiascos that fueled the doubts among the public.

Dr. Tirol detailed how the public is so deranged about the Manila Bay white sand project, which according to her, all started with the communication issues.

These communication issues include inappropriate timing of the project at the height of the pandemic, missing the big picture which created information gaps, thus making more people to speculate.

Also, the unharmonized mouthpieces– the DENR and the Department of Health (DOH) -when they first contradicted each other about the safety of dolomites also added to the issues particularly on the communication issue on the credibility reversal due to the retracted statement of DOH.

In light of these issues, Dean Tirol shared some good communication practices, such as preparing a communication plan, building good relationship with media, reporting positive results/stories/build champions as advocates, social media training or communication capacity building, and listening to public opinions and complaints.

Geological considerations in Manila Bay coastal management, soil liquefaction

The experts did not set aside the geological considerations for the coastal management of the bay. Dr. Karlo Queaño, Professor at Ateneo de Manila University, stressed that the adaptation and mitigation strategies will need to be reviewed carefully to strengthen flood resilience.



Dr. Karlo Queaño, Professor, Ateneo de Manila University, presents the geological considerations for Manila Bay.



He also added the need for adaptation strategies to protect or enhance the ecosystem and improve future development planning to deter large community displacement and damage to infrastructures.

On the other hand, Dr. Jonathan R. Dungca, Professor, De La Salle University, presented several studies and previous incidences of earthquake-induced soil liquefactions in other countries such as in Japan.

Soil liquefaction, also called earthquake liquefaction, is the ground failure or loss of strength that causes otherwise solid soil to behave temporarily as a viscous liquid. (Britannica)

“A magnitude 5 earthquake can already cause a liquefaction in Manila Bay, since saturated sand deposits are loose,” said Dr. Dungca.

DOST Secretary Fortunato dela Peña also briefly joined the forum to thank the organizers for coming up with such a timely open discussion of the much-talked about Manila Bay rehabilitation.

On the other hand, Dr. Gregorio E.H. del Pilar, NRCP President said that many aspects of the project can be considered, as he posed the question about the maintenance and engineering sustainability in justifying the cost.

USec. Leones said that putting of white sand in some parts of Manila Bay will also address behavioral attitude that will help in cleaning and rehabilitating the bay.

Lastly, Dr. Graciano P. Yumul, former DOST Undersecretary, also stressed that supporting and trusting the government efforts and initiatives are the best we could do as a citizen.

This forum was led by Dr. Carla Dimalanta, President, GSP, Dr. Yumul, Dr. Marieta Banez Sumagaysay, Executive Director, DOST-NRCP, Dr. Edanjarlo Marquez, Chair, NRCP Division of Earth and Space Sciences, and Dr. Decibel F. Eslava, Dean, SESAM, and was attended by more than 1000 participants from different sectors.

The organizers are still open for another discussion to further clarify the environmental issues of the Manila Bay.



Sewerage treatment facility sa Manila Bay, iniangat ang water quality ng tubig

September 23, 2020 min read Pol Montibon

MATAPOS ang dalawang buwan, nakitaan na ng pagbabago ang water quality ng Manila Bay sa tulong ng bago at kauna-unahang sewerage treatment plant sa bansa. Matatagpuan ito sa bahagi ng Manila Bay Baywalk.

Batay sa datos ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources o DENR, malaki na ang ipinagbago sa kalidad ng tubig sa Manila Bay mula nang ipatupad ang malawakang rehabilitasyon sa lugar.

Bago pa man simulan ng pamahalaan ang rehabilitasyon sa buong Manila Bay, nakapagtala ito ng mataas na fecal coliform levels hanggang sa tuluyan na itong bumaba dahil sa pagtigil ng pagdaloy ng mga maruming tubig na nanggagaling sa ilang malalaking establisyementong malapit sa Manila Bay.

| WATER QUALITY IN MAJOR MANILA BAY OUTFALLS | | |
|--|------------------------|---|
| WATERWAYS | NOON | NGAYON |
| PADRE FAURA WATERWAYS | 7.21 MILLION MPN/100ML | 920,000 MOST PROBABLE NUMBER PER 100 MILLILITER |
| RAJA SOLIMAN/ REMEDIOS DRAINAGE | 35 MILLION MPN/100ML | 11 MILLION MPN/100ML |
| MANILA YACHT CLUB | 110 MILLION MPN/100ML | 54 MILLION MPN/100ML |

Nito lamang buwan ng Hulyo, itinayo ang kauna-unahang solar-powered sewerage treatment facility sa Manila Baywalk na bahagi pa rin ng Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program.

Ayon kay [DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu](#), ito ang kauna-unahang pasilidad sa bansa na may kakayanang maglinis ng tubig mula sa nabanggit na tatlong waterways bago ito umabot sa Manila Bay.

Kaya nitong magkarga ng hanggang 500,000 liters ng tubig hanggang 2,000,000 liters sa kada water tanks nito.

At bago lumabas ang tubig mula sa nasabing planta, tiniyak ng DENR na malinis na itong dadaloy sa karagatan ng Manila Bay.



Sa katumayan ani Cimatu, mula sa 770 mpn/100ML positibo ang ahensiya na mapababa pa ng planta ang water level ng Manila Bay hanggang sa 200 mpn/100ML

Mula sa nasabing water level ay maaari nang pahintulutan ng DENR ang pagligo sa Manila Bay.

Mula sa isang treatment plant, balak pa ng DENR na magtayo ng tatlo pang malalaking solar-powered sewage treatment plants sa major river systems sa Metro Manila sa ilalim pa rin ng Manila Bay Rehab Program.

Kabilang sa mga pagtatayuan nito ang bahagi ng Libertad sa Parañaque River, Tullahan-Tinajeros River ng northern Metro Manila, at sa Las Piñas-Zapote River

Ayon pa kay Cimatu sa isa nitong pahayag, ang nasabing treatment plant ay isang malaking hakbang para sa mga inaasahang pagbabago sa Manila at maibalik dito ang pagligo, pangingsda, at iba pang recreational activities.

“The sewage treatment plant is a big step forward to making Manila Bay safe again for swimming, bathing, boating, fishing and other forms of contact recreation.”

—Secretary Roy Cimatu, DENR

Ang nasabing treatment facility ay bahagi ng P43 billion Manila Bay Rehabilitation Project ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

SMNI NEWS

Source: <https://www.smninewschannel.com/sewage-treatment-facility-sa-manila-bay-iniangat-ang-water-quality-ng-tubig/?fbclid=IwAR3Ix9XsV7YByHJk5Jw4UKZdGVWGB5w4mgX6EaicRrvnMDrk4lkfJ1OnkI>



Ang galing! Solar Water Treatment Plant para linisin ang Manila Bay naitayo na

By [dailybncnews](#) -September 23, 2020

Hindi lang paglalagay ng artificial white sand ang inaasikaso ng gobyerno ngayon upang mapaganda at mapalinis ang Manila Bay.

Maalala na inulan ng batikos ang manila bay rehabilitation project ng gobyerno dahil tila hindi naman daw malilinis ng artificial white sand ang karagatan.

Ngunit sa isang post ay ipinakita ni Atty. Trixie Cruz-Angeles na nakapagtayo na pala ang gobyerno ng solar-powered sewage treatment plant malapit sa Manila Bay.

Naglalayon ang nasabing planta na linisin ang mga tubig na didiretso sa Manila Bay upang hindi na madagdagan pa ang polusyon sa nasabing lugar.



Hindi napigilan ni Cruz-Angeles na banatan ang mga kritiko ng proyekto sa Manila Bay dahil sa isang bagay lang daw sila nakatingin.

"Ang Manila Bay Rehabilitation ay isang malaking proyekto bunga ng decision ng Korte Suprema nuon 2008 na nagutos linisin ang lugar na ito (more on this in the next post). Dinagdag ni Pangulong Duterte ang puntiryang paabutin sa antas na maaari nang mag swimming at mangisda dito ng ligtas sa ating kalusugan."

"Kung kaya't bilang bahagi ng rehabilitasyong ito, nag tayo ng solar powered sewerage treatment plant ang DENR sa Manila, nitong July. Lilinis nito ang outflow galing sa tatlo sa pinakamalalaking drain falls ng Maynila. Makakahandle ito ng hangga't 500,000 liters ng wastewater sa isang araw."

"Ano ang wastewater? Yung greywater na lumalabas sa mga drain natin pag naghugas tayo ng pinggan, nag rinse ng mga pamunas, basahan, laundry plus yung toilet water. Oo yun finaflush natin. Eyw."



"Pag lumabas ang tubig sa STP at mag drain sa Manila Bay, malinis na ito at mapapababa ang coliform levels sa tabing dagat natin."

"So, no. Sorry trolls. Isang bahagi lang ang tinitignan ninyo at pilit binabatikos."

Samantala, sinabi ng DENR na umaasa silang mapapababa ng treatment plant ang coliform level ng Manila Bay hangga't sa maging ligtas na itong paliguan ng mga tao.

Kaya diumanong linisin nito ang 500,000 litro na tubig kada araw bago ito ibalik sa Manila Bay.

Balak pa nilang magtayo ng tatlo pang sewage treatment plants sa mga susunod na buwan.

Binuksan ang nasabing treatment plant noong Hulyo.

Source: https://dailybncnews.com/2020/09/23/ang-galing-solar-water-treatment-plant-para-linisin-ang-manila-bay-naitayo-na/?fbclid=IwAR1KjjXoPg4CKo4N0E6_pcTQwzbPpm2CpNF-LA78aySsKdSaLT1rNjl5a18



ABS-CBN News

15h · 🌐



Itinanggi ng DENR na inaanod na ng tubig ang itinambak na dolomite sa baybayin ng Manila Bay. Ayon kay Environment Usec. Benny Antiporda, ongoing pa ang pagtatambak sa mga lugar na nakuhanan ng larawan. #HeadlinePilipinas



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Patapusin muna ang #ManilaBay white beach project bago ito batikusin. 'Yan ang giit ng DENR kasunod ng kumalat na litrato online ng dolomite na tila naanod na ng tubig.

Balikan ang 24 Oras livestream: <https://bit.ly/3mEwq2y>



DENR: PATAPUSIN MUNA ANG MANILA BAY WHITE BEACH PROJECT BAGO ITO BATIKUSIN

Giit ng DENR, patapusin muna ang Manila Bay White Beach project bago ito batikusin. Kasunod 'yan ng kumalat na litrato online ng dolomite na tila naanod na ng tubig. Nilatagan na rin ito ng mga sandbag ng contractor ng proyekto. Natural lang naman daw ang erosion sa kahit anong lupang katabi ng anumang katawang tubig.



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Joseph Cortes, Editor

Friday, 25 September 2020
Daily Tribune



AN AERIAL view of the portion of Manila Bay recently rehabilitated and beautified with crushed dolomite.

POND NEWS ASIA



DENR worsened Manila Bay, Akbayan tells SC

By: [Dona Z. Pazzibugan](#) - Reporter / [@dpazzibuganINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:20 AM September 25, 2020

A party-list group on Thursday asked the Supreme Court to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for contempt for violating its 2008 order to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay when it dumped crushed dolomite rocks along a stretch of the water body to create an artificial white sand beach.

“A dolomite beach in Manila Bay is nothing but a window-dressing project. Disregarding the unconscionable cost at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, it might even be acceptable if it does no harm to the environment and to humans. But it does,” Akbayan said in a petition it filed in the high court.

The DENR’s action has endangered Manila Bay’s ecosystem and created a health hazard, Akbayan said. It “destroys the Manila Bay ecological habitat [and] exposes human residents to the health hazards of a mineral substance used for construction materials,”

Sought for comment, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said Akbayan “had no moral ascendancy of dipping even their smallest finger in this issue.”

“If they call the dolomite overlaying as ‘dumping,’ what do we call the pile of garbage and silt that was recovered in that area?” he said in a statement sent to reporters. “Can we call it ‘caring’ for Manila Bay? [Akbayan] came before us in this government and they have done nothing to come up with a concrete action to save Manila Bay.”

“Our message ultimately is where were you when Roxas Boulevard was drowning in garbage?” he added.

Mandamus order

On Dec. 18, 2008, the Supreme Court granted the petition of a group of concerned residents and issued a standing order directing government agencies led by the DENR to rehabilitate Manila Bay and restore its waters to levels fit for swimming, skin diving and other forms of contact recreation.

Though it is not one of the original petitioners, Akbayan asked the Supreme Court for leave to intervene in the case, invoking “the protection of public interests.”

“The plans to beautify Manila Bay to the detriment of its ecosystem is a direct violation of the continuing mandamus [court order],” said Akbayan, led by its 81-year-old former party list Rep. Etta Rosales.

About a month ago, the DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways began dumping crushed dolomite boulders from Cebu province on a stretch of Manila Bay as part of its P389-million artificial beach enhancement project.

Officials of both departments said the project was meant to give Metro Manila residents the feel of Boracay’s famed white powdery beaches.



P389-M project

Akbayan said the Supreme Court should order the DENR to disclose the details of its P389-million project, pointing out that the money came from the contingency fund of the Office of the President in 2019.

Dolomite, it said, could never be considered a restoration and rehabilitation material for degraded foreshore areas, since it is not the naturally occurring silica sand that is found along the country's coastlines.

“The presence of dolomite will only make the water classification worse,” said Akbayan. It cited a data safety report by the US-based construction materials supplier Lehigh Hanson Inc., which stated that dolomite could cause cancer, damage to lungs through prolonged repeated exposure, and skin and eye irritation.

Dolomite is used in manufacturing bricks, mortar, cement, plastics, paving materials and other construction materials.

The petition claimed that it was impossible that the DENR was not aware of the consequences and lack of sustainability of its artificial beach enhancement project, as well as the potential harm to the ecosystem and to human health. —WITH A REPORT FROM KRIXIA SUBINGSUBING

Source: https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1339992/denr-worsened-bay-sc-told?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3aBx4W-55XRr56BU8W1vKKrHc5kwSy_8YFzRIkbs0p-RMlkmJyqEmj3Pc#Echobox=1600985795



SC asked to cite DENR in contempt for dolomite dumping at Manila Bay

Published September 24, 2020, 3:13 PM

by [Jeffrey Damicog](#)

The Supreme Court on Thursday was asked to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for contempt for dumping hazardous crushed dolomite in violation of the High Tribunal's order to the government to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay.



Members of Akbayan Partylist files a motion asking the Supreme Court to cite DENR in contempt in line with the use of artificial white sand in Manila Bay on Thursday.
(Photo by Jansen Romero / MANILA BULLETIN)

“Dumping artificial white sand to achieve an artificial Boracay-like beach in Manila Bay is a direct violation of the Continuing Mandamus,” Akbayan Citizen’s Action party said in a 16-page motion-in-intervention to cite the DENR in contempt.

Akbayan warned that the dumping of dolomite along Manila Bay “would most probably cause irreparable damage to the coastal environment of this national and historic body of water.” Akbayan reminded that the SC issued the continuing mandamus in its landmark December 2008 decision which ordered 13 government agencies, including the DENR, to rehabilitate Manila Bay.

The SC directed the DENR in its decision “to fully implement its Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy for the rehabilitation, restoration, and conservation of the Manila Bay at the earliest possible time.”

“The continuing mandamus judgment was issued to put an end to the era of delays, procrastination, and ad hoc measures. It made it a continuing duty of the agencies covered by the writ to act despite the absence of a specific pollution incident, and to consider the preservation of Manila Bay as a mandatory and directory duty,” Akbayan said.

However, the petitioner pointed out that the P389-million artificial beach enhancement project at the Manila Bay is “not in line with the duty of DENR in the continuing mandamus as such artificial beach enhancement project is not in the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan (MBSDMP).”

“The plans to beautify Manila Bay to the detriment of its ecosystem is a direct violation of the continuing mandamus. The dumping of crushed dolomite boulders on the foreshore areas of Manila Bay contravenes the order. It destroys the Manila Bay ecological habitat that is home to various species of flora and fauna. It exposes human residents to the health hazards of a mineral substance used for construction materials,” Akbayan told the SC.

The petitioner said Dolomite is “a non-metallic material used in manufacturing bricks, mortar, cement, concrete, plastics, paving materials, and other construction materials.”



“It has low solubility, which makes it resistant to the acid content of rain and soil,” it added.

Akbayan chair emeritus Etta Rosales, Akbayan Youth chair Dr. RJ Naguit, and Akbayan-Manila Youth Leader Rafaela David filed the petition.

The movants also called on the SC to immediately convene the Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC) chaired by Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta to review and determine the effects of the dolomite dumping operations.

Rosales said the refusal of the DENR to submit public reports on the artificial beach enhancement project was gross and direct violations of the SC’s continuing mandamus. (*with a report from Raymund Antonio*)



In a 16-page motion-in-intervention, the Akbayan Citizen's Action Party said the DENR violated the high court's order for 16 government agencies, including the DENR, to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman, file

Cite DENR in contempt over Manila beach, SC asked

[Evelyn Macairan](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 25, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Supreme Court (SC) was asked yesterday to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt for dumping crushed dolomite on Manila Bay.

In a 16-page motion-in-intervention, the Akbayan Citizen's Action Party said the DENR violated the high court's order for 16 government agencies, including the DENR, to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve Manila Bay.

The political party, represented by former Commission on Human Rights chairperson Loretta Ann Rosales, Rafaela Mae Lopez David and Raymond John Naguit, said the DENR failed to comply with the continuing mandamus issued by the SC in December 2008.

"Dumping artificial white sand to achieve a Boracay-like beach in Manila Bay is a violation of the SC directive," Akbayan said.

The petitioner said the dumping of dolomite on Manila Bay "would probably cause irreparable damage to the coastal environment of the historic body of water."

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu maintained that the P389-million white sand project along the baywalk of Roxas Boulevard is a vital component of the government's Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

The agency said the project is in accordance with SC mandamus, which ordered government agencies to work together to rehabilitate the bay.

"In more than a decade since the order was issued, it was only under the Duterte administration that the government finally set in motion an honest-to-goodness undertaking to bring Manila Bay back to its former glory," the DENR said.

