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## PRRD to DENR Employees: "Sagot Kita"

"If you do your duty in accordance with law ... I will defend you"

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## HIGHLIGHTS of the 3rd State of the Nation Address of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte relevant to environment and natural resources

Batasang Pambansa Complex, Quezon City  
23 July 2018, 1700H



### 1. Boracay Island Rehabilitation

The President lamented that the island has sadly become a representation of the government's negligence. He then stated his intent to restore its environmental integrity, alongside measures to help those whose livelihood were momentarily affected. He stressed that the government's actions in Boracay mark the beginning of a new national effort.

Other tourist destinations needing urgent rehabilitation and enforcement of environmental and other laws shall soon follow. He also encouraged Local Government Units (LGUs) to proactively enforce laws and not wait for the national government to criticize their work.

### 2. Passage of the National Land Use Act

The President urged the Senate to pass the National Land Use Act to put in place a national land use policy that will address competing land requirements for food, housing, businesses, and environmental conservation.

### 3. Creation of the "Department of Disaster Management"

The President emphasized that Filipinos should learn from their experiences from Super Typhoon Yolanda. He stressed the need to have an empowered department characterized by a unity of command, science-based approach and full-time focus on natural hazards and disasters, and the wherewithal to take charge of the disaster risk reduction; preparedness and response; with better recovery and faster rehabilitation. The President fervently appeal to Congress to pass this bill with utmost urgency, stating the people's safety requirements cannot wait.

### 4. Sustainable use of natural resources

The President reminded mining companies once again not to compromise the environment in the pursuit of profit through the exploitation of natural resources. He stated the need to change the management radically because this time, they will be imposed with more restrictive policies. He emphasized the prohibition of open-pit mining.

He also warned irresponsible miners and their patrons to stop destroying our watersheds, recharge areas, forests, and aquatic resources. He made example of the degradation of Mt. Diwalwal. He said that the companies should expect radical reforms in the industry. He further stated that he expects the mining companies to do their part in ensuring our nation's sustainable development, starting now.

President Duterte encouraged all agencies and LGUs to uphold the concept of inter-generational responsibility in the utilization of mineral wealth and protection and preservation of biodiversity.

### 5. Tax Reform on Natural Resources Utilization

The President mentioned the submission of the remaining five (5) packages of the Tax Reform Law, which will include tax reforms on mining, property valuation, etc.

### 6. Issues on the West Philippine Sea

The President made clear that the government will continue to reach out to all nations regardless of its political persuasions or proximity or distance from shores so long as these nations wish the country well. However, he emphasized that the Philippines' improved relationship with China does not mean that the country will waver in its commitment to defend its interests in the West Philippine Sea. This is why the country will continue to engage China through bilateral and multilateral platforms such as the ASEAN-China and the Philippines-China Bilateral Consultation Mechanism.

Opening lines of communication and amicably managing differences have led to positive developments that include renewed access of Filipino fishermen in the areas in dispute in the Philippines - West Philippine Sea.

Participation in the ASEAN-China dialogue has also resulted to the draft framework for the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea which intends to resolve disputes by peaceful means. (*Nelgie Ann Belesario*)

### ▶ PRRD TO DENR EMPLOYEES...FROM PAGE 1

Over 3,000 DENR employees from all regions of the country converged at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife (NAPW) to celebrate DENR's 31st anniversary. It was a special day, different from previous anniversaries, as no less than the President of the Republic of the Philippines was the guest of honor.

Despite the hot mid-afternoon weather and restricted movement imposed by the Presidential Security Group, the mood in NAPW Amphitheater remained festive. Everybody was excited, waiting in eager anticipation of the President's arrival. Ushers lined up, and everybody prepared his/her cell phone and camera, hoping for a moment of selfie or even groupie with the President. Emotions grew high as Freddie Aguilar's song, "Ipaglalaban Ko" was played. Everyone was clapping their hands and shouting out as President Rodrigo Duterte entered the Amphitheater.

As elation settled down, the program proceeded with a brief report from Secretary Roy Cimatu. The environment chief confidently discussed the latest developments in the mining sector, particularly the DENR's proposed policy reinventing mining in such a way that it would spread more benefits to the people. He informed the President about the Department's accomplishments in the government's Land Reform Program, Boracay Rehabilitation, Expanded National Greening Program, Bangon Marawi Rehabilitation, and Clean Water Program, of which the latest involves the demolition of illegal fish pens in Laguna Lake. His highlight was a video presentation of "before and after" scenes of Boracay.