The white sand project of the DENR drew flak due to possible environmental and health risks posed by crushed dolomite. — **Elizabeth Marcelo**

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/09/25/2044925/cite-denr-contempt-over-manila-beach-sc-asked>



SC urged to cite DENR in contempt over sand dumping

posted September 25, 2020 at 01:20 am

by [Rey E. Requejo](#)

The Supreme Court has been asked to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in contempt for allegedly dumping dolomite sand on Manila Bay, a move complainants said was a direct violation of the high court's continuing mandamus order for state agencies to clean up and rehabilitate the bay.

In a 16-page motion, the Akbayan Citizens' Action Party through its chairman emeritus Etta Rosales sought to intervene in the more than 10 year-old mandamus case pertaining to the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay.

The party-list group said dolomite sand is hazardous to health and the environment.

It also called on the SC to immediately convene the Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC), headed by the Chief Justice, to review and determine the effects of the dolomite dumping operations along the bay under the DENR's 'nourishment' project.

In 2008, the SC issued a writ of mandamus directing the DENR, as the lead agency, and other government agencies such as the Metro Manila Development Authority, Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Budget and Management, Philippine Coast Guard, National Maritime Group, Department of Interior and Local Government and local government units to restore Manila Bay to a condition suitable for public bathing and swimming and for breeding bangus (milkfish) and similar fish species.

But the petitioner claimed that dolomite contains varying levels of crystalline silica that can damage human lungs, cause cancer when breathed in, and irritate the skin and eyes. With Willie Casas Besides, the group argued that the dumping of crushed dolomite boulders on the foreshore would destroy Manila Bay's ecological habitat that is home to various species of flora and fauna.

The petitioner insisted that building an artificial beach in Manila Bay is not in line with the duty of DENR in the continuing mandamus as such an artificial beach enhancement project is not in the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan

"Dumping artificial white sand to achieve an artificial Boracay-like beach in Manila Bay is a direct violation of the Continuing Mandamus. The presence of dolomite in Manila Bay will never make the waters fit for swimming, skin-diving, and other forms of contact recreation; the presence of dolomite will only make the water classification therein worse," Rosales said.

The petitioner cited the data safety report by US-based Company Lehigh Hanson Inc., where it was stated that dolomite may cause cancer, damage to organs through prolonged repeated exposure, and may cause skin and eye irritation.

The group took note of the statement made by DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergerie that the dolomite sand could pose health risks, including eye irritation and discomfort in the gastrointestinal system.

The petitioner cited Oceana Philippines' claim that the project may harm the natural ecosystem and coastal integrity of Manila Bay, as the sand "does not appear to be a natural substrate of that portion of the bay." With Willie Casas



Akbayan wants DENR cited in contempt over ‘white sands beach’

By [Ashzel Hachero](#) -September 25, 2020

THE party-list group Akbayan Citizens Action Party yesterday asked the Supreme Court to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in contempt for violating the SC’s 2008 order directing the department and other government agencies to protect, rehabilitate and clean Manila Bay.

In a 16-page motion, Akbayan said the DENR move paving the shore area of the bay with dolomite sand as part of its P389 million beautification project directly contravenes the SC order.

“Akbayan believes that the dolomite dumping operations of the DENR and the DPWH on Manila Bay was done in utter and complete disregard and violation of the continuing mandamus judgment of the Honorable Supreme Court in this case,” the petition said.

“The dolomite dumping operation at the Manila Bay will not rehabilitate and restore the Manila Bay coast as a natural habitat. Rehabilitation and restoration as a natural habitat entails the implementation of activities which are free from the introduction of exotic materials – materials that are otherwise alien and not naturally occurring to the coastal environment’s indigenous state such as dolomite,” the petition said.

Akbayan said building an artificial “white sands beach” on Manila Bay is not in line with the DENR’s duty as provided for under the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan (MBSDMP).

It also said the project is inconsistent with the National Economic Development Authority’s sustainable development plan.

“Clearly, when DENR admitted that its artificial beach enhancement project does not match the plans of NEDA, it also admitted that the project is in direct contravention of the MBSDMP,” it added.

Akbayan also noted the possible health hazards posed by dolomite to the public, citing a report by the US-based firm Lehigh Hanson Inc. that it may cause cancer, damage to the lungs and skin and eye irritation through prolonged and repeated exposure.

It also cited a statement earlier this month by Health Undersecretary Ma. Rosario Vergeire that dolomite can pose health risks, including respiratory problems.

The DOH though backtracked and claimed otherwise.

Akbayan also asked the SC to convene the Manila Bay Advisory Committee headed by the Chief Justice to “review and determine the effect of the dolomite dumping operations consistent with the precautionary principle.”

The Manila police tried to prevent Akbayan members from holding a brief protest action outside the gate of the SC compound on Padre Faura, Manila, saying they need a permit to stage a rally. They were later allowed to hold a brief program before filing the petition.

Source: https://malaya.com.ph/index.php/news_news/akbayan-wants-denr-cited-in-contempt-over-white-sands-beach/



Regional Updates (09/24/20)

September 24, 2020 | 7:31 pm



Akbayan asks SC to cite DENR for contempt over Manila Bay project

AKBAYAN CITIZENS' Action Party asked the Supreme Court to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt for dumping crushed dolomite along Manila Bay to create a "white sand" effect. In its motion-in-intervention, Akbayan said DENR's project violates its continuing mandate to rehabilitate the bay. The party cites the ecological impact and health hazards of the material. "In truth, the artificial beach enhancement project does nothing to enhance the environmental integrity of Manila Bay. What is worse is the high probability that this costly cosmetic project might actually do more harm than good, both to the coastal marine environment and the residents of the Manila Bay area," it said. In a separate motion, Akbayan asked the court to allow it to intervene and immediately convene the Manila Bay Advisory Committee headed by the chief justice. — **Vann Marlo M. Villegas**



SC sinuway ng DENR sa 'white sand'

By Abante News Online — Last updated Sep 24, 2020

NEWS



38 0

Pinako-contempt ng grupong Akabayan sa Supreme Court (SC) ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) dahil sa ginawang pagtatambak ng kontrobersiyal na dolomite sand sa Manila Bay bilang bahagi ng hakbang na pagandahin ang lawa.

Sama-samang naghain ng mosyon sa SC sina Akbayan Chair Emeritus Etta Rosales , Akbayan Youth Chairperson Dr. RJ Naguit at Akbayan-Manila Youth Leader Rafaela David para igiit na ang pagtatambak ng DENR ng dolomite sand sa Manila Bay ay direktang paglabag.

Hiniling rin ng grupo sa SC na i-convene ang Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC),na pinamumunuan ni Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta na rebisahin at determinahin ang epekto ng dolomite dumping operations.

Sinabi ni Rosales na una nang kinilala ng SC ang massive environmental pollution ng Manila Bay, kaya nag-isyu ng mandamus judgment noong 2008 at inatasan ang DENR at iba pang ahensiya na protektahan at linisin ang Manila Bay.

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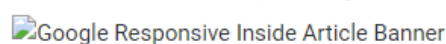
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Ayon kay Rosales, ang pagtatambak ng dolomite sand ng DENR ay isang banta sa kalusugan at kapaligiran at inamin na ang proyekto ay hindi alinsunod sa Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan at ang pagtangi na tuparin ang

kanilang obligasyon na magsumite ng public



reports kaugnay sa naturang artipisyal na beach enhancement project ay isa umanong paglabag sa mandamus judgment ng SC.



“Obviously, there is a need to save Manila Bay. But it has to be saved the right way. Right now, Manila Bay needs to be saved from incompetent and grandstanding public officials who resort to dangerous cosmetic solutions,” ayon kay Rosales.

Sinabi naman ni Naguit na malaking banta sa kaban ng bayan, kalikasan at kalusugan ang pagtatambak ng dolomite sand sa Manila Bay at mas mabuti na ang ginugol na pondo sa proyekto ay ginamit na lamang sa mga hospital at health workers.

Kasabay nito ay iginiit ni dating congressman at Infrawatch PH convenor Terry Ridon kay Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na suspendihin na ang Manila Bay white sand project.

“Inanod na po yung P28 million, wag na po natin pabayaan anurin yung susunod na P368M. Time to cut our losses; suspend the Manila Bay white sand project, Mr. President,” bahagi ng mensahi ni Ridon sa kanyang Facebook page. (Juliet de Loza-Cudia/Eileen Mencias)



Photo: Isa Avendaño-Umali's Twitter post

Akbayan urges SC to cite DENR in contempt over Manila Bay dolomite dumping

Published September 24, 2020 3:02pm

By JOVILAND RITA, GMA News

Akbayan on Thursday filed a motion urging the Supreme Court to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt over the dumping of crushed dolomites along Manila Bay.

Akbayan chair emeritus Etta Rosales, Akbayan Youth chairperson Dr. RJ Naguit, and Akbayan-Manila Youth Leader Rafaela David asked the High Tribunal to declare the dumping as a direct violation of its continuing mandamus judgment in 2008 ordering the DENR and other relevant agencies to protect and clean Manila Bay.

“There is a need to save Manila Bay. But it has to be saved the right way,” Rosales said.

“Right now, Manila Bay needs to be saved from incompetent and grandstanding public officials who resort to dangerous cosmetic solutions,” she added.

She said DENR’s dumping of dolomite sand which threatens public health and the environment, admission that the project is not in line with the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan, and refusal to fulfill its obligation to submit public reports on the artificial beach enhancement project are gross and direct violations of the SC’s continuing mandamus judgment.

The movants also called to immediately convene the Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC), headed by the Chief Justice, to review and determine the effects of the dolomite dumping operations.

"As if the pandemic is not bad enough, the government has added another threat to the health and safety of the people by dumping dangerous artificial sand along Manila Bay," Naguit said.



DZBB Super Radyo @dzbb · Sep 24, 2020

FLASH REPORT: Ilang miyembro ng Akbayan at Akbayan Youth, nagtungo sa Korte Suprema para maghain ng mosyon laban sa proyektong "Manila Bay Sands."

Pero mga pulis-Maynila, agad sinita ang grupo dahil wala raw silang permit para mag-rally. | via @Isa_Umali



DZBB Super Radyo @dzbb

WATCH: Pahayag ni Dr. @raymondnaguit ng Akbayan kaugnay sa kanilang paghahain ng mosyon sa Korte Suprema.

Sa kasagsagan ng panayam, kapansin-pansin ang mga pulis na nasa likuran ni Dr. Naguit. | via @Isa_Umali



12:16 PM · Sep 24, 2020

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“The money for this fake sand project could have been better utilized if it was allocated instead to the budget of public hospitals and health workers,” he added.

The project received [criticisms](#) over the issues of the possible health hazards of crushed dolomites and the timing of the project amid the COVID-19 pandemic, among others.

The DENR has already [defended](#) its decision to spruce up the area with dolomite sourced from Cebu.

Amid criticism, President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday [congratulated DENR Secretary](#) Roy Cimatu following the placement of crushed dolomites.

For environmental groups, however, the DENR’s rehabilitation of Manila Bay is [not commendable](#).—AOL, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/757019/akbayan-urges-sc-to-cite-denr-in-contempt-over-manila-bay-dolomite-dumping/story/>



Akbayan wants DENR cited in contempt over fake beach

Mike Navallo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 25 2020 05:43 AM | Updated as of Sep 25 2020 07:15 AM



Workers spread white sand along a portion of the Baywalk in Manila Bay on September 3, 2020 as part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program by the DENR. The white sand, which comes from Cebu, is spread from the banks of the bay near the US Embassy to the Yacht Club. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News/File*

MANILA – A citizen’s group has asked the Supreme Court to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt of court for violating a court order to clean and preserve Manila Bay when it dumped “fake” sand on “dolomite beach.”

Akbayan Citizen’s Action Party, represented by former Commission on Human Rights chair Etta Rosales, filed on Thursday a motion seeking to intervene in a case decided by the high court in 2008 which ordered the DENR to “clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay, and restore and maintain its waters...to make them fit for swimming, skin-diving and other forms of contact recreation.”

The purpose for the intervention is to hold the DENR responsible for supposedly violating the court order. A non-party to a case is not allowed to file any pleading without permission from the court.

“AKBAYAN believes that the artificial beach enhancement project is a danger to the environment. Specifically, AKBAYAN believes that the dolomite dumping operations of the DENR along Manila Bay was done in utter and complete disregard and violation of the continuing mandamus judgment issued for Manila Bay’s rehabilitation,” it said in its motion for leave to intervene.

“Moreover, AKBAYAN sees the act as an additional health risk to the public at large,” it added.

Rosales was joined by Center for Youth Advocacy executive director Rafaela Mae David and Akbayan Youth Chair Dr. Raymond John Naguit.

“Ang Korte Suprema natin mismo ang nagsabi na dapat meron talagang responsibilidad ang DENR para linisin ang Manila Bay. Pero yun nga, dahil hindi sinunod ito, nakikita natin na meron talagang kapabayaan ang DENR,” Naguit said during the filing.

The DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways spent P389 million to dump artificial white sand along Manila Bay Walk, which is actually crushed dolomite rock sourced from Cebu.

According to AKBAYAN, dolomite is “unnatural and synthetic” to Manila Bay and could have adverse effects on the health and well-being of residents and on the ecosystem itself.

“The fear of negative effects of DENR’s act of dumping dolomite sand along Manila Bay Walk is not unreasonable: dolomite contains varying levels of crystalline silica that can damage human lungs, cause cancer when breathed in, and irritate the skin and eyes,” the group’s motion to cite in contempt said, quoting a 2012 safety report of a Texas-based corporation that supplies building materials.

The group also relied on Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergerie’s previous statement that dolomite could pose health risks including eye irritation and gastrointestinal discomfort while Oceana Philippines noted possible harm on the natural ecosystem and coastal integrity



It added that the building of an artificial beach in Manila Bay is not part of its duties under the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan, the planning of which is headed by the National Development Authority (NEDA).

“A dolomite beach in Manila Bay is nothing but a window-dressing project. Disregarding the unconscionable cost at this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic, it might even be acceptable if it does no harm to the environment and to humans. But it does,” Akbayan said in closing.

The beautification project has generated controversy on social media as users point out the cost of the project could have been spent on efforts to address the coronavirus pandemic.

Its public opening over the last weekend also raised concerns over observance of physical distancing, wearing of face masks and other health protocols.

The cops’ failure to control the crowd led to the sacking of a station commander.

Last week, another group called Manila Bay Watch vowed to question the project before the Supreme Court.

Akbayan asks SC to cite DENR in contempt over dolomite dumping

September 24, 2020



The Akbayan group led by former Rep. Etta Rosales has filed a motion before the Supreme Court urging the tribunal to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt over the dumping of dolomite sand in Manila Bay.

The group is seeking the SC declaration on DENR's act as violative of the continuing mandamus of the court in 2008 regarding the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

They also requested the High Court to convene the Manila Bay Advisory Committee led by Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta to look into the effects of the artificial white sand.

The group claimed that dolomite sand is harmful to public health and to the environment. – *Report from Kenneth Paciente*



Motion vs dumping of dolomite sand filed at SC

September 25, 2020 | 1 min read

Led by its chairman Dr. RJ Naguit, the Akbayan Youth, has filed a motion before the Supreme Court to ask the high tribunal to cite the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in contempt over the dumping of artificial white sand in Manila Bay. The militant group argues the dumping of crushed dolomite sand in Manila Bay violates SC's continuing mandamus over the area. Signatories to the petition are Akbayan Chair Emeritus Etta Rosales, Akbayan Youth chairperson Dr. RJ Naguit and Julieta Agon Romano, Head Ministry on Ecology of the Sto. Nino de Pandacan Parish, Manila.

Kiara Lauren Ibanez / BENJAMIN CUARESMA



News5
17h · 🌐

Naghain ng mosyon sa Korte Suprema ang grupong Akbayan laban sa pagtatambak ng synthetic white sand sa Manila Bay. Hiling nila, mag-convene sa Manila Bay Advisory Committee para suriin ang epekto ng dolomite at i-cite for contempt ang DENR sa paglabag umano sa SC mandamus na linisin ang Manila Bay. | Shyla Francisco



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Hinulugang Taktak ibabalik sa dating ganda – Antipolo gov't



September 24, 2020 @ 12:58 PM 17 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nakatakdang buhayin ng lokal na gobyerno ang dating pasyalan at pinagkakaguluhang Hinulugang Taktak.

Sa pakikipagtulungan sa Manila Water, susubukang ibalik sa dating ganda ng Antipolo City ang Hinulugang Taktak sa pamamagitan ng itatatag na sewage treatment plant project sa nasabing lugar.

Nito lamang mga nakaraang araw ay pinirmahan ni Mayor Andrea Bautista Ynares ang isang kasunduan sa East Zone water concessionaire, Manila Water, sa pagtatatag ng Waste Water Management Treatment Plant (WWMTP) sa nasabing waterfalls.

Sinaksihan nina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu, at Manila Water chief operating officer Abelardo P. Basilio ang pirmahan ng kasunduan kasama si Manila Water president at CEO Rene Almendras.

Sa nasabing kasunduan, bubuuin ng Manila Water ang WWMTP sa loob ng limang taon. Kapag nakumpleto na ay eksklusibo itong patatakbuhan ng Manila Water sa pakikipagtulungan ng lokal na gobyerno, ayon kay Mayor Ynares.

Ayon sa lokal na gobyerno ng Antipolo na kayang magproseso ng nasabing proyekto ng 16 milyong litro ng wastewater kada-araw.

“The falls will be an attraction in itself since the water is already treated (after WWMTP completion), bringing back the old glory of the famed falls,” ani dating Antipolo Mayor Junjun Ynares III. **RNT**

Source: https://www.remate.ph/hinulugang-taktak-ibabalik-sa-dating-ganda-antipolo-govt/?fbclid=IwAR0VtCdDOImDy92-4Mnfv0voMeLIwdO16DVKK_3mjKwTy48X1ukN5gERuj4



Cebu fishing town starts treating public market's waste water

By John Rey Saavedra **September 24, 2020, 5:48 pm**



SEWAGE TREATMENT FACILITY. Officials of San Francisco town on Camotes Island, Cebu, led by Mayor Alfredo Arquillano Jr. (7th from right), pose with representatives of Samjin Precision Co., Ltd. during the completion ceremony of the PHP10-million water treatment facility in Barangay Poblacion on Sept. 11, 2020. Arquillano on Thursday (Sept. 24, 2020) said the facility is now processing 10 cubic meters (1,000 liters) of waste water from the town's public market per day. *(Photo courtesy of Engr. Gaga Mendoza)*

CEBU CITY – The fishing town of San Francisco on Camotes Island now treats waste water from its public market through a PHP10-million Korean facility to preserve the surrounding pristine beaches and preventing pollution in the area's rich marine resources.

Mayor Alfredo Arquillano Jr. on Thursday said the town is thankful to the Korean government as among the four municipalities in Camotes, San Francisco is the lone local government that received a grant from the Korean government for the sewage treatment project.

"Well, this is the result of our determination to implement zero waste disposal policy. That Korean technology is the answer to our quest to put a stop to the ill-practices of throwing our solid and waste water to the sea," he told the Philippine News Agency.

Arquillano said the facility will also solve the town's sewage disposal problem in many establishments, which affected its positioning as a budding tourist destination and the livelihood of the fisherfolk.

The Korean government, through its Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises, provided the project funds, with the assistance of the technology provider, Samjin Precision Co., Ltd., Sungho Suh, Samjin's project director told the PNA in an interview.

Sungho said the facility uses the eco-friendly activated sludge method to eliminate or minimize damage to nature.

The San Francisco facility can process a maximum of 10 cubic meters of waste water per day, but Sungho said the technology can be expanded if needed to accommodate more sludge water.

The output purified water is being used as agricultural water, he added.

"Due to the Philippines' geographical composition, it is difficult or impossible to build large-scale facilities due to considerable amount of construction and transportation costs. Therefore, small-scale facilities are excellent both economically and efficient wise," Sungho said.

He said the company welcomes proposals from other local government units in Cebu that may be interested to set up a mobile waste treatment facility similar to the one installed in San Francisco.

Environmental Management Bureau (EMB-7) information officer, Cindy Pepito, who attended the facility' demonstration last Sept. 11, said the "modular sewage treatment facility" can be a model to other LGUs in implementing their own waste water treatment project.



She said the EMB-7 has been reminding LGUs to manage their solid and waste water as mandated by law.

San Francisco has 15 barangays with 55,180 population based on the 2015 survey. **(PNA)**



Maynilad aims to finish new sewer lines early next year

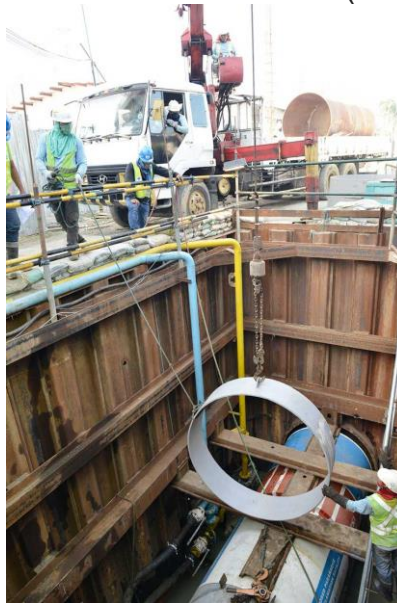
September 25, 2020 | 12:03 am

WEST ZONE water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. plans to finish the installation of new sewer lines along two water esteros in Manila by the first quarter of 2021.

In a statement, Maynilad said it targets to complete the laying of 1.78 kilometers of sewer lines as part of its “Adopt an Estero” program.

The estero program involves the installation of new sewer lines along five creeks that will catch wastewater from Maynilad customers who could not be served by individual sewer connections.

Maynilad said the program is in support of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).



BW FILE PHOTO

“Facilitating this project has been a challenge given quarantine restrictions. Nonetheless, we continue to pursue our estero rehabilitation efforts because it will help to reduce pollution loading in Manila Bay,” Maynilad Chief Operating Officer Randolph T. Estrellado said.

Since the program’s implementation in November 2018, Maynilad said it had installed 745 meters of interceptor pipes along Estero dela Reina and Estero San Antonio Abad that benefitted more than 19,400 residents.

“As long as solid waste can be managed well at the household level, it will not pollute these same esteros that we are trying to clean. That will ensure that our investment in new sewer lines will not go to waste,” Mr. Estrello said.

Meanwhile, the water provider said it is also constructing new sewerage treatment plants in Valenzuela City and Muntinlupa City to add to its 22 operational wastewater facilities.



Maynilad provides water for areas in the west zone of the National Capital Region such as Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, Malabon, Manila, Makati, and Quezon City; and parts of Cavite province such as Bacoor, Imus, Kawit, Noveleta, and Rosario.

Metro Pacific Investments Corp., which has majority stake in Maynilad, is one of three Philippine units of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being Philex Mining Corp. and PLDT Inc.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has interest in BusinessWorld through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



Maynilad to complete esteros by Q1

By [Malaya Business Insight](#)

-September 25, 2020

West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. said it will complete 1.78 kilometers of new sewer lines along two esteros in Manila by the first quarter of 2021 as part of its ongoing Adopt an Estero program.

The project, which is part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, involves the laying of new sewer lines along five creeks to catch wastewater flow from Maynilad customers who could not be served by individual sewer connections.

Since the program started in November 2018, 745 meters of interceptor pipes along Estero dela Reina and Estero San Antonio Abad has been installed by Maynilad, benefitting over 19,400 residents in the areas.

“Facilitating this project has been a challenge given quarantine restrictions. Nonetheless, we continue to pursue our estero rehabilitation efforts because it will help to reduce pollution loading in Manila Bay... As long as solid waste can be managed well at the household level, it will not pollute these same esteros that we are trying to clean. That will ensure that our investment in new sewer lines will not go to waste,” said Randolph Estrellado, Maynilad chief operating officer.

Mandani Bay plants 36,000 mangroves in Carcar

BYPR - SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

Extending its sustainability efforts to the grassroots level, Mandani Bay developer HTLand, Inc. planted approximately 36,000 mangrove propagules in Bolinawan, Carcar City, Cebu.

In partnership with the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) Argao, Local Government Unit of Barangay Bolinawan, and People's Organization (PO) – Dunggoan Bolinawan Mangrove Seashore Association Inc. (DUBOLMASAI), several mangrove planting sessions were held between August 24 and September 7, 2020.



“This mangrove planting activity is one of the many ways Mandani Bay is taking care of the environment by involving our partners in the communities in our sustainability efforts,” said Gilbert Ang, HTLand Project Director.

True to its passion for the environment, HTLand pushes for sustainable designs through its flagship project Mandani Bay. Its first residential enclave Mandani Bay Suites has received a 4-star Building for Ecologically Responsive Design Excellence (BERDE) accreditation from the Philippine Green Building Council (PHILGBC). The BERDE rating tool identifies green building practices that excel above and beyond local environmental regulations and standards.

About Mandani Bay

Developed by HTLand, Inc., a joint venture of Hongkong Land and Taft Properties, Mandani Bay is a world-class 20-hectare waterfront township development with a stunning view of the coast and the encompassing cityscape.

Strategically located along the Mactan Channel in Mandaue City, Mandani Bay sets the bar for a new era of development in the Philippines as it is poised to become the focal lifestyle centre of its area and one of Asia's key urban landmarks.

Source: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/341783/mandani-bay-plants-36000-mangroves-in-carcar>



Tourism stakeholders conduct dive cleanup, collect about 42 kilos of garbage in Lapu-Lapu City

Published September 24, 2020, 10:40 AM

by [Minerva Newman](#)

LAPU-LAPU CITY – A total of 41.94 kilos of garbage was collected by various tourism stakeholders during a dive clean-up as part of the 35th International Coastal Clean-up Day last Sept. 18.



REGION 7 PIA/ FACEBOOK/ MANILA BULLETIN

The clean-up was led by the Department of Tourism (DOT-7) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-7) with help from the Lapu-Lapu City LGU, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and Crimson Resort.

Lapu-Lapu City councilor Ricardo Amores, representing Mayor Junard Chan, said that with Lapu-Lapu City located in an island and depending much of its natural resources from the seas, taking good care of the environment is of utmost importance. “Preserving our environment is our legacy to our children and to the next generation,” Amores said.

DOT-7 regional director Shalimar Hofer Tamano said it is important to ensure the cleanliness of the coastal waters and dive sites and the protection of the marine ecosystem.

“Cebu, Bohol, Negros Oriental, and Siquijor or the Central Visayas region is a marine park. To name a few, we have Apo Island, Cabilao, Balicasag, Malapascua, Moalboal, and Mactan as one of the biggest operations and dive spots in the region,” Tamano added.

According to Tamano, Cebu, Bohol, and Apo Island in Negros Oriental have been identified as one of the country’s top diving destinations. Early this month, the Philippines was awarded the Best Overseas Diving Area in the annual Marine Diving Awards in Tokyo, Japan. It was the first time the country was given the prestigious award.

DENR-7 ARD Engr. Trinidad Etulle emphasized the shared responsibility of reversing environmental degradation. “The Philippines is among the top countries with the most volunteers in terms of the yearly International Coastal Clean Up Celebration.”

Etulle said this journey of seeing the seas and ocean clean again is a challenge but he is optimistic that with the shared responsibility and inter-agency coordination, cleaning the environment becomes an easy task.

“Essentially, we need to advance stronger working relationships and improve coordination mechanisms with the local government and other stakeholders in reversing environmental degradation of our water bodies,” Etulle said.



The dive cleanup was led by PCSSD Commissioner Bo Mancao with divers from the Philippine Coast Guard and DENR. Most of the garbage collected were construction materials, glass bottles, fish traps, diapers, discarded ropes, shoes, and plastic bottles.

Mancao said that “we don’t need to wait for agencies and groups to organize a big clean-up event for us to take our part in taking good care of our environment. We can always do it in our own little way. Everyday, whenever we see trash in our surroundings, we should be responsible enough to do our part in preserving and protecting our marine ecosystem.”

Aside from the dive clean-up, the DOT also conducted another edition of its Oplan Islas, a mobile accreditation program partnership among DOT-7, the Philippine Coast Guard, and MARINA that provides a one-stop shop venue for water tourist transport operators, boat men, and dive operators to process documents for registration and accreditation.

In coordination with the Lapu-Lapu City Government, DOT-7 was able to process and accredit 24 water tourist transport operators and eight dive operators that submitted their documents on that day.



Boracay to welcome GCQ, MGCQ tourists starting Oct. 1

Published September 24, 2020, 11:11 PM

by [Genalyn Kabiling](#)

The government has allowed Boracay Island to accept local tourists from general community quarantine (GCQ) and modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) areas starting October 1.

Boracay visitors however must pass the coronavirus test before traveling to Boracay based on the latest Resolution No. 74 issued by Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Infectious Diseases (IATF).

“Effective October 1, 2020, Boracay Island may accept tourists from areas within a community quarantine classification of General Community Quarantine or lower, apart from travelers from Western Visayas,” Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a statement Thursday night.

“In this regard, the Test-Before-Travel shall be implemented and strict quarantine shall be observed immediately after undergoing the test until the date of the travel to the island,” he added.

In reopening Boracay to tourists, Roque also said age restrictions shall be relaxed while restrictions for persons with co-morbidities will still be strictly enforced.

The IATF has also advised airlines to land at the Godofredo R. Ramos Airport in Caticlan.

“Minimum health and safety guidelines as well as emergency response protocols must be in place, and a COVID-19 Laboratory in the locality must be operational,” Roque said.

In June, the Boracay rehabilitation task force approved Aklan local government’s recommendation to reopen Boracay but only for residents from the Western Visayas region.

The reopening of Boracay, known for its powdery white sand beaches, comes amid government’s efforts to relax strict coronavirus lockdown to revive the sluggish economy.

The Palace recently said President Duterte’s order is to gradually re-open the economy, including the tourism sector, with the assurance that health and safety measures are in place.

The national government, through the Department of Tourism, is working in concurrence with the local government units in determining when tourism operations would resume in their areas.



More Boracay tourists allowed by 1 October

Published 1 day ago on September 24, 2020 02:30 AM

By [Raymart Lolo](#)



The island paradise of Boracay will be allowing the entry of more local tourists from different parts of the country starting 1 October 2020, the Department of Tourism (DoT) announced on Wednesday.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said the popular tourist destination will be relaxing further the existing restrictions and would soon allow visitors coming from areas under general community quarantine (GCQ) which includes Metro Manila.

This development came as a result of a special meeting convened by the principals of the Boracay Interagency Task Force (BIATF) led by its chairperson Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and Co-Vice chairpersons, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año, Romulo-Puyat, and local officials of the Province of Aklan.

During the said meeting, the BIATF approved an earlier request of the local government to expand Boracay's reopening to domestic travelers in addition to tourists from Western Visayas who have already been permitted to visit the island since 16 June 2020.



PH marine scientists document 33 new records of seaweeds in Kalayaan Island Group

Published September 24, 2020, 11:42 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

A team of marine scientists were able to document 33 new records of seaweeds from a recent expedition in the Kalayaan Island Group, and suggested that even more are likely to be discovered in the future.



(Photo via Ellalyn De Vera Ruiz / MANILA BULLETIN)

Seaweed biodiversity in the Philippines “is very high” and has the most diverse seaweed flora in the tropical western Pacific, according to Dr. Wilfred John Santiañez of the University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute (UP-MSI).

Based on latest reports and herbarium records, the Philippines has a total of 1,079 seaweed taxa. It is composed of red seaweeds or Rhodophyta (57 percent), green seaweeds or Chlorophyta (25 percent), and brown seaweeds or Ochrophyta (18 percent).

Of the 1,079 seaweed taxa in the Philippines, there are about 350 species that have known economic value, Santiañez said.

However, Santiañez said much of the scientists’ knowledge on seaweed resources in the country is only based on collection from a few areas.

“Little is known in the Pacific Seaboard, Southern Mindanao, and the Kalayaan Island Group,” he said during a webinar organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) Wednesday.

Ecological and economic values of seaweeds

“Seaweeds are habitat to many marine organisms from invertebrates to different fishes. They are at the bottom of the food chain because they are primary producers and they are sources of food to marine invertebrates and fishes, and even sea turtles,” he said.



(Photo via Ellalyn De Vera Ruiz / MANILA BULLETIN)



“They also have a very significant role in reef formation. They are often overlooked as a component of the reef but they are actually crucial in recurring the substrate from which your corals settle, where coral reefs form. They are very important in aggregating the substrate towards the stabilizing and can act as buffer to a wave action and even storm surges,” he said.

Seaweeds are also important economically.

“They are sources of food in many populations, particularly in the western Pacific. In China, Japan, and Korea, and even here in the Philippines, seaweeds are consumed as food. Among the seaweeds that we consume are the Caulerpa or ‘lato,’ Eucheuma or ‘guso,’ and Phycocalidia or ‘gamet,” he said.

Seaweeds are also sources of high-value natural products, such as Phycocolloids, Carrageenan, and Alginate.



(Photo via Ellalyn De Vera Ruiz / MANILA BULLETIN)

“Carrageenan in particular is very important in the food industry. It is used as one of the thickening gelling agent in many of our food products. It is one of the major components of toothpaste and some gel ballpens. Production of carrageenan is also one of the major sources of livelihood among coastal population. Particularly, seaweed farming industry is based on Carrageenan-producing seaweeds,” Santiañez said.

In 2018, he pointed out, seaweed production contributed 13 percent to the total value of aquaculture production in the Philippines. Seaweed production was valued at P11 billion in 2018 alone.

Aside from that, he said that seaweeds are important sources of fertilizers, fodder, biofuel feedstock, and bioactive compounds used in medical and pharmaceutical industries.

West Philippine Sea expedition

In 2019, the DENR-BMB and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) funded a research expedition to conduct a survey, and part of it was to look into the diversity of seaweed resources in the Kalayaan Island Group.

Dr. Deo Florence Onda spearheaded the research expedition of the Protect-WPS Research Cruise.

Santiañez said collection efforts involved shallow and deep dives in the Ulugan Bay, Sabina Shoal (two stations), and Pag-asa Island (five stations).

Focusing his report on Sabina Shoal and Pag-asa Island, Santiañez said the group of scientists was able to collect 105 samples from the Sabina Shoal and 391 samples from Pag-asa Island.

He said they compared the latest samples from the collections deposited at the UP-MSI herbariums that date back in the late 1990s, “the last time that seaweeds of Kalayaan Island Group were studied.”

“There were a total of 71 species that were deposited at the MSI herbarium, 45 percent are green seaweeds, 35 percent are red seaweeds, and 20 percent are brown seaweeds,” Santiañez said.



“When we looked at our seaweed from the latest collection effort, we were able to identify a total of 95 seaweeds composed of 57 percent red seaweeds, 38 percent green seaweeds, and five percent brown seaweeds,” he noted.

“In the Protect WPS expedition, there were a lot of red seaweeds collected primarily because one of the advantages of our current effort is that we were able to go deeper by scuba diving, and much of these red seaweeds were collected from deeper areas,” he added.

Although the team of experts was not able to collect samples of 21 previously recorded seaweeds, Santiañez reported that of the 95 samples collected, 33 new seaweed records were added to the marine flora of the Kalayaan Island Group. Most of the new records of seaweeds were red seaweeds, he added.

New seaweed species, other interesting find

Santiañez said one of the interesting finds from the expedition was the *Flahaultia* sp., which is not a common seaweed in the Philippines. “It is the first time that I saw this seaweed,” he said.

“Another interesting find, which is widely distributed in the Philippines is the *Gibsmithia hawaiiensis*. They have feathery bodies and they can be sometimes mistaken for soft corals,” he added.

“We were able to grow some of the seaweeds from the Kalayaan Island Group. One of which is the *Griffithsia* which is known to produce griffithsin, an active anti-HIV compound. However, we were not able to successfully maintain this seaweed,” he said.