Speaking before employees and officials, the President lauded DENR's 31 years of meaningful and dedicated service to the public. He commended Secretary Roy A. Cimatu and the DENR family for its contribution to the land reform program of the government, promoting social equity thru the distribution of land titles (residential free patent and sales patent) to urban poor beneficiaries in Makati, Paranaque, Pateros, Valenzuela and Taguig. The President awarded a total of 75 land titles with a total area of 5,394 square meters or .5349 hectares to beneficiaries and representatives of the said cities.

The President expressed hope that the parcel of lands given by the government to the landless urban dwellers will not be wasted, but instead, serve as instrumental in improving the quality of their lives. The "poor are the true beneficiaries and recipients of the government's programs," said the President, as he emphasized the need for DENR to continue pursuing its goal of ensuring human well-being and environmental quality and sustainability.

The President also commended DENR for its "on the target" rehabilitation of Boracay. "We are boasting about the beauty of the island as the famous tourist destination, so we need to clean it and make it hygiene safe," said the President. He recalled how during the election campaign, he discovered the "sorry" state of the island and was bothered by the stinky smell of its waters. Since then on, he made it an agenda to clean and restore Boracay back to its former glory.

Once again, the President reiterated that he has no interest in the area and would not, by all means, deal it for any business or amount of money. He has already made clear in the past that he will not allow any gambling in the area. The government intervenes because it is its moral obligation to make the world's crown jewel tourist destination clean and hygiene safe.

The President promised to return Boracay to its rightful owners, as there are some people who claim they have titles. According to him, he will create a committee that will look into the matter taking into consideration, justice and fairness. Despite the reality that Boracay has become one of the world's premiere tourist destination earning Php 59 billion pesos annually, the President stands firm on the premise that Boracay's land classification, remains to be forestland and agricultural and has not opened to any commercial exploitation.

The President concluded his speech by calling on all employees and officials of DENR and its seven attached agencies to work harder and fulfill their duties, despite external pressures from stakeholders with conflicting interests. He assured DENR workers of Presidential protection, "Huwag kayong matakot magtrabaho kasi I can guarantee you. However busy I am if you do your duty in accordance with law and you are facing suit or you are being sued at maniwala ka na trabaho mo yun, just tell me the truth and I will defend you," assured the President. (*Adona P. San Diego*)

# DENR 31<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating the past, rising up to current expectations, and bracing for the future

by: Alvin D. Gatbonton



Secretary Roy A. Cimatu and Secretary Eduardo del Rosario shake hands after the MOA Signing on the donation of confiscated forest products to be used for the rehabilitation in Marawi; (Upper photo) Contestants showcase their costumes made from recycled materials during the 2018 DENR Milenyal ng Kalikasan held in BMB; (Lower photo) Secretary Cimatu poses with DENR officials. In foreground is a birthday cake.

Fourth of July, 2018 - the day that DENR celebrated its 31st Founding Anniversary was a cool, clear and liberating sunny Wednesday. At 6:30 in the morning the DENR basketball court was already half-filled; men and women of DENR from different regions of the country, wearing white polo shirt and barong, were lining up to register. The excitement of DENR people did not tapered off after all, even after a series of postponements nulled its actual schedule of June 10, 2018.

At NAPW Amphitheater, the festive spirit remained high despite the heavy security imposed by the Presidential Security Group (PSG) in anticipation of President Rodrigo Duterte's arrival. People were all smiles. When the Program started, all eyes and attention were fixed to the beauty and pleasantness of the two Miss Earth hostesses. After a short introduction, Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Rodrigo Garcia opened the ceremony with a brief history of DENR.

## Celebrating the past

Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Rodolfo C. Garcia traced back DENR's roots from the mid-1800s when the Spanish rule created the *Inspeccion General de Minas* in 1837 and the *Inspeccion General de Montes* in 1863. He made highlights in discussing the reorganization of DEENR to DENR through Executive Order 192, issued by President Corazon Aquino in 1987. In conclusion, the Chief of Staff stressed that the DENR anniversary was not only about celebrating past achievements, but more about rising up to current expectations and bracing the future.

## Rising up to current expectations

Coming up with acceptable mining reforms is the biggest thing expected from DENR today. It was no less than President Duterte himself who warned the mining companies, "to shape up or he will stop mining." The Secretary, speaking up before the President during the anniversary celebration announced that DENR will be coming out with proposed policies that would reinvent mining: those that will spread the benefits to the people without compromising the environment and natural resources.