However, he noted that “it is apparent that Kalayaan Island Group can be a good source of novel compounds that can be used for biomedical purposes.”

Santiañez also shared that they are conducting further studies on a red seaweed that “can be a new species from the Philippines.”

“We are also working on the identification and looking at the life history of a red seaweed, a putative new species of *Hypoglossum* from the Kalayaan Island Group. Much of the samples that we were able to grow died during the lockdown so we are now trying to recover this so that we can continue our work on this seaweed,” Santiañez said.

Further studies

The total number of the seaweeds within the Kalayaan Island Group is “very low” and “remains poorly known” as compared to other areas such as Balabac Island with 176 species and Bolinao in Pangasinan which has 168 species, Santiañez said.

But with more collection efforts, we will be able to uncover the seaweed biodiversity resources of the Kalayaan Island Group, he added.

“Many species are still hidden in plain sight. We need to continue and increase support to efforts on generating foundational marine biodiversity knowledge,” he said.

“There are still a lot, even with our recent collections, I believe we still have a lot of opportunities to discover (new records and species). It’s just that our capacity to work on them is very limited because there are very few of us that work on them at the moment. But definitely there is a high chance of discovering records even describing new seaweed taxa,” he added.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/24/ph-marine-scientists-document-33-new-records-of-seaweeds-in-kalayaan-island-group/>



PH displays 'int'l leadership' for call to address climate change

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora **September 24, 2020, 11:33 am**



MANILA – The Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC), an international climate and energy policy group based in the Philippines, lauded the Philippine government for its display of "international leadership" during the 75th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), where President Rodrigo Duterte called on parties of the Paris Agreement to fight climate change.

"The Philippine government displayed international leadership at the right moment by affirming the need to flatten both the Covid-19 and the climate curves as urgently as possible," Renato Redentor Constantino, the group's executive director, said in a statement Wednesday.

Duterte's historic address to the UNGA underscored the need for the international community to act collectively based on science to tackle both the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic and climate change, Constantino said.

Citing scientists, he said the world has to keep global warming below the 1.5-degrees Celsius threshold to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

"Solutions such as decentralized renewable energy, active mobility, and sustainable transport, and mangrove and watershed management can address not only Covid-worsened public health and economic problems in the short term but also climate risks and development challenges in the long haul," Constantino said.

He said they expect the President's remarks "to be reflected in the ongoing drafting of the country's Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement, as well as in the national budget deliberations and the policies of the Department of Energy and Department of Transportation."

Duterte, in his pre-recorded speech aired Wednesday (Manila time) at the UNGA, [stressed the urgency of arresting the spread of the coronavirus and addressing the climate crisis.](#)

"This is a global challenge that has worsened existing inequalities and vulnerabilities from within and between nations. Climate change has worsened the ravages of the pandemic. People in developing countries like the Philippines suffer the most. We cannot afford to suffer more," he said as he called on all parties, especially those who have not made good on their commitment to fighting climate change, to honor it.

In 2017, Duterte signed the Paris Agreement, which aims to reduce the emission of gases that contribute to global warming.

The Philippines earlier pledged a 70-percent cut in emissions by 2030. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1116459>



E-planting raises funds

Employees volunteers from First Gen Corp held a hi-tech and innovative tree-planting activity in the midst of the pandemic and raised in the process thousands of pesos in donations for indigents in a Batangas town whose means of livelihood have been affected by the coronavirus.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FIRSTGEN

The employees from the Lopez-led power company, along with other volunteers from

MEMBERS of two community organizations in Lobo, Batangas wave their hands to Lopez Group employees who joined the tree planting in Lobo as virtual participants.

parent firm First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPH), planted over a thousand mangrove saplings in Lobo, Batangas, from afar – meaning, while they were inside their homes in Metro Manila and other parts of the country. The Lopez Group volunteers belonging to the Employee POWER (EmPOWER) Program accomplished the long-distance activity on Sept. 19 by joining what they called “e-Planting,” a virtual tree-planting project that the employees – some as far as Mindanao – implemented in coordination with community partners in Lobo. “The e-Planting project works like the ‘theater seat’ booking process. To join, a volunteer or donor logs in to the EmPOWER Program’s e-Planting website and picks a preferred planting hole in almost the same way one would book for a cinema seat online,” said Adrian Balicuatro, a volunteer of EmPOWER, which is the Lopez Group employees’ own arm to implement civic and community projects.



Greenpeace report: Philippines gets failing mark due to massive use of coal

Published September 24, 2020, 8:07 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Philippines got a failing mark of “D+” due to its strong inclination to coal power generation, a new Greenpeace Southeast Asia report revealed on Thursday.

The report titled, “Southeast Asia Power Sector Scorecard,” cited that the Philippines was an early leader on renewable energy (RE) after the introduction of the RE Act in 2008.

However, subsequent years have seen the country’s share of coal in the energy mix rising to 52 percent. And under current plans, the Philippines will have over 60 percent of coal in its energy generation mix in 2030, and only around 5 percent of solar and wind.

A day after President Duterte urged world leaders to strengthen their commitment to fight the climate crisis, the Greenpeace report revealed that the Philippines may not be able to reach its commitment to keep global temperatures below 1.5-degrees global temperature with the version of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Philippine Energy Plan.

“President Duterte has called for urgent action to the climate crisis – but it seems that this has fallen on deaf ears in the DOE, whose lackluster approach to RE and support for coal is preventing us from fulfilling our 1.5-degree commitment,” Greenpeace Philippines campaigner Khevin Yu said.

The scorecard maps business-as-usual and best-case RE scenarios for eight countries in Southeast Asia using the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 1.5 degrees pathway.

This graded snapshot of each country’s energy transition, fossil fuel exclusions, solar and wind market development, policies and pricing, competition, and coronavirus stimulus benchmarks progress on RE and climate action.

According to the report, coal power dominance has made the Philippines highly dependent on imported fossil fuels, with a near tripling of its thermal coal imports in less than 10 years.

However, the report also cited that the country can still be on track with global climate targets if it creates exclusions for new coal and gas starting this year, increase its RE target to 50 percent by 2030, and improve grid development for utility-scale solar and wind.

The country’s vested coal interests, erratic policy shifts, and political bottlenecks hinder the transition to a low-carbon pathway. We still have a workable chance to be on track with our commitments, but DOE must be more ambitious on RE with its energy plan for 2018-2040, and rally energy companies to shift away from coal,” Yu said. “Because of this pandemic, we have an opportunity to shift to forward-looking investments that do not harm the environment and peoples’ health and well-being. There is a whole range of opportunities for green, people-centered investments in RE, compared to harmful fossil fuels. As part of its call for urgency on climate action, we are calling on the Duterte administration to initiate a managed phase-out of fossil fuel-dependent energy generation and infrastructure, reshape the economy and direct energy policies to respond to the climate crisis,” he added.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/24/greenpeace-report-philippines-gets-failing-mark-due-to-massive-use-of-coal/>

Ordinance on proper disposal of face masks, other COVID wastes only needs mayor's OK

By: Futch Anthony Inso - Correspondent/CDN Digital|September 24,2020 - 04:19 PM



Used face masks and other COVID-related wastes should be disposed properly in Lapu-Lapu City once the proposed ordinance regarding the proper disposal of these wastes will be approved by Mayor Junard Ahong Chan. | CDN file photo

LAPU-LAPU CITY, Philippines — Improper disposal of COVID-related waste such as used face masks will soon be penalized in Lapu-Lapu City once Mayor Junard Ahong Chan will sign into law the City Council approved ordinance about the proper disposal of these kinds of wastes.

The proposed ordinance entitled “An Ordinance Prohibiting the Improper Disposal of Face Masks and other COVID-19 Protective Gears and Products in the City of Lapu-Lapu” aimed for the proper disposal of COVID-19 wastes, and would penalize those who would violate it, said Lapu-Lapu City Councilor Rico Amores, who authored the proposed ordinance.

He said that the approval of the proposed ordinance would create a new classification of garbage, which would be the COVID-19 wastes.

“Kay bag-o man siya nga classification, i-separate siya ug segregate. Ang atong normal practice kadto ganing black plastic ibutang. Kining COVID waste, as much as possible, yellow nga plastic nato ibutang. Unya markingang gyud nato ug COVID waste. Unya ang iyahang collection ana idungan sa hazardous, dili idungan nato sa malata ug dili malata,” Amores said.

(Because it is a new classification, it will be separately segregated. Our normal practice is to place our waste in a black plastic. But COVID waste, as much as possible, should be placed in a yellow plastic bag. Then it should be marked as COVID waste. Then the collection of these waste should be simultaneously done in the collection of hazardous waste and it should not be collected simultaneously with the waste that will decompose and not decompose.)

According to Amores that he made such a move, in order not to compromise the health of the public, especially that such waste might be contaminated with the virus and might infect other people.

Under the proposed ordinance, violators will have to pay the fine of P1,000 for the first offense, P3,000 for the second offense, and P5,000 for the third offense or imprisonment of not less than one month and not more than six months or both such fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the court.



Last week, the proposed ordinance has already passed the third and final reading at the City Council. This afternoon, after the minutes of the last week's session will be approved, the proposed ordinance will be submitted to the Mayor's Office for him to sign.

“Inig approve sa minutes ana, due nana for signing sa mayor. Unya duna may penalty, we will abide with the publication,” he added.

(Once the minutes of the approved ordinance are approved then it will be sent to the mayor for signing. Since there is a penalty, we will abide with the publication of the ordinance.) /dbs



WARNING! The next environment crisis to hit us is your discarded face mask

Published September 24, 2020, 5:58 AM

by [Johannes Chua](#)

It is dubbed as the “plastic water bottle” of the pandemic. These face masks, which is a “must” these days, are set to become the looming environment crisis that we would face.

Though light as a feather (at least four grams each), millions of face masks are discarded each day, some even thrown on the road, flushed in toilets, or discarded by the river—one can imagine the mountain of trash filling up garbage trucks and landfills.

A study revealed that around 100 billion face masks (and 65 billion plastic gloves) are discarded per month. And with the Philippine government mandating strict mask use in public spaces, it is inevitable we contribute to the rise of that 100 billion number.



How did we arrive at this problem?

The pandemic has drastically changed our lives, and that includes our habits and routines. As the vaccine remains elusive, the best way to protect ourselves from Covid-19 is by wearing face masks.

Now, all medical experts, even the World Health Organization (WHO), has specifically instructed that “face masks should be disposed as soon as it is damp.”

The WHO even presented a guideline on how to remove a mask, saying, “first, clean your hands; remove face mask from behind with the ear or head strap; do not touch the front of the mask; pull the mask away from your face; discard immediately in a closed bin; wash hands properly with soap and water.”

With this, it is clear that face masks, specifically the single-use ones, “cannot be recycled,” adding that those who feel unwell or suspect themselves to be exposed with the virus to “store face masks for 72 hours before disposing in the bin.”

Various environment organizations have raised the red flag on this issue, highlighting the fact that there is a significant spike in the number of personal protective equipment (PPE) that are littered everywhere, which sometimes ends up in our bodies of water.

One government agency, the Climate Change Commission (CCC), has already warned the public on the surge of plastic pollution due to the global production and consumption of single-use masks, latex gloves, PPE, alcohol and hand sanitizer bottles, and disposable cleaning agents. It added that “plastic waste may end up in our oceans, break into microplastics, and be mistaken for food by marine animals, such as fish, which humans also consume.”



“(We) express our concern on the increasing volume of single-use plastic wastes from take-out and online shopping deliveries. As Covid-19 restricted public mobility, online shopping and food delivery services often using single-use plastics... and these have further encumbered our waste management system,” said a statement from the agency.

“We are calling on local governments and citizens to help in addressing plastic pollution generated during this global health crisis.”

This was also the alarm raised by global environment organization The Worldwide Wildlife Fund (WWF). In a study, it said that “if even only one percent of the masks were disposed of incorrectly, this would result in 10 million masks per month dispersed in the environment.”

What can we do to help the environment?

So, how should we dispose our face masks properly without harming the environment? Here is a list we compiled from recommendations of health and policy experts.

- First, do not dispose face masks in public spaces. Be responsible. Throw them in bins or waste baskets.



- Just recently, a message circulating online asks for this small request—“Kindly cut used disposable masks into two pieces before putting them in the bin. There is a huge market where discarded masks are sold to the poor. Please inform family and friends. It will take barely five seconds to cut them into half. Your action can save hundreds from getting infected.” Whether this is true or not, it’s prudent to be extra safe and avert any health crises.
- Eco groups, however, say that even though we dispose our face masks properly in bins, these could still end up in our seas and landfills. They recommend that we “should just avoid single-use face masks, if possible.”
- A medical expert has this advice: “Unless you are in the medical field, it is practical to use a reusable face mask, which can be worn and washed again and again. It also saves you from the cost of purchasing face masks.” So if wearing face masks is now part of our lives, isn’t this a wise (and budget-friendly) advice?
- In terms of government policy, the CCC is calling on the implementation of Administrative Order No. 22-2013, issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), on the proper management and disposal of used masks, PPEs, and other considered hazardous (infectious) waste from hospitals, barangay health centers, and clinics.



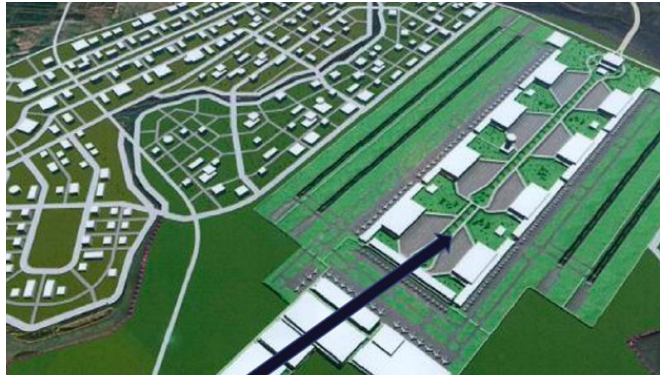
“We stress the importance of enacting the Ecological Solid Waste Management (ESWM) Act of 2000, which provides guidance on proper segregation at source, transportation, storage, transfer, processing, treatment, and disposal of solid waste and other waste management activities that do not harm the environment,” the agency said.

- Like face masks, we can also cut our own plastic wastes by refusing disposable plastic cutlery (especially when having food delivered) and by supporting businesses that offer more sustainable delivery packaging, such as cardboard or compostable bags.

“The biggest challenge in adopting a more sustainable lifestyle is breaking old habits and making sacrifices for the climate and environment,” says the CCC. “But by slowly incorporating sustainable practices into our everyday activities, we would be able to protect both the health of the people, natural systems, and the planet.”



Pagyanig, pagguho ng airport site sa Bulacan ibinabala ng Phivolcs



September 24, 2020 @ 5:36 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nagbabala ang isang opisyal ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology na ang lugar na pagtatayuan ng P740 bilyong halaga ng domestic at international airport sa lalawigan ng Bulacan ay lapitin sa mga pagyanig at pagguho ng lupa.

Sa pagdinig ng Senate public services committee, sinabi ni Phivolcs Director Dr. Renato Solidum, prone sa ground shaking at liquefaction ang lugar na pagtatayuan ng “New Manila International Airport” ng San Miguel Aerocity Inc., subsidiary ng San Miguel Corporation, datapwat malayo ito sa anomang fault system.

Batay sa United States Geological Survey, nagaganap ang liquefaction kapag ang “loosely packed, water-logged sediments” na malapit sa ground surface ay nawawalan ng lakas para labanan ang malalakas na pagyanig ng lupa.

Gayunman, sinabi ni Solidum na posibleng maiwasan ang naturang panganib kung ang itatayong airport ay may naaayong disenyo at konstruksyon.

Bukod sa pagyanig, ibinabala rin ni Solidum ang pagbaha sa naturang lugar na matagal nang inilalatag ng environmental groups.

Nauna rito, sinabi ng SMC na nakatakda silang magtayo ng multibillion pero flood control program para mapagaan ang taunang pagbaha sa Bulacan sa sandaling matanggap nila ang go signal para simulan ang proyekto.

Ayon kay Melissa Encanto-Tagarda, head ng government relations ng SMC, kumuha sila ng foreign partners na eksperto sa airport construction at safety designs. **RNT**



Babala ng Phivolcs: Lugar ng Bulacan airport project bahain, mapanganib sa pagyanig

Balita

By Karlos Bautista September 24, 2020 - 03:37 PM



Nagbabala ang Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology na ang lokasyon ng panukalang P736-bilyong international airport project sa Bulacan ay bahain at bulnerable sa malakas na pagyanig ng lupa.

Sa pagdinig ng Senate public services committee sa airport franchise noong Miyerkules, sinabi ni Phivolcs director Renato Solidum na ang lugar na pagtatayuan ng New Manila International Airport sa baybaying bayan ng Bulacan ay pangunahing nasasapnan ng buhangin at ang water table ay napakababaw.

Dahil sa ganitong katangian ng lupa, bantad ang lugar sa geohazards, kabilang na rin ang liquefaction, bagamat malayo ang airport project sa Valley Fault System na naghahati sa Luzon, ayon pa kay Solidum.

“The multi-billion airport project is sitting on soft ground and the location is prone to frequent flooding,” ani Solidum.

Ipinaliwanag niya na ang river environment na ito ay nangangailangan ng special engineering interventions upang ang mga gusali at imprastraktura ay maging matatag sa mga panganib na dulot ng lindol o malakas na pag-ulan.

“The area chosen for the project stands on tender ground susceptible to shaking and liquefaction, and the flooding remains a big concern because the project site is a part of Bulacan known to easily submerge in water during heavy rains,” paliwanag pa ng Phivolcs director.

Sinabi ni Solidum na para matuloy ang proyekto, kailangan nito ng disaster risk reduction at business continuity protocols, maliban pa sa pagtatayo ng tamang drainage system.

Siniguro naman ng San Miguel Corporation, ang project proponent, na ang mga isyung inilahad ng Phivolcs director ay naisaalang-alang na sa plano.

Ayon kay Melissa Encanto-Tagarda, head ng government relations unit ng SMC, kumuha ang kompanya ng foreign partners na eksperto sa airport construction at safety designs.

Itatayo ang panukalang international airport sa isang 2,500 hectare property sa Bulacan, Bulacan na tatawaging SMC Aerocity. Binigyan ito kamakailan ng prangkisa ng House of Representatives at humihingi ngayon ng Senate approval.

Ang prangkisa ay nagpapahintulot sa SMC na magtayo at mag-operate ng four-runway air facility para sa domestic at international flights sa loob ng 50 taon, kabilang ang tax reliefs sa panahon ng pagtatayo nito.

Source: <https://bandera.inquirer.net/265469/babala-ng-phivolcs-lugar-ng-bulacan-airport-project-bahain-mapanganib-sa-pagyanig>



Phivolcs, may nakitang panganib sa Bulacan airport project site

By **Bombo Dennis Jamito** -September 24, 2020 | 10:39 AM

Ibinunyag ng Phivolcs na may nakita itong ilang indikasyon ng tinatawag nitong geohazards sa project site ng panukalang P736-billion Bulacan international airport.

“The multi-billion airport project is sitting on soft ground and the location is prone to frequent flooding,” babala ni Phivolcs director Renato Solidum.

Sa Senate hearing ng airport franchise ay sinabi ni Solidum na ang lugar ay pangunahing nasasapnan ng buhangin at ang water table ay napakababaw.

Ipinaliwanag niya na “ang river environment na ito ay nangangailangan ng special engineering interventions upang ang mga gusali at imprastruktura ay maging matatag sa mga panganib na dulot ng lindol o malakas na pag-ulan.

“The area chosen for the project stands on tender ground susceptible to shaking and liquefaction, and the flooding remains a big concern because the project site is a part of Bulacan known to easily submerge in water during heavy rains,” paliwanag pa ng Phivolcs director.

Gayunman ay inamin niya na ang lugar ay wala sa loob ng Valley Fault System na dumadaloy sa malaking bahagi ng Luzon landmass.

Binigyang-diin niya na para matuloy ang proyekto ay nangangailangan ito ng disaster risk reduction at business continuity protocols kasama ng konstruksiyon ng angkop na drainage system.

Bilang reaksiyon sa babala ni Solidum, nagpalabas ang San Miguel Corporation, ang project proponent, ng statement na nagsasabing “the concerns and issues raised by the Phivolcs director have already been factored into the detailed engineering design which is being finalized by its company’s safety experts.”

Sinabi ni SMC’s government relations unit head Melissa Encanto-Tagarda na kumuha ang kompanya ng foreign partners na eksperto sa airport construction at safety designs.

Ang panukalang international airport na itatayo sa isang 2,500 hectare property sa Bulacan, Bulacan at tatawaging SMC Aerocity ay binigyan kamakailan ng prangkisa ng House of Representatives at humihingi ngayon ng Senate approval.

Ang prangkisa ay nagpapahintulot sa SMC na magtayo at mag-operate ng four-runway air facility para sa domestic at international flights sa loob ng 50 taon, kabilang ang tax reliefs sa panahon ng pagtatayo nito.

Source: <https://www.bomboradyo.com/phivolcs-may-nakitang-panganib-sa-bulacan-airport-project-site/>



Bulacan airport dev't suportado ni Gordon



September 24, 2020 @ 7:05 PM 12 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Suportado ni Sen. Richard J. Gordon ang pagpapagawa ng Bulacan International Airport, ayon sa ulat.

“This is the first airport that we are doing for a long time. Certainly, when you have an airport like this, it will be an economic game changer. A lot of entrepreneurship is going to happen, not to mention the duty-free shops and restaurants that will be established,” lahad ni Gordon.

“If you accompany it to the RICH bill, which I am going to sponsor next week, I think this will be great. This will put the Philippines as one of the centers in Asia. It will make a statement in the whole world that we mean business. It can be a lightning rod to create business that will thrive not only in Metro Manila but also in Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, and certainly all the way up to the North.”

“This airport will be a great alternate airport. Meaning to say, if you are landing in an airport and you have engine trouble, you can have any choices from Subic-Clark to Manila and Bulacan. So, it is very important that these alternate runways will always allow an enormous amount of safety for the passengers,” dagdag pa nito.

“I strongly support this airport. I see no short end here. I think we are getting the long end and I’d like to be able to see it and land on it.”

Sa tala ay may kakayahan itong makapaglaman ng isang daang milyong indibidwal at may badyet na P735.6 bilyon. **RNT/FGDC**



PH COVID-19 cases, 296,755 na; 36 patay, 2,180 dagdag-kaso



September 24, 2020 @ 4:05 PM 16 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Umakyat na sa 296,755 ang kabuuang bilang ng kumpirmadong kaso ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19) sa bansa.

Sa pinakahuling tala ng Department of Health, karagdagang 2,180 ang bagong mga kaso ngayong Setyembre 24.

Sa nasabing bilang, 1,825 ang naitala mula September 11 hanggang September 24.

Ang top regions na may naitalang mga kaso ay ang NCR na may 617, Region 4A, 588 at 156 sa Region 6.

Habang umabot na rin sa 231,928 ang kabuuang bilang ng recoveries matapos makapagtala ng karagdagang 580 na bagong gumaling sa sakit.

Nasa 36 naman ang nadagdag sa mga nasawi dahilan para umabot na sa kabuuang 5,127 ang COVID-19 related deaths.

Nasawi ngayong September ang 23 habang 7 noong August, tig 2 noong July, June; tig 1 naman noong May at April.

Mula naman sa NCR ang 15 sa mga pumanaw, tig 7 sa Region 6 at 7; 2 sa Region 4A, tig 1 sa Region 1, 3, 9, 12 at ROF. **Jocelyn Domenden Tabangcura**

Majority of NCR mayors in favor of Metro GCQ

September 24, 2020



Metro Manila Council Chairman and Parañaque Mayor Edwin Olivarez has disclosed that majority of the mayors in the National Capital Region (NCR) are in favor of retaining Metro Manila under General Community Quarantine.

“Sa consensus po namin, hindi pa naman official iyon, may meeting pa sa Sunday, karamihan po sa amin ay ang consensus ay manatili sa GCQ. Alam po natin na for the past weeks, for 3 weeks, pababa na, downtrend na po iyong ating new cases all over Metro Manila. Pero we have to sustain iyong ating mga strategy pati ang ating mga protocol. Naniniwala kami kung ito’y ida-downgrade natin sa MGCQ, baka hindi natin makuha ang sustainability at magkaroon na naman tayo ng rise. So sa aking palagay, kailangan manatili pa ng GCQ ang ating Metro Manila. (In our consensus, it is not official yet, since there is still a meeting on Sunday, but majority of us want to remain under GCQ. We all know for the past weeks, for 3 weeks, that the new cases all over Metro Manila are on the downtrend. However, we have to sustain our strategies and protocols. We believe that if [the classification] is downgraded to MGCQ, we might not achieve the sustainability and there might be a rise [in the number of cases] again. So I think we still need to remain under GCQ).”

In a press briefing Thursday morning, Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Leopoldo Vega pointed out that the government’s decision on the quarantine classifications is based on data.

“Ang desisyon po niyan, ng IATF, it depends on iyong doubling time ng virus at saka iyong pangalawa, iyong critical utilization rate noong mga hospitals. (The IATF’s decision depends on the doubling time of the virus and the critical utilization rate of hospitals).”

Meanwhile, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque assured that the government is taking all steps to control and stop the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). – *Report from Mela Lesmoras*



MAGHANDA SA SOBRANG PAG-ULAN NG LA NIÑA AT MGA BAGYO



September 25, 2020 @ 12:41 AM 6 hours ago

INIHAHAYAG ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Atmospheric Services Administration na darating ang La Niña sa unang tatlong buwan o Enero hanggang Marso sa 2021.

Posibleng magkakaroon din ng mga bagyo sa panahong ito.

Bigla nating naalaala na kung sobra ang ulan, may mga baha at kung may bagyo, may mga kalamidad.

Handa na ba tayo na haharap sa mga problemang ito?

Maaaring sa mga panahong ito, maaaring sadlak pa tayo sa pandemya dahil sa kawalan pa rin ng bakuna laban dito.

Paano na?

BAHA, LANGSLIDE AT IBA PA

Mabuti kung simpleng baha at landslide lang ang ating mararanasan tuwing may matitindi na 9-9 na ulan kung tawagin.

Kayang-kaya natin ito lalo't sanay na tayo sa ganitong uri ng baha at landslide.

Ang siste, mga Bro, lumulubog pati ang mga bahay hanggang bubong.

Gumuguho ang mga bundok, kalsada at tulay sa landslide.

Mayroon ding mga blackout lalo na kung may bagyo na tumutumba sa mga poste ng kuryente at inaabot ng ilang araw o linggo ang pagbabalik sa mga ito sa normal na operasyon.

ANYO AT BUNGA NG KALAMIDAD

Kung titira ang baha, hindi lang hanggang baywang o lagpas-tao kundi lagpas sa bubong ng ating mga tahanan.

Gayundin kung may landslide, sira lahat.

Mabuti kung walang malilikhang apoy na grabe kung tumupok ng kahit anong bagay.

At mabuti kung pagdating ng mga 'yan, eh, makatatakbo pa tayo sa mga ligtas na evacuation site.



Pero may iba pang kakambal ng ating kamalasan.

Naririyang din ang kamatayan, pagkakasakit, pagsasamantala ng mga negosyante sa presyo at suplay ng mga pangunahing bilingin.

Naririyang din ang pagkasira ng mga pananim na palaman ng ating sikmura, pagtigil ng trabaho dahil sa mga blackout, pagkaparalisa ng transportasyon at negosyo at iba pang kamalasan.

Naririyang din ang ubos nang pondong pangkalamidad ng pamahalaang lokal at nasyunal lalo't nasagad ang mga ito bilang panlaban sa coronavirus disease-19 sa taong ito.

BUONG BANSA

Lumalabas na buong bansa ang sasasakayin ng La Niña.

May mga bagyo ring buong bansa ang sakop lalo na kung bumibiyahe ito mula sa Mindanao hanggang Luzon o kabaligtaran nito.

May mga kambal o triplet ding bagyo na sobra sa teritoryo ng mahal kong Pinas ang sakop.

Kaya asahan na natin ang mga iba't ibang anyo bangis ng kalikasan at bunga nitong mga kalamidad sa buhay at ari-arian natin.

Magaganap ang mga kalamidad hindi lamang sa Metro Manila kundi sa lahat ng lugar sa labas nito mula Batanes hanggang Sulu.

ANG MGA GAGAWIN?

Una, matuto tayong magdasal at hingin sa ating Bathala na iligtas tayo o mabawasan man lang ang mga panganib na darating.

Ikalawa, dapat na ring maghanda ang buong pamahalaan mula nasyunal hanggang lokal para magsilbi at protektahan ang mga mamamayan.

Ikatlo, huwag nating ilagay sa kamay ni Bathala at sa pamahalaan lahat ang ating buhay at ari-arian at maging ang ating mga karapatan.

Ikaapat, tungkulin din nating ipunin ang ating lakas bilang bayan o kaya'y indibidwal para iligtas din ang ating mga sarili, ari-arian at karapatan.

Ikalima, tungkulin din nating makipagkaisa at makipagtulungan sa pamahalaan at pahalagahan ang paniniwalang nasa Diyos ang awa at nasa tao ang gawa.

Ikaanim, kayong mahihilig na manira sa kung sino-sino at wala nang ginawa kundi manira para sa mga pansariling interes, matuto kayong makiisa, makipagtulungan sa pag-ayuda sa lahat ng biktima ng mga kalamidad.

Ikapito, naririyang pa rin tiyak ang COVID-19 na maaaring manalasa sa mga magkakasakit dulot ng kalamidad kaya ang panatilihin natin ang mga protocol kahit saan, kahit mga evacuation center.

Marami pang gawaing mahahalaga, depende sa sitwasyon, ngunit tatandaan na ang pagkakaisa, pagtutulungan, pagsasakripisyo at paglimot sa mga awayan sa pulitika at iba pa ay lubos na makatutulong para maligtas tayo sa lahat ng anyo ng kalamidad at makabangon at makaahon sa ating pagkakadapa at pagkakalubog dito.



Leaders with Brains

In less than a speak, the seismic changes in Philippine politics leave the Filipino public confused more than ever.

Published 6 hours ago on September 25, 2020 12:25 AM

By [Darren M. de Jesus](#)



Rep. Pantaleon D. Alvarez, former Speaker of the House, recently made headlines, yet again, for his brash and truthful statements made in his local AM radio show. It is interesting how news trickled down the local beat onward to the national scene. He bared that the country's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic is a failure and that the next President of the country should be a leader with brains. Both statements are true but open to a lot of interpretations. The message made is a stroke of genius.

The statements came at a perfect timing. We are 20 months away from the next presidential elections and we are feeling the political tremors gaining ground. Mild earthquakes are now shifting powers left and right. This is most evident in the House of Representatives where the President's son, Deputy Speaker Paolo Duterte, nearly caused the premature change in the Speakership in his almost declaration of the seat vacant last Monday. The squabble is traced from the supposed uneven budget allocations for 2021 – a most crucial year as this being the final full 12-month calendar for projects to be completed. It is the final year to complete a politician's accomplishment report and to fill up a "war chest."

It also came at a time when the nation has succumbed to the acceptance of our failed public health system and of the continuous rise of infected individuals with COVID-19. We have transferred our attention to other things, such as the artificial white sand beach in a portion of Manila Bay. Health Secretary Francisco Duque has disappeared to nothingness — a relief for him — amid the PhilHealth controversies and inept COVID-19 response.

Alvarez pointed out something that no one else had the cojones to say. People are debating online on who the next "brainy" leader should be. Alvarez made it clear that he is not insinuating that President Rodrigo Duterte has no brains. He would never say that about his good friend, but he is able to speak his mind well enough to point out flaws objectively. This is the Alvarez brand we came to know very well during his time as Speaker of the House from 2016 to 2018.

What makes Alvarez's timing even more perfect is that right after these statements were made public, President Duterte delivers his speech at the United Nations General Assembly denouncing China's occupation in the South China Sea, affirming the ruling of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and raising the favorable arbitral award issued back in 2016 — one of the few resounding victories achieved by the Aquino Administration. Isn't this a "brainy" move by the President?

In less than a speak, the seismic changes in Philippine politics leave the Filipino public confused more than ever. Questions abound: Will there be a change in the Speakership? If so, how soon will it be? Alvarez quipped on his stance that there should be no term-sharing agreement since the Speakership is about the Filipino people, not the individuals involved.



What is the status of diplomatic relations of Philippines and the US? We must see the trending — from the Visiting Forces Agreement, Daniel Pemberton pardon, to the UNGA speech that shall eventually lead to a US presidential elections with an expected Democratic victory for Joe Biden. Are we going back to the arms of the Americans? How about our relations with China that reached a historic high during the time of President Duterte?

Have we made a full turn-around after the countless public statements made by President Duterte in favor of President Xi Jinping?

The answers to these questions could only be resolved with finality by a President with brains. Alvarez ignited a storm by addressing the elephant in the room. What was a mere utterance made in a local radio show in Davao del Norte is now a subject of national debate. Now we are left with more questions. If at all, the Alvarez statement highlighted that the campaign season for 2022 has already begun.

For comments, email him at darren_dejesus@cocogen.com or tweet

Inutile No More? Duterte Finally Raises Arbitral Ruling On South China Sea Before UN, Pleasantly Surprises Critics

Filipinos from both sides of the political fence should feel proud hearing President Duterte express his strong and unequivocal position on the South China Sea issue, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said.

Alexis Romero Thursday, September 24, 2020



In this image made from UNTV video, President Duterte speaks in a pre-recorded message which was played during the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 22, 2020 at UN headquarters in New York City. (UNTV via AP)

In his penultimate State of the Nation Address last July, President Duterte was criticized for his defeatist attitude toward China when he spoke about the South China Sea issue.

“Now, plenty of critics, both sides, claim about nothing has been done to retake forcefully or physically the South China Sea. *Alam mo*, unless we are prepared to go to war, I would suggest that we better just call off and treat this, I said, with diplomatic endeavors. China is claiming it. We are claiming it. China has the arms, we do not have it,” Duterte said on July 28.

Lamenting his helplessness against the military might of China, he said: “So it is simple as that. They are in possession of the property. It will remain a property of a... if you’re a lawyer, property rights. They are – it has nothing to do with the Philippine laws of property, but it’s akin to – they are in possession. So what can we do? We have to go to war and I cannot afford it. Maybe some other president can, but I cannot. *Inutil ako diyan, sabihin ko sa inyo*. And I’m willing to admit it. *Talagang inutil ako diyan. Wala akong magawa*. I cannot... the moment I send my Marines there at the coastal shores of Palawan, *tinamaan ng cruise missile lahat iyan. Hindi pa nga naka-set sail iyan eh sabog na*.”

These were only some of Duterte’s pronouncements since he assumed office in 2016 that made critics accuse him of selling out the Philippines in exchange for Chinese aid even if he had been saying that he would raise the country’s arbitration victory at the proper time.

On Tuesday, Sept. 22, Duterte surprised his critics as he vowed to reject efforts to undermine the historic arbitral ruling that voided China’s expansive maritime claim in the South China Sea during his first address before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Duterte said the ruling is already part of international law and could no longer be abandoned by governments.

The President addressed the High-Level General Debate of the 75th Session of the UNGA – the main deliberative organ of the UN where all the 193 member states are represented – from the Malacañang Golf Clubhouse in Malacañang Park.

“We must remain mindful of our obligations and commitment to the charter of the United Nations and as amplified by the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes. The Philippines affirms that commitment in the South China Sea in accordance with UNCLOS and the 2016 arbitral award,” Duterte told the assembly, which included representatives from China, as he referred to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

“The award is now part of international law, beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish or abandon. We firmly reject attempts to undermine it,” he stressed.