According to the Secretary, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) will come up with the following:

- Guidelines for additional environmental measures for operating surface metallic mines;
- Guidelines for the evaluation and approval of a

three-year Development /Construction/Utilization Work Program;

- Tenement Safety, Health, Environment and Social Monitoring Checklist and Scorecard;
- Creation of a Technical Working Group for a policy shift from open-pit mining to alternative surface mining method.

The rehabilitation of Boracay is the next big thing for DENR. President Duterte, early last year, warned that he will close Boracay because it has become a cesspool. He gave DENR and other agencies of the Task Force six months to restore the island to its former glory.

Secretary Cimatu, in his speech, assured the President, that they (Task Force) are on target, and will be able to open Boracay again to its former glory on October 26, 2018. Huge accomplishments on drainage and sewerage rehabilitation in Boracay have improved the water quality of beaches by 80 to 90 percent. There have been significant achievements also in garbage collection, demolition of structures for easement recovery, wetlands rehabilitation, road widening, biodiversity conservation, and geohazard management.

The deterioration of Boracay may seem one problem only, but the issue has taken the agency to rehabilitate other ecotourism destinations in the country. Panglao Island in Bohol, Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro, El Nido and Coron in Palawan, and Siargao in Surigao del Norte are also currently undergoing rehabilitation and restoration programs.

The Expanded National Greening Program (eNGP) would pass as the third significant expectation from DENR. Secretary Cimatu informed the President that from July 2016 to June 2018, the DENR was able to plant around 554 million seedlings nationwide of different species of mangrove, fuel wood, and forest trees, covering 462,114 hectares. To enforce the log ban, the Department has trained more than 3,000 forest patrollers with the high-tech Lawin Forest and Biodiversity Protection System. The Lawin System is an effective tool in monitoring forest conditions, in tracing forest threats, and in apprehending violators of forest protection and conservation laws.

## Bracing for the future

To ensure the future of Marawi City and its people, 56 agencies, offices and institutions have merged together to form the Task Force Bangon Marawi. As initial

contribution, the DENR has turned over the deed of donation of more than 870,000 board feet of lumber for the rebuilding of Marawi City.

As Head of the Sub-Committee on Land Resource Management of the Task Force, the DENR is responsible for handling all issues pertaining to land resources. It would not only lay the groundwork for the physical rebuilding of the new Marawi City, but it would also set the conditions so that strong and lasting peace in the area could be attained.

Developing good policies is another way of DENR to brace the future. Secretary Cimatu thanked President Duterte for signing into law Republic Act 11038, or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018. The new law would not only add 94 legislated protected areas, but would also ensure the effective protection and conservation of protected areas in the country. The Secretary also commended Congresswoman Josephine Sato for pursuing a bill and a proposed Executive Order on strengthening the national policy on wealth generation from access, benefit-sharing, and utilization of the Philippine genetic resources.

Partnership and innovative strategies also sustain current developments for future generations. In his speech the Secretary acknowledged the efforts of Metropolitan Manila Development Authority for cleaning the *esteros* and rivers, and for other environmental assistance it rendered to DENR. He lauded Senator Legarda for her green financing that supported the conservation and management projects in Sibalom Natural Park and Malandog River. He also thanked Senator Cynthia Villar for funding materials recovery facilities and for her plastic recycling facilities that convert plastic wastes into durable school chairs.

Likewise, the DENR braces the future through effective enforcement of environmental laws. The Environment Secretary informed the President about how the DENR raided Pepsi Cola Bottling Company; shut down its illegal deepwells, and slapped the company with Php 11 million pesos as penalty for not having a permit. He told the President how through the Laguna Lake Development Authority, the fishpens in Laguna Lake were demolished, and how two construction companies were shut down for dumping waste materials and garbage in a shoreland area in Taguig City.

The Secretary thanked the President and told everybody that the DENR is indeed fortunate to have a President, who is very much protective of the environment, and who insists that Filipino people be the foremost beneficiaries of development.

# CENROS, PENROS, AND FIELD OFFICERS UNDERGO ENR MANAGEMENT COURSE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

by: Alvin D. Gatbonton

There were obvious reasons Secretary Roy A. Cimatu gave order to develop programs and strengthen DENR's frontline services. He wanted all Regional, Provincial, and Community Offices to be responsive in addressing environmental problems. He wanted them to be effective in enforcing environmental policies, laws, and regulations and to be efficient and transparent in delivering public service.