In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration based in The Hague ruled that China’s maritime claim, which covers about 90 percent of the resource-rich South China Sea, has no legal basis. The ruling also affirmed the Philippines’ sovereign rights over its 200-mile exclusive economic zone or EEZ, specifically over Panganiban (Mischief) Reef, Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal and Recto (Reed) Bank.

The ruling also declared Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal off Zambales as a common fishing ground, and stated that Chinese moves to drive away Filipino fishermen from the shoal violated Philippine rights.

China has rejected the ruling, calling it “illegal since day one.”

The landmark ruling stemmed from a case seeking the definition of the Philippines’ maritime entitlements under UNCLOS. The case was filed by the administration of former president Benigno Aquino III, which described China’s claim as “excessive” and “exaggerated.”



Demonstrators in Manila stage a protest action on June 14, 2018 against Chinese coast guards' seizure of fish caught by Filipino fishermen near the contested Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. Photo by AP

Upon assuming power, Duterte decided to set aside the maritime dispute to improve the Philippines’ ties with China, but assured Filipinos that he would not give up even an inch of the country’s territory to foreign powers.

His administration, however, has rejected calls to file new cases against China for violating its obligation under UNCLOS to protect the marine environment. Issues related to the South China Sea can be discussed through bilateral consultations with the Chinese government, Philippine officials have said.

Addressing the UNGA on Tuesday, Duterte said: “We welcome the increasing number of states that have come in support of the award and what it stands for – the triumph of reason over rashness, of law over disorder, of amity over ambition. This – as it should – is the majesty of the law.”



China has created artificial islands on Kagitingan (Fiery Cross), Panganiban, Zamora (Subi), Burgos (Gaven), Kennan (Hughes), Mabini (Johnson) and Calderon (Cuarteron) Reefs – areas located off Palawan that are also being claimed by the Philippines. Various sectors have expressed concern that China’s island-building would affect freedom of flight and navigation in the area.

‘Do not hate each other too much’

Duterte also warned world leaders about the possible effects of geopolitical tensions that continue to rise while the world is grappling with the coronavirus pandemic.

He said the tensions could inflict a “terrible toll” on human life and property if the “word war” between some countries deteriorated into a real war involving nuclear weapons and missiles.

“Escalating tensions benefit no one. New flashpoints heighten fears and tend to tear peoples apart. When elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled flat,” Duterte said.

“I therefore call on the stakeholders in the South China Sea, the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East and Africa: if we cannot be friends as yet, then in God’s name, let us not hate each other too much. I heard it once said, and I say it to myself in complete agreement,” he added.

‘Alipin no more’

On Wednesday, Sept. 23, senators commended Duterte for his address before the UNGA, specifically his position on the South China Sea.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said if there was an Emmy for the UNGA speeches, the one Duterte delivered could win the prize for the best written. The Emmys honor the best in primetime television programming in the United States.

According to Recto, Duterte’s team who put policies to prose should be congratulated as “what they put together is the template for presidential addresses: cohesive, coherent and straight to the point.”

“If he was able to convey his thoughts with clarity to the world, all the more he should do the same to his own people at this time when they need hope and direction,” Recto stressed.

Recto expressed belief that Duterte’s unequivocal stance against China’s illegal reclamation in the country’s waters should put to rest any ambivalence on where he and the government stand on this important issue.

“From where he spoke, with the whole world watching, he was able to plant our flag on a territory that historically and legally is ours,” Recto said.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who chairs the Senate committee on national defense and security, said hearing the President invoke the arbitral award before the UNGA should now erase doubts on where he stands regarding the West Philippine Sea (WPS) issue.

“*Alipin* no more!” Lacson posted on Twitter. *Alipin* is Filipino for slave.

“Filipinos from both sides of the political aisle should feel proud hearing the President express his strong and unequivocal position on the WPS issue,” Lacson said. “More importantly, I hope that China heard the President’s message loud and clear.”

Opposition Sen. Francis Pangilinan also lauded Duterte's pronouncements asserting the tribunal ruling.

"We hope he will match these strong words with actions to include bringing the matter officially before the UN as well as seeking support from our ASEAN allies such as Indonesia and Vietnam who have stood up to China and opposed its aggression in the disputed waters," Pangilinan said. "We also hope he doesn't change his mind and does a 180-degree turn moving forward."



Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Duterte offer a toast during a state banquet at Malacañang's Rizal Hall on Nov. 20, 2018. Xi was in the Philippines for a series of bilateral meetings and signing of agreements between the two countries. The Philippine STAR file photo

Albert del Rosario, who as foreign affairs secretary filed the arbitration case in The Hague, welcomed the President's statement on Wednesday.

"This is the first time that our President addressed the UNGA and we are heartened to know that he is not at all impervious but listens to the will of his countrymen. We also welcome President Duterte's statement that he supports the 'increasing number of states that have come in support of the Award' – and this include the US, France, Germany, (United Kingdom), Australia and others," Del Rosario said in a statement.

He noted that by invoking the arbitral award, Duterte "has acted more faithfully to our Constitution, which mandates him and our military to secure our country's sovereignty and protect our lands and seas."

"The next step is for our President and his administration to put in reality the invocation of the arbitral award: our government should work earnestly to get the support of more countries so that the arbitral award will be raised more emphatically next year, for the UNGA 2021," Del Rosario stated.

"We hope that this puts to rest the misconception that bringing the arbitral award to the UNGA is re-litigating the case. All Filipinos should now unite so that that the world will help our country enforce the arbitral award against China. Let us not allow this opportunity to be put to waste," Del Rosario declared. "We deeply thank you, Mr. President, for defending what is ours."

Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. has rejected calls to bring up the landmark arbitration ruling to the UNGA, saying the award would only turn Manila's win into a "question of numbers."

"We won it already, why would you want to re-litigate something that you won? It's like you don't like you won? It doesn't make sense so I rejected it," Locsin said.

Locsin noted that China can reject the decision as a matter of "opinion" but the fact remains that Manila won and that the law is on its side.



"We won, we don't need to go back to the UN. You bring it back to the UN and it becomes a question of numbers. And this has nothing to do with numbers, it has to do with law. Law is eternal, the rest is opinion," he argued.

Former Supreme Court senior associate justice Antonio Carpio praised Duterte for showing a strong stand before the UNGA.

Carpio, who was among those who defended the Philippine claims before the arbitration court, also called Duterte's recognition of the countries that have expressed their support to the country's victory as "heartening."

Just last week, France, Germany and the UK told the UN that they reject China's "historic rights" in the South China Sea.

"I fervently hope that this is the policy that the Duterte administration will implement across all levels – in the protection of our exclusive economic zone in the West Philippines Sea, in the negotiations for the Code of Conduct, and in gathering the support of the international community for the enforcement of the arbitral award," Carpio said.

Muntinlupa City Rep. Ruffy Biazon, senior vice chairman of the House committee on national defense and security, was also elated over Duterte's statements at the UNGA.

"Mission accomplished, Mr. President! By making that statement in the UN General Assembly, the President makes it known that the Philippines intends to exercise its rights to explore, exploit and manage the resources in our EEZ," Biazon said.

"His acknowledgment of other countries' unified stance in support of the arbitral ruling also points out a basis for the Philippines to engage these countries as allies in the assertion of our rights in our exclusive economic zone," he added. "This shows that the Philippines can stand up against the intrusions and assertions by China in South China Sea without resorting to war." – **With Paolo Romero, Evelyn Macairan**



Chinese military presence doesn't mean SCS ownership: Palace

By Azer Parrocha [September 24, 2020, 7:58 pm](#)



File photo

MANILA – Chinese military presence in territories claimed by the Philippines will "never ripen" into a valid legal ownership, Malacañang said Thursday.

In a virtual Palace briefing, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said the 2016 Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ruling has already invalidated China's expansive claim in the South China Sea.

He said President Rodrigo Duterte, who invoked the arbitral ruling for the first time before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) last Wednesday, reasserted that the arbitral victory cannot be erased or ignored since it is already part of international law.

"Ang tinutukoy po diyan ng ating Presidente, kahit anong physical military occupation nila sa mga isla na ang sabi naman ng Tribunal ay kabahagi ng ating (The President is saying that whatever physical military occupation they have in the islands, which the Tribunal ruled is part of our) exclusive economic zone (EEZ), will never ripen into a valid legal title," he said.

He, however, recognized the presence of Chinese Coast Guards near the EEZ as part of freedom of navigation.

"Alam ninyo po sa EEZ kasi, lahat po ng mga sasakyan ay may kalayaang maglalayag. So iyong paglalayag po mismo sa EEZ ay hindi po pinagbabawal (You know the EEZ, all ships have freedom of navigation. So navigating in the EEZ is not illegal)," he said.

Asked if the Philippines is open to proposing a resolution before the UNGA calling on China to respect The Hague ruling, Roque said "anything is possible."

"But there has not been any step to that effect ordered by the Palace yet," he added.

Roque, meanwhile, welcomed praises from incumbent and former Cabinet officials on Duterte's speech, but reminded them that it was also "a restatement of an old existing policy."

"Kampanya pa lang po, sinabi ni Presidente, hindi niya isu-surrender ang maski isang inch ng ating teritoryo, so iyan po ay pagiging consistent lamang na wala po tayong ipamimigay na teritoryo at paninindigan po natin iyong ating panalo sa (Since his campaign, the President was already saying he would not surrender even an inch of our territory, so he was just being consistent that we won't give up our territory and we will invoke our victory at the) UN Tribunal of the Law of the Sea," he said.

Don't dictate

After Duterte invoked the arbitral ruling, former Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario, who praised the President's move, said the next step is to rally support from more countries.

Roque, however, dismissed del Rosario's suggestion, saying he was not entitled to dictate on the President on what to do.



“He (del Rosario) is a Filipino, he is entitled to speak *pero parang hindi po maganda na dinidiktihan niya ang Presidente. Hindi ko po alam kung ano ang special qualification niya para diktahan niya ang isang Presidente* (it’s not good to dictate on the President. I don’t know what special qualifications he has to dictate on the President),” he said.

He again blamed the former Foreign Affairs chief for losing control over the Panatag Shoal (Scarborough Shoal) during the previous administration.

Despite Duterte’s invocation of the arbitral ruling, Roque said he does not think the sea row would be resolved anytime soon.

“I don’t think the resolution of the territorial dispute is forthcoming in our lifetime. So *hayaan muna po natin iyan, basta nandiyan po ang desisyon diyan, malinaw kung ano ang nakasaad sa* (let’s leave it be, the decision is there, it’s clearly stated in) international law,” he said.

The sea row, he said, is not the sum total of bilateral relations between the Philippines and China.

“The President has been consistent – we will move on matters that we could move forward on including trade and investments; and we will, for the time being, set this aside,” he added.

In his debut speech at the UNGA, Duterte asserted the Philippines’ arbitral ruling which invalidated China’s expansive claim in the South China Sea.

Duterte said the arbitral ruling “is now part of international law, beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish or abandon.” **(PNA)**



Ex-Ombudsman bats for support to arbitral ruling

posted September 25, 2020 at 01:50 am

by [Rey E. Requejo and Rio Araja, Macon Ramos-Araneta, Maricel Cruz](#)

Former Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales on Thursday called on President Rodrigo Duterte to seek more international support for the 2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling that rejected Beijing's excessive claims in the South China Sea.

"That is an optimistic development. He finally took it upon himself to say that the tribunal's ruling cannot be subjected to a compromise or different interpretation by different countries," she told an ANC interview.

"We have to follow the arbitral ruling to a tee. The President made a good start, and he should continue to request or intimate to other countries to support us in our quest for the implementation of the arbitral ruling," she said.

In his first-ever address to the United Nations General Assembly Wednesday dawn, Duterte said the arbitral ruling was "beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish or abandon," and that the Philippines "firmly rejects attempts to undermine it."

France, Germany and the United Kingdom earlier expressed their support to the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration against China's nine-dash line claim.

Morales earlier filed a complaint against Chinese President Xi Jinping alongside former Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario before the International Criminal Court, accusing China's leader and other mainland government officials of committing crimes against humanity with the repeated encroachment and aggression on Filipino fishermen within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone in the West Philippine Sea.

The Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC, however, dismissed the complaint for lack of jurisdiction last year, but Morales said they remain unfazed.

"We are filing this month what amounts as a motion for reconsideration before the Office of the Prosecutor. We insist that the crimes committed by Xi Jinping et al. were committed within the Philippine territory and also within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines. Even if it were not on Philippine territory like the Gem-Ver, it involved a Philippine-registered vessel," she said.

"Before we filed the communication, we spent days and weeks on end to reflect on our chances. We are very confident that we will succeed in this program of ours, irrespective of whether there is precedent. We believe that we will win this case," she added.

In June last year, a Chinese vessel rammed into the Filipino boat f/b Gem-Ver in the vicinity of Recto Bank, also called Reed Bank, an underwater feature in the West Philippine Sea also being claimed by China.

The Filipinos were abandoned by the Chinese crew, floating at sea for hours before they were rescued by Vietnamese fishermen.

Meanwhile, Senator Risa Hontiveros said Duterte must stay true in his resolve to reject any attempts to subvert the arbitral ruling.

She said the President's statement before the UNGA must mirror reality on the ground by resuming operations against poachers and reinforcing state presence in the areas that are occupied by the Philippines.

"I am encouraged by his tone before the UN, and I do believe in the power of words. But, as always, I will remain watchful as to how these words translate into action," she said.



Cagayan de Oro City Rep. Rufus Rodriguez likewise urged Duterte to “walk the talk” and support his invocation of the arbitral ruling “with concrete and consistent actions.”

“He made it clear to Beijing that the ruling cannot be compromised despite the cordial relations and friendship existing between the two nations. China should not misread such friendship as weakness on our part,” Rodriguez said.

“We can for instance continue to rally regional and international support for the ruling. We can also increase patrols in our exclusive economic zone (EEZ), where some Chinese-occupied features the arbitral court had ruled as belonging to the Philippines under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea are located,” he added.



Roque to Del Rosario: Don't dictate on Duterte what to do in West PH Sea row

By: [Darryl John Esguerra](#) - Reporter / [@DJEsguerraINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:07 PM September 24, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Former Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert Del Rosario is in no position to dictate to President Rodrigo Duterte what to do with the country's territorial dispute with China in the West Philippine Sea.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque questioned the former diplomat's "special qualification" to impose on the President, stressing that it was under his leadership in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) when the country lost control of Scarborough Shoal (Panatag Shoal).

"Si Sec. Del Rosario, he's a Filipino, he's entitled to speak pero parang hindi po maganda na dinidiktahan niya ang Presidente. Hindi ko po alam kung anong special qualification niya para diktahan niya ang isang Presidente," Roque said in a televised Palace press briefing.

"Alam ko po na anim na taon siyang Secretary ng Foreign Affairs pero noong mga panahong pong iyon, doon nawala 'yung Panatag (Shoal) at doon nawala 'yung physical possession of that island.'" "So I don't think he has much to show by way of showing his actual accomplishments as DFA Secretary. And all I can say is magisip-isip po muna tayo kung anong qualification natin para diktahan natin ang isang sitting President na hinalal po ng taumbayan," Roque added.

Roque said this Thursday in response to Del Rosario, who said that the "[next step](#)" in the invocation of the Philippines' arbitral victory against China before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is to put it into reality.

In a strongly-worded debut speech before the UNGA, Duterte described the 2016 decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague that struck down China's expansive nine-dash line claims in the disputed waters as "beyond compromise."

"[The award is now part of international law](#), beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish or abandon," Duterte said.

"We firmly reject attempts to undermine it," he added.

However, Malacañang refused to call Duterte's remarks on the territorial dispute as a "strong statement," claiming that it was just a "restatement of an old, existing policy."

The Philippines elevated its case against China before the PCA in 2013 following a stand-off over the Scarborough Shoal – which Beijing took control.

China has been pushing for its expansive claims in the South China Sea, refusing to recognize the 2016 PCA ruling.

Meanwhile, Duterte has chosen to shelve the ruling in exchange for Chinese economic perks to help fund his administration's ambitious infrastructure projects even as the Asian powerhouse continues its military activities within the Philippine territory.

KGA

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1339703/roque-to-del-rosario-dont-dictate-on-duterte-what-to-do-in-west-ph-sea-row>



Back WPS stance with action, says expert

Published 6 hours ago on September 25, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



The national government's stand on the West Philippine Sea (WPS) needs to be supported by consistent action as future developments continue, an expert in the maritime affairs said on Thursday.

Director Jay Batongbacal of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea said that the public should remain vigilant in asserting the country's claim.

"We have to always keep watch that we do remain consistent and that government officials do not make statements that undermine the victory in the arbitration," he said in a television interview.

He said it is mostly advisable to do so especially with a known relation between Philippines and China that may now somewhat be affected by the recent pronouncements of President Rodrigo Duterte.

In his perspective, Duterte's statement may cause an issue on the country's credibility with China especially after years of being accommodating towards them.

This is why Batongbacal commended his speech at the United Nations General Assembly stating that it was a good start in forming a more unified stance against China along with other member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which may share the same sentiments.

"This provides an opportunity for them to actually talk and come to a unified position on at least certain issues now like protecting the respective Exclusive Economic Zones," he said.

Stronger response

Through this action, he said that it will form a stronger response against China which prompts a weaker chance at dividing the nations.

"China will not be able to keep resorting to its divide and conquer tactics and compelling the ASEAN states to just deal with it on a bilateral basis now without any coordination with the Southeast Asian countries, not even coordinating their positions, which weakens their bargaining hand," he stressed.

He said that there had been a number of instances where the Philippines could've asserted their claim such as in the reported damages in marine life from past years that robbed many of their source of livelihood.

But the marine affairs expert said that with Duterte's speech being announced at an international assembly gives hope, provided that assertions in following months will be pushed through.



A few of the factors that he noted which prompted for a sudden change in the President's stand on the matter were possibly due to national security reasons.

Batongbacal cited that China's aggressive claim over the disputed sea as seen in other ASEAN member states and in the Philippines as well were likewise one of the main elements which caused the temporary abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement.

On Wednesday, the president's statement in the assembly was also welcomed by other top officials in the country who have also been pushing for the government to assert the Philippines' won territory.

Set aside anew

But hardly had the hosannas been heaped, Malacañang said it would "set aside" the 2016 arbitral ruling for the meantime.

In his briefing Thursday, presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said the Philippines would instead continue its trade and investments with China, since it appears that the sea row's resolution might not be possible "in our lifetime."

"The President has been consistent — we will move on matters that we could move forward on including trade and investments," Roque said.

"We will, for the time being, set this aside because I don't think the resolution of the territorial dispute is forthcoming in our lifetime," he added.

Roque even refused to call the President's latest statements as "strong," saying the latter merely reiterated existing government policies before the 193-member United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

"It's a restatement of what has been the Philippine policy on China that we cannot neglect our win at the Hague," Roque said.

Meanwhile, Roque told former Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario that he should not dictate President Duterte's next move to address the maritime dispute.

Roque said this after Del Rosario urged the government to take the "next step" of "putting into reality" the President's invocation of the 2016 arbitral ruling before the UN.

Roque even questioned the former diplomat's "special qualifications" to tell the President what he should do, saying that it was under his leadership at the Department of Foreign Affairs when the country lost control of Scarborough Shoal in 2012 during a standoff between Philippine and Chinese forces.

with MJ BLANCAFLOR



Duterte asserts arbitral win at ‘most opportune time’: solon

By Filane Mikee Cervantes **September 24, 2020, 5:09 pm**



Cagayan de Oro City Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (*File photo*)

MANILA – Cagayan de Oro City Rep. Rufus Rodriguez on Thursday commended President Rodrigo Duterte for raising before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) the country’s arbitral victory over disputed islets and other sea features in the South China Sea.

“The President has repeatedly declared that he would invoke the arbitral ruling favoring our claims over these areas and even raise it with Chinese leaders at the proper time. He felt that maybe, now is the most opportune time to reassert our position on this matter,” Rodriguez said in a statement.

Rodriguez said Duterte has made it clear to Beijing that the ruling cannot be compromised despite the cordial relations and friendship existing between the two nations.

“That he did it before a large international forum for every nation, including China, to hear made it all the more laudable,” Rodriguez said. “China should not misread such friendship as weakness on our part.”

In his debut speech at the UNGA, Duterte asserted the UN-based Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling which invalidated China’s nine-dash line map that covers nearly the entire South China Sea.

Duterte said the arbitral ruling “is now part of international law, beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish or abandon.”

“We firmly reject attempts to undermine it,” Duterte said.

Rodriguez urged Duterte to support his invocation of the arbitral ruling “with concrete and consistent actions.”

“We can for instance continue to rally regional and international support for the ruling. We can also increase patrols in our exclusive economic zone (EEZ), where some Chinese-occupied features the arbitral court had ruled as belonging to the Philippines under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea are located,” he said.

Rodriguez noted that Beijing should now give up those features, including Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal off Zambales and Pangasinan in the north, and Mischief Reef down south in the Palawan area. **(PNA)**



Will PH walk the talk on sea ruling? Analysts skeptical

By: [Frances Mangosing](#) - Reporter / [@FMangosingINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 05:36 AM September 24, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — President Rodrigo Duterte’s assertion of the Philippines’ legal victory against China over its sweeping territorial claims to the South China Sea has drawn mixed reactions from foreign policy observers.

“This move should not be taken lightly,” said Julio Amador III, senior research fellow at the Ateneo School of Government, after the President told world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday that the Philippines “firmly rejects” any attempt to undermine the 2016 arbitration award that invalidated China’s sweeping claims over the South China Sea.

Amador said Duterte, in his first speech at the UN meeting, “has cemented the Philippines’ commitment to international law by raising to the UN the 2016 arbitral tribunal decision.” While pointing out that the previous Aquino administration won the case, the Duterte administration, he said, “has now made it a core tenet of Philippine foreign policy, from which there will be no walking back.”

‘Follow this line’

“Succeeding administrations will have to follow this line,” he said.

In July 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague invalidated China’s sweeping claims in the South China Sea when it ruled in a maritime case filed by the Philippines. But Duterte shelved the victory in favor of economic investments from China.

Jeffrey Ordaniel, director of Maritime Programs at Pacific Forum, a Hawaii-based foreign policy research institute, said Duterte’s affirmation of the arbitral ruling was “a step in the right direction,” but he remained skeptical. “If the Philippines was being strategic, it should continue to reinforce the importance of the 2016 Arbitration award at every chance. But I’d caution the optimists,” Ordaniel said.

“It’s either of two things: Mr. Duterte’s UN speech signaled a change in the Filipino president’s approach — one that, from here on, is expected to increasingly emphasize the primacy of international law, or that speech was mainly the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and that a contradictory, spur-of-the-moment remarks are forthcoming,” he said.

Asean members’ support

The President had often been criticized for his supposed defeatist stance on the maritime dispute and his pro-China policies.

He should now strive to get the support of key members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to back up the Philippines’ efforts, said Euan Graham, senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies-Asia.

“Fellow Asean members are still unwilling to mention it directly in summit communiqués. That was always going to be a stretch when the Duterte administration also appeared to softball it,” he said.



“After four years of keeping the award in his back pocket, and failing to leverage it to advantage with Beijing, Mr. Duterte appears finally prepared to own it ... Now that Manila is behind it again, getting key Asean members to publicly back it should be the focus for Philippines diplomatic efforts,” Graham said.

“It doesn’t seem to have got the international attention it could have,” he added. Maritime expert Jay Batongbacal, a professor and director of the University of the Philippines’ Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, said it remained to be seen how the Duterte administration would walk the talk.

‘Maximum leverage’

“How the administration follows up on this statement is even more important in order to show that this is not just a political stunt,” Batongbacal said.

“It’s the right thing to do, but it’s not the only thing that should be done,” he added.

Batongbacal said Duterte could have raised the award in 2017 when it could have been used for “maximum leverage” and the Philippines had the ability to lead.

“We need to keep in mind, that from 2016 up to yesterday, China [had] made great gains in the West Philippine Sea due to the PH accommodation of its demands. Raising the award a bit late has made it more difficult to push back against China’s efforts,” he said.

The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and other Western powers have been vocal in refuting China’s sweeping claims in the South China Sea and invoking the 2016 arbitration award.

Batongbacal said Duterte could have realized that it was now the “proper time” to bring up the award as the Philippines was already behind other nations.

“He probably thinks it’s safe to do so now because the Philippines doesn’t have to stick its neck out first,” he said.

The Philippines, he said, missed the opportunity to be at the forefront.

“The leverage would not only be vis-a-vis China, but also with countries we could gain support from. We could have a bigger influence on events,” he said.

“Instead we are essentially acting when our actions and options have been constrained/defined by the US-China geopolitical contest, which means options are actually limited. We have to maneuver between the two powers, instead of defining the path for ourselves,” Batongbacal said.



CROSSCURRENTS

What the Code of Conduct shouldn't be

By: [Antonio T. Carpio](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:06 AM September 24, 2020

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and China are set to resume negotiations on the Code of Conduct (COC), which is intended to manage the dispute in the South China Sea. What the Philippines should strongly guard against is for the COC to become a tool of China to legitimize its seizure of geologic features and maritime zones in the South China Sea in violation of international law and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea or Unclos.

Once the COC is signed, China can proclaim that all artificial island-building and militarization of geologic features in the South China Sea should cease. The effect is to de facto legitimize all prior island-building and militarization of China and to bar all other countries from fortifying the geologic features they presently occupy. The COC must expressly state that all prior acts of state parties that were in violation of international law or Unclos are neither condoned nor legitimized under the Code.

China wants “powers outside the region,” aka the United States and its allies, to cease their freedom of navigation and overflight operations (Fonops) in the high seas and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of the South China Sea. China knows that these Fonops are the most robust and effective means of enforcing the arbitral ruling that the Philippines won against China in the South China Sea arbitration. These Fonops assert that in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) there is an EEZ where any state can conduct Fonops, including military exercises, in accordance with international law and Unclos. Of course, there is only one adjacent coastal state that has an EEZ in the WPS, and that is the Philippines.

China also wants the COC to bar Asean coastal states from joining these Fonops of the United States and its allies. Without the support of outside world naval powers, the navies of the Asean coastal states do not stand a chance against the mighty Chinese navy that will enforce China's claim to all the natural resources within the nine-dash line. The Asean coastal states must preserve one of their powerful leverages against China — joining the Fonops of the United States and its allies.

The COC will govern the activities of state parties on the use of the South China Sea to avert an armed conflict. These activities must be in accordance with international law and, in particular, Unclos. China, however, refuses any mention of the arbitral ruling in the COC since it considers the ruling void. If China succeeds in deleting any mention of the arbitral ruling in the COC, China can trumpet before the world that since its position prevailed in the COC, then the arbitral ruling is not in accordance with international law and Unclos.

If the arbitral ruling is not mentioned, and a dispute arises on the exploitation of natural resources in the WPS, China can point out that under the COC the arbitral ruling does not apply. China will claim that any dispute on the exploitation of natural resources in the WPS must be settled by negotiations between China and the Philippines. Clearly, China's objective is to reverse the arbitral ruling through the COC. The Philippines must never waver in demanding that the arbitral ruling be included in the COC. President Duterte declared yesterday before the United Nations General Assembly that the arbitral ruling is “beyond compromise,” and the Philippines should stand by this.



Finally, the COC is intended to merely manage the dispute in the South China Sea to prevent any armed conflict, not to resolve the substantive issues of the dispute which are governed by international law and Unclos. The COC must not prevent any state party from resorting at any time to the mandatory dispute settlement mechanism under Unclos. China's objective is to cut off resort by Asean coastal states to the dispute settlement mechanism under Unclos and to freeze the dispute within the COC where

China's consent is necessary to any resolution of the dispute. If Asean coastal states submit to China on this, it will be a humiliating act of self-castration.

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Climate summit set

Published 36 mins ago on September 25, 2020 06:10 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The United Nations and Britain said Wednesday they would co-host a global climate summit on 12 December, the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement.

The announcement came days after Chinese President Xi Jinping told the UN that the world's largest greenhouse gas polluter would peak emissions in 2030 and attempt to go carbon neutral by 2060, a move hailed by environmentalists.

“We have champions and solutions all around us, in every city, corporation and country,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

“But the climate emergency is fully upon us, and we have no time to waste. The answer to our existential crisis is swift, decisive, scaled up action and solidarity among nations.”

Guterres and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson were to address the issue at a climate roundtable meeting on Thursday.

Johnson, who will speak via video link, was expected to say: “As the world continues to deal with coronavirus we must look ahead to how we will rebuild, and how we can seize the opportunity to build back better.

“The UK will lead by example, keeping the environment on the global agenda and serving as a launch pad for a global green industrial revolution,” he was to say, according to a government statement.

The world remains off-track to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, which scientists say is crucial to prevent runaway warming that would leave vast swathes of the planet inhospitable to life.

Guterres and Johnson will convene “global leaders... to rally much greater climate action and ambition,” the statement said.

National governments will be invited to present more ambitious and high-quality climate plans at the summit, which would involve government leaders, as well as the private sector and civil society.

According to the UN, the summit is intended to increase momentum ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) to be held in Glasgow in November 2021.

Recent data shows greenhouse gas concentrations reaching record levels, worsening extreme events including unprecedented wildfires, hurricanes, droughts and floods.

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/09/25/climate-summit-set/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=climate-summit-set



Tree-planting rush overlooks climate benefits from natural forest recovery

Michael Taylor, Thomson Reuters Foundation

Posted at Sep 24 2020 04:26 AM



An aerial view shows part of the Mpanga Forest Reserve, a rainforest that is now regenerating after it was degraded by illegal loggers, farmers and villagers cutting down trees for firewood within Mpigi District, Uganda September 11, 2020. *Asaph Kasujja, Reuters*

KUALA LUMPUR - Leaving cleared tropical forests to regrow naturally has the potential to absorb a quarter of global carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels each year, researchers said on Wednesday.

A study led by the World Resources Institute (WRI), a US-based think-tank, looked at and mapped the potential carbon-storing benefits of letting cut forests recover on their own.

To meet national climate pledges, many countries have launched big tree-planting programs, signing up to high-profile schemes like the Bonn Challenge.

But some deforested areas in the tropics may benefit more from allowing them to regrow naturally - which is often cheaper and more likely to benefit native wildlife, the study said.

The approach could absorb 8.9 billion metric tons of carbon each year through to 2050 - much higher than previously thought, said WRI researchers.

That is on top of the carbon sponge already provided by existing forests, which absorb about 30 percent of planet-heating emissions, mainly generated by burning fossil fuels, each year.

Nancy Harris, research manager at Global Forest Watch (GFW), an online monitoring system hosted by WRI, said the key was to identify where forests can grow back and store carbon faster.

"Now we have a map that says 'go to the tropics because those areas will recover carbon the quickest'," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Cleared forest areas with the most carbon-storing potential when left to regrow are located in Brazil, Indonesia and Liberia, among others, she said.

Central Europe and the Middle East have the lowest rates for young forests to absorb carbon from the atmosphere, the study said.

In 2019, tropical rainforests - whose preservation is considered crucial to curbing climate change - disappeared at a rate of one football pitch every six seconds, according to GFW.

Environmentalists say conserving existing forests and restoring damaged ones reduces the risk of flooding, helps limit global warming by storing more carbon and protects biodiversity.

Published in the journal *Nature*, the study looked at cleared tropical forests that were unused but unable to return to their former state due to activities like sporadic logging or farming.



In some deforested areas in the tropics, such land could be utilized with incentives for local people to help the cleared forests grow back, said GFW research associate David Gibbs.

"Natural forest regrowth was probably previously under-appreciated as a natural climate solution," he added.

Harris noted that natural solutions like this were just "one tool in the toolbox" for tackling climate change.

"Reducing fossil fuels is also a very important aspect to this entire problem," she said.

If world handles climate like COVID-19, UN chief says: 'I fear the worst'

Michelle Nichols, Reuters

Posted at Sep 25 2020 02:16 AM



United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres speaks during the 75th annual UN General Assembly, which is being held mostly virtually due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, US, September 22, 2020. *United Nations/Handout via Reuters*

NEW YORK - The United States, China and Russia fought on Thursday during a United Nations Security Council meeting on the coronavirus pandemic after UN chief Antonio Guterres had warned the body that if the climate crisis was approached with the "same disunity and disarray" of COVID-19, then: "I fear the worst."

Guterres said the coronavirus was out of control as the global death toll approaches 1 million, while more than 30 million have been infected. He blamed "a lack of global preparedness, cooperation, unity and solidarity."

"The pandemic is a clear test of international cooperation – a test we have essentially failed," he told the 15-member body.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the Chinese government's top diplomat, Wang Yi, both took veiled swipes at the United States during the virtual council meeting on global governance post-COVID-19, to which US Ambassador Kelly Craft responded: "Shame on each of you."

"I am astonished and I am disgusted by the content of today's discussion ... members of the council who took this opportunity to focus on political grudges rather than the critical issue at hand," she said.

While not naming any countries, Lavrov noted that the pandemic had deepened differences between states.

"We see attempts on the part of individual countries to use the current situation in order to move forward their narrow interests of the moment, in order to settle the score with an undesirable government or geopolitical competitors," he said.

Long-simmering tensions between the United States and China hit the boiling point over the pandemic, spotlighting Beijing's bid for greater multilateral influence in a challenge to Washington's traditional leadership.

Wang called for better coordination and cooperation among key powers on Thursday.

"Major countries are even more duty-bound to put the future of humankind first, discard Cold War mentality and ideological bias, and come together in the spirit of partnership to tide over the difficulties," he said.

US President Donald Trump is facing a Nov. 3 re-election battle as the United States is dealing with the world's highest official number of deaths and infections from the coronavirus. Washington accuses Beijing of a lack of transparency that it says worsened the outbreak. China denies the US assertions.

Craft reiterated those accusations on Thursday, echoing a call by Trump for the world body to hold China accountable.



China's UN Ambassador Zhang Jun rejected her accusations and said: "Enough is enough. You have created enough troubles for the world already. ... The US should understand that blaming others will not solve its own problems."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian also appeared to take a stab at the United States when he said the pandemic should not be used to undermine "all the work has been done over recent decades by feminist movements for gender equality."

"We must be on our guard, we must be watchful, particularly when it comes to protecting sexual reproductive rights," he told the Security Council.

Trump's administration has led a push at the United Nations against the promotion of sexual and reproductive health rights and services for women because it sees that as code for abortion. Earlier this month, the United States voted against a U.N. General Assembly resolution on the coronavirus pandemic partly because it included such language.



Key to butterfly climate survival may be color coded

Kelly Macnamara, Agence France-Presse

Posted at Sep 24 2020 02:11 PM



Some of the butterflies caught by entomologist Dr. Aimee Dupo during a hike in Mount Makiling in Laguna on March 24, 2019. *George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News/File*

PARIS -- A butterfly's ability to absorb or reflect heat from the sun with its wings could be a matter of life and death in a warming world, according to British research published Thursday calling for gardens, parks and farms to host shady, cooling-off spots.

While all butterflies are ectotherms -- they cannot generate their own body heat -- the ability to regulate temperature varies significantly, researchers said.

The study found that species that struggle to moderate their body temperatures often rely on being able to escape the full heat of the sun in shaded "microclimates" to survive.

These butterflies are "likely to suffer the most from climate change and habitat loss," said lead author Andrew Bladon, of the University of Cambridge's Department of Zoology.

Researchers said the cooler niches they rely on have dwindled as habitat is lost and fragmented, driving population decline in two-thirds of butterfly species in Britain.

This is exacerbated by extreme weather events and temperature fluctuations made worse by climate change, they said.

To measure how different butterflies cope with temperature change, researchers captured 4,000 wild specimens from 29 species, combing across several UK sites in monthly surveys from April to September 2009 and May to September in 2018.

They recorded the behavior of each butterfly and then -- if they could catch it in their nets -- took its temperature using a tiny, 0.25-millimeter thick thermometer.

The study found that bigger, pale-colored butterflies, like the Large White or Brimstone species, are better at thermoregulation because they can angle their wings to reflect the sun's heat either away from them or onto their bodies to attain the right temperature.

POPULATION DECLINE

Researchers said that these species had either stable or growing populations.

But among species with smaller or more colorful wings, they found a less rosy picture, particularly among the "thermal specialists" that use shade to cool down.

These species, such as the Small Copper butterfly, have suffered steeper population declines over the last 40 years, according to the study, which was published in the *Journal of Animal Ecology*.



Bladon said landscapes must become more diverse in order to protect a range of butterfly species.

"Even within a garden lawn, patches of grass can be left to grow longer -- these areas will provide cooler, shady places for many species of butterfly," he said in a university press release.

"We also need to protect features that break up the monotony of farm landscapes, like hedgerows, ditches, and patches of woodland."

Insects including butterflies are the world's top pollinators -- 75 percent of top global food crops depend on animal pollination, according to the UN.

FOOD FEARS

In another study also published on Thursday, researchers from the University of Michigan found that projected temperature increases may lead to alterations in the wing shape of North American Monarch Butterflies and could impede their annual migration.

Researchers reared Monarch larvae at 25 degrees Celsius or an elevated 28C feeding them on three species of milkweed -- common, swamp and tropical.

Each of these contain cardenolides, a steroid stored by Monarch butterfly larvae as a chemical defence against predators and an antibiotic against parasites that can be toxic at higher concentrations, researchers said.

Cardenolide levels are particularly high in tropical milkweed, which has proliferated due to warming temperatures.

The researchers found that larvae reared in warmer temperatures flew for shorter periods and over a reduced distance, while also expending more energy per distance measured.

The study, published in the Journal of Insect Conservation, also found that those that had been fed the cardenolide-rich tropical milkweed had shorter and wider forewings.

Researchers said these rounder wings were less efficient for long distance flight than long narrow wings that can be used for energy-saving gliding, concluding that this could hamper annual migration.

Most Monarchs in North America travel several thousand kilometers to spend the winter in Mexico where they mate.

The study said monarch populations had seen a "drastic" decline in the last decades, with those migrating east dropping around 80 percent, while numbers migrating westward have declined by 99 percent since the 1980s.

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Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/09/24/20/key-to-butterfly-climate-survival-may-be-color-coded>



Australian rescuers forced to euthanize some beached whales as toll rises

Published 15 hours ago on September 24, 2020 03:26 PM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



A dead whale lays on a beach in Macquarie Harbour on the rugged west coast of Tasmania. (AFP)

Australian rescuers were forced Thursday to begin euthanizing some surviving whales from a mass stranding that has already killed 380 members of the giant pod.

While 88 pilot whales have been saved since the pod was discovered beached on Tasmania's rugged western seaboard four days ago, the death toll is expected to rise as the window for rescue closes.

"We still have a few more live animals that we think are going to be viable to move," said Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Service manager Nic Deka, praising the hard "yakka" (work) of rescuers who will continue until nightfall and into Friday.

"There is a likelihood that we'll be continuing the rescue effort tomorrow... our focus has been on those that appear the most viable and have the most chance of success," he said.

A crew of around 60 conservationists and expert volunteers have spent days wading in the chilly waters of Macquarie Harbour, surrounded by the anguishing cries of dying whales.

"It is emotional," said rescuer Sam Thalmann.

"There are animals swimming around, they are vocalizing. We can see the bonds and the pairings within them."

Pilot whales — which can grow up to six meters (20 feet) long and weigh a tonne — are highly social.

Some animals have resisted rescue or tried to return to the pod after being freed, becoming beached for a second time.

Such is the level of distress that authorities said they had to carry out mercy killings of at least four whales.

"Those four whales were euthanized earlier today," using firearms and specialist ammunition, said Tasmanian environment department marine biologist Kris Carlyon.

"We've got a few others that we currently giving veterinary assessment."

"That's based purely on animal welfare grounds," he said.



The crews are now focusing efforts on a group of 20-25 partially submerged whales, using boats fitted with special slings to guide them back to the open ocean.

But, increasingly, attention is turning to how to safely dispose of the carcasses of the nearly 400 whales that have already died.

“Our preference is for disposal at sea. We’re still taking expert advice about where exactly the drop-off point may be,” said Deka.

Left where they are, the whales would “bloat and float”, causing a navigation hazard, polluting the bay, and potentially attracting sharks and other predators, Deka said.

“The decomposition of such a large number of animals could actually affect oxygen levels in parts of the harbor, which could affect the marine life in those places.”

‘Little we can do’

A resident and cruise-boat worker who gave her name only as Monique said the local community has been devastated by witnessing scenes of such anguish.

“You could see that they were obviously suffering,” she told AFP.

“On the beach they were still... puffing, flipping about and you couldn’t really do much to help them.”

The causes of mass strandings remain unknown despite scientists studying the phenomenon for decades.

Some researchers have suggested the pilot whales may have gone off track after being attracted by food close to the shoreline, or by following one or two members of the pod that strayed.

Marine biologist Carlyon said it was a “natural event” with strandings of the species regularly occurring in both southern Australia and neighboring New Zealand.

“We do step in and respond in these situations, but as far as being able to prevent these occurring in the future, there’s really little that we can do,” he said.



Tasmania pilot whales: Australia to euthanise stranded animals

Published 7 hours ago

Several surviving pilot whales beached in a mass stranding in Tasmania will be euthanised as they cannot be saved, officials have said.

About 380 whales have already died in Australia's worst stranding on record.

Tasmania's government said 88 of the animals had been rescued so far and there was hope for another 20.

But rescuers said four surviving whales that were too exhausted to be saved would have to be euthanised as it was "the most humane thing to do".

"These are animals we've given a chance, we've tried to release them but they haven't done well," Kris Carlyon with the Marine Conservation Project explained.



BILAL RASHID/REUTERS

Rescuers have been trying to keep the survivors wet and cool

He said there was no viable chance to successfully release them again and "in this case the best, most human course of action is to euthanise".

The four animals in question were assessed by a vet before the decision to kill them was taken, "based purely on animal welfare grounds".

What will happen to the carcasses?

With close to 400 dead whales on the Tasmanian beach, the rescue operation is now focusing on what to do with the carcasses.

The animals' bodies could either be left at the beach, buried there, taken to a landfill, or taken out to sea.

[Blue Planet: Death of a pilot whale calf](#)

[BBC Earth: Pod of pilot whales in an Orkney harbour](#)

"We are starting to form a plan," Nic Deka of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service told reporters on Tuesday. "Our preference is for disposal at sea. We're still taking expert advice as to exactly where the drop-off point may be.

"Our focus for the next few days will be trying to contain the spread of carcasses because as the whales start to decompose they will bloat and float, and with wind and tide they will drift."



BILAL RASHID/REUTERS

Dead pilot whale calves on the beach in Macquarie Heads



He warned that if the bodies should wash back into the sea, they could pose a significant navigation hazard. The carcasses could also attract predators such as sharks and even present an environmental health issue as the decomposition of such a large number of animals could affect oxygen levels and hence marine life.

"So the strategy is going to be to collect and contain," Mr Deka explained. "When conditions are suitable we will take them out to sea and release them."

What about the rescued whales?

Dr Carlyon said they were pleased they had been able to rescue just under 90 whales so far.

"On Monday, as we were coming up with plans, if we had said 90 we would have been very happy with that. We are really, really pleased with that number," he said.

Dr Carlyon added that the rescued whales were being released into deep water, at which point "they are on their own".

"Tracking work in the past has shown that animals released individually do reform after a period and behave as we would expect," Dr Carlyon added. "We are hoping they are forming those bonds again."

How did the whales get stranded?

The pilot whales washed up on sand spits in the sea around an area called Macquarie Heads.

The stranding is one of the largest ever recorded and eclipses a previous national record of 320 whales beached in Western Australia in 1996.

It is not fully understood why the whales became stranded but pilot whales are known to be more prone to getting beached. **They are not considered endangered**, although exact population numbers are not known.



There are a range of theories for why beachings occur. Some say the animals could be getting disoriented after following fish they hunt to the shore.

Others believe that one leading individual can mistakenly lead whole groups to shore. Researchers also believe that such groups are susceptible around beaches which gently slope across a wide area because the whales' sonar pulses can fail to detect the shoreline in shallow waters.



The daring plan to save the Arctic ice with glass

(Credit: BBC)



By Katya Zimmer 24th September 2020

The fear that action to combat climate change has been too slow has led some scientists to test unconventional methods to stem the loss of Arctic sea ice.

One of the most important, yet underappreciated, features of the Arctic sea ice is the ability of its blindingly white surfaces to reflect sunlight. For at least as long as our species has existed, the frozen seas at the top of our world have acted as a massive parasol that helps keep the planet cool and its climate stable.

Yet now, **much of that ice is rapidly vanishing**. Rising temperatures have locked the Arctic in a self-destructive feedback loop: the warmer it gets, the reflective white ice dissolves into darker, blue water, which absorbs more of the Sun's warmth rather than reflecting it back into space. Warmer water accelerates melting, which means yet more absorption of heat, which drives further melting – and so on in a vicious cycle that is part of the reason why the Arctic is warming around twice as fast as the rest of the planet. **This July, ice cover was as low as it had ever been at that time of the year.**

As planet-warming **greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise**, some have been driven to explore desperate measures. One proposal put forward by the California-based non-profit **Arctic Ice Project** appears as daring as it is bizarre: to scatter a thin layer of reflective glass powder over parts of the Arctic, in an effort to protect it from the Sun's rays and help ice grow back. "We're trying to break [that] feedback loop and start rebuilding," says engineer Leslie Field, an adjunct lecturer at Stanford University and chief technical officer of the organisation.

This is the backup plan I hoped we'd never need – Leslie Field

The melting of the sea ice has impacts far beyond the Arctic and its inhabitants. It will contribute to rising sea levels, and some say **it's already disrupting weather patterns around the globe**. If we lose our protective white shield entirely – which **some reckon could happen just decades from now** – it **could have the same warming effect** as another 25 years of fossil fuel emissions at current rates, which would mean more intense droughts, flooding and heat waves. By rebuilding sea ice, Field hopes her approach will also restore its ancient function as a planetary air-conditioner and help counteract the effects of global warming. (*Read more about **how ice loss in the Arctic affects the rest of the world**.*)



Tiny powder-like beads could increase the reflectivity of Arctic ice, to reflect more of the Sun's warmth back into space (Credit: Susan Kramer/Arctic Ice Project)

Many scientists frown upon such technological interventions in Earth’s planetary system, known broadly as “geoengineering”, arguing that fiddling with nature might cause further damage. However, “the utter lack of progress on climate mitigation is really opening up a space for all of these [geoengineering] things to be discussed,” says Emily Cox, who studies climate policy and public attitudes towards geoengineering at the University of Cardiff. That said, the urgency does not erase the uncertainty. “What do you do if something goes wrong... especially in the Arctic, which is already a fairly fragile ecosystem?”

You might also like:

- [Russia’s grand plans to clean up the Arctic](#)
- [The coast overwhelmed with otters](#)
- [The deadly hail the size of boulders](#)

Field launched the Arctic Ice Project — formerly known as ICE911 — in 2008, soon after watching the climate change documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, which convinced her of the urgency of doing something about the melting sea ice. In particular, it’s the fate of old, thick sea ice that worries her the most – the kind that lasts multiple years. This mature ice, dazzlingly white, has a high albedo, meaning it’s extremely good at reflecting sunlight – much more so than the thinner and darker young ice that forms each polar winter only to melt again during the summer. Yet over the past 33 years, that ice has dwindled by a staggering 95%.

When ice in an uncovered area had completely vanished, there was still nearly a foot in the section treated with the glass beads

What if, Field asked, she could layer a reflective material on top of the young ice to protect it during the summer months? If it had that extra protection, could it rebuild into sturdy multi-year ice, and kick-start a local process of ice regrowth? She settled on silica – or silicon dioxide – which occurs naturally in most sand and is often used to make glass, as the material of choice. She found a manufacturer that turns it into tiny, brightly reflective beads, each one 65 micrometers in diameter – thinner than a human hair, but too large for them to be inhaled and cause lung problems, Field says. The beads are also hollow inside, so they’ll float on water and continue to reflect away sunlight even if the ice begins to melt.

Over the past decade, she and her team have scattered the silica spheres over several lakes and ponds in Canada and the United States, so far with encouraging results. For instance, in a pond in Minnesota, just a few layers of glass powder made young ice 20% more reflective – enough to delay the melting of the ice. By spring, when the ice in an uncovered area of the pond had completely vanished, there was still nearly a foot of ice in the section treated with the glass beads.



Dark blue water absorbs more of the Sun’s rays, accelerating the process of global warming - but bright white ice reflects that radiation away (Credit: Getty Images)

Field doesn’t want to carpet the Arctic in glass. Instead, she plans on distributing it strategically to protect some particularly fast-melting, vulnerable areas, like the Fram Strait, a thin passage between Greenland and Svalbard. According to results of a climate model she presented last December at the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union, treating the Fram Strait could lead to large-scale ice regrowth across parts of the Arctic.



Scientists agree that the beads are well-intentioned, but worry about their potential effects on the Arctic ecosystem. If they float around there indefinitely, “it’s just going to clog up the ocean and mess with the ecosystem,” says Cecilia Bitz, an atmospheric scientist at the University of Washington who specialises in Arctic sea ice.

Field argues that the balls are safe because silica is so abundant in nature – indeed, it routinely washes from weathered rocks via rivers into the sea. And according to some safety testing as part of her 2018 study, the beads, when ingested, cause no ill effects in at least two species – sheephead minnow fish and northern bobwhite birds.

However, some biologists are concerned about the potential effects on the creatures at the base of the Arctic food chain. Depending on how much light the silica beads reflect, they could block sunlight from photosynthesising plankton, such as diatoms, algae that live under the sea ice and around it. Any change in plankton abundance could cascade up the food web and have unpredictable effects on organisms from fish to seals and polar bears, notes Karina Giesbrecht, an ocean chemist and ecologist at Canada’s University of Victoria who has studied the role of silica in Arctic ecosystems.

Some view such approaches as stop-gap solutions to climate change, in that they only treat single symptoms

On top of that, the silica balls are similar in size to diatoms, which are eaten by zooplankton known as copepods, Giesbrecht notes. If the beads sank into the water column, copepods might consume them thinking they are diatoms, without gaining any nutrition. In the worst case, the copepods could starve, with knock-on effects for other members of the Arctic ecosystem.

So far, Field has been using beads that mostly stay afloat (though some inevitably sink each season), and she is planning to test their impact on plankton ecosystems. If there are any harmful effects, she’ll explore ways of tailoring the beads to make them ecologically safer, she says. One option she is considering is whether to tweak their composition such that they dissolve after a period of time. There are many other questions that her team, which is about to undertake further testing in seawater-filled pools in Alaska, will have to answer to convince the world that the approach is safe and effective.



The young, thin Arctic ice is darker and less reflective than the thick, white, old ice – pushing the Arctic into a feedback cycle of warming (Credit: Martha Henriques)

For one, Mark Serreze, a climate scientist who directs the US National Snow and Ice Data Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder, wonders whether they’ll work as intended. “If you put down the silica beads in an area of fast-moving ocean currents, notably the Fram Strait, they will be quickly dispersed,” rendering them ineffective, he says.

The proposal also raises financial questions, like who would foot the approximately \$1-5bn (£800m to £4bn) annual bill for making, shipping, testing and distributing the necessary silica beads in the Fram Strait. It may be an eye-watering figure, but it starts to look small next to the estimated \$460bn (£360bn) that the United States incurred in extreme weather and climate disasters between 2017 and 2019 alone, Field notes.



Researchers are **exploring the feasibility of other geoengineering approaches to save the melting** Arctic, but none come without problems. One, for instance, would entail building millions of **wind-powered devices to pump water from the deep to the ice surface** in order to build up thicker layers of ice – which is energy-intensive and might not be very effective, Bitz says. She and Serreze view such approaches as stop-gap solutions to climate change, in that they only treat single symptoms – in the case of silica dust, temperatures – while doing nothing about the root cause of it. If Field’s strategy works as intended, “that’s wonderful,” Bitz says, “but I *know* that not emitting CO2 in the first place will work.”

Field agrees that geoengineering is in no way a replacement for reducing carbon emissions. Rather, she sees it as a chance to buy the time needed for world economies to decarbonise and stave off the worst impacts of climate change. The silica beads, she says, are “the backup plan I hoped we’d never need”.

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Sasakyang de-gas, ipagbabawal na sa California

ni [Ronalyne Seminiano Reonico](#) | September 24, 2020



“It shall be a goal of the State that 100 percent of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks will be zero-emission by 2035, sa nilagdaang Executive Order N-79-20. @Filesource

Ipinag-utos ni California Governor Gavin Newsom na gawing “zero-emission” ang lahat ng pampublikong sasakyan sa 2035 sa naturang lugar upang malabanan ang climate change.

Ang sektor ng transportasyon umano ang nakapagdudulot ng mahigit kalahati ng carbon pollution sa California.

Pahayag ni Newsom, "For too many decades, we have allowed cars to pollute the air that our children and families breathe.

"Our cars shouldn't make wildfires worse -- and create more days filled with smoky air. Cars shouldn't melt glaciers or raise sea levels threatening our cherished beaches and coastlines."

Mababasa rin sa nilagdaang Executive Order N-79-20 ni Newsom nitong Miyerkules:

“It shall be a goal of the State that 100 percent of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks will be zero-emission by 2035. It shall be a further goal of the State that 100 percent of medium-and heavy-duty vehicles in the State be zero-emission by 2045 for all operations where feasible and by 2035 for drayage trucks. It shall be further a goal of the State to transition to 100 percent zero-emission off-road vehicles and equipment by 2035 where feasible.”