The Human Resource Development Service (HRDS) Team, headed by Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo, Jr., was keen in responding to this order of Secretary Cimatu. Together with OIC Assistant Secretary Jesus Enrico Moises B. Salazar, Director Rolando Castro, and the HRDS staff, they developed and launched the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Learning Program.

## ENR Learning Program

The ENR Learning Program is "learning with purpose." Modules, activities, and workshops were designed to meet the participants' needs to strengthen DENR's frontline services. These include filling the knowledge gaps in ENR management, providing a better understanding of ENR policies and laws, and improving the competence and leadership of DENR officials and personnel at the regional, provincial and community level. HRDS Director Rolando Castro, in an interview, discussed the three (3) tracks of the ENR Learning Program.

First is the ENR Management Course, which according to Director Castro, was designed to suit the needs of DENR mid-level managers, starting from those whose salary grade is 24, and/or occupying Community ENR Officer (CENRO), Provincial ENR Officer (PENRO), or Division Chief positions. This track primarily aims to equip participants with ENR management knowledge and skills. Nonetheless, it has modules whose objective is to fill the knowledge gaps and understanding on existing ENR laws, policies, programs and projects. The ENR Management Course also integrates the core elements of leadership and management principles in developing a feasible and sustainable action plan in their area of jurisdiction.

Second is the ENR Leadership Course, which was designed also for DENR mid-level managers who possess and strongly exhibit leadership potentials. Participants of this track will be introduced to new leadership styles and skills, as well as important aspects of decision making. They will be taught on how to effectively communicate DENR's vision, mission and goals to their subordinates. Likewise, they will learn how to efficiently direct, control, and advocate DENR's priority programs and projects to the public.

The third course is the ENR Frontline Course, which was designed to equip employees of CENROs and PENROs, who directly interact with clients and stakeholders. Participants of this track would learn the fundamentals of ENR policies, laws, programs and projects. They will be trained on how to make first level resolution, accommodate requests, and address complaints. Likewise they will be trained on how to be responsive and courteous public servants, aiming to meet the highest level of client satisfaction.

## First Batch of ENR Management Course

For HRDS pilot project, the first batch of CENROs,

PENROs, Heads of Task Forces, and Assistant Regional Directors took a four-week ENR Management Course at the ENR Academy in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija. It was attended by 37 participants. As a main requirement, all participants or learners were required to develop and submit their "Re-Entry Action Plan" or REAP, which is a comprehensive field operation action plan that they must implement in the area of their jurisdiction after completing the Course. The REAP comprises 35 % of their entire grade, which they need to submit on the last day of lecture, and present it to a panel before the graduation.

## The HRDS Team

Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo, Jr. stressed that the DENR's recent hiring of more than a hundred lawyers and forest patrols to increase the agency's manpower for field operations is not enough to strengthen DENR Regions' frontline services. CENROs, PENROs, Regional Directors, and field officers, who are foremost upfront in dealing with environmental problems in the provinces and communities, must be educated and trained for excellent public service.

OIC Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration Rico Salazar made

clear that the Masters Degree in ENR related courses of many CENROs, PENROs, and field officers is not a guarantee that they will be effective in their management of ENR in their areas of jurisdiction. Just like many professionals who are required to attend conferences and continuing education programs, the DENR field officers must also undergo continuing learning programs for relevant knowledge and skills. "They need to be oriented with the current issues and new directions of the Department; likewise be updated with current good practices, management trends, and technologies utilized in environmental protection and conservation," stressed OIC Assistant Secretary Salazar.

On the other hand, Director Rolando Castro thinks that the ENR Learning Program is a must for field officers: to fill the knowledge gaps, widen their knowledge and understanding of ENR laws and policies, and sharpen the proficiencies of the personnel from DENR's regional, provincial and community offices. "We want to make sure that our frontline officers will be capable not only in responding to the problems and needs of the community where they are assigned, but also in delivering effectively the programs of the Department," said Director Castro.

## The Learner's Experience

**PENRO Edgardo "Egay" Rostata**

**PENRO Bacolod**



PENRO Egay Rostata of Negros Occidental, one of the participants who completed the ENR Management Course, was awarded for having the best Re-Entry Action Plan or REAP. When asked why his REAP was chosen as the best REAP, PENRO Rostata said that aside from being feasible and practical, his REAP has established a local-based financing mechanism that enables initial financing and implementation of programs and activities. His REAP is also sustainable and

can be replicated in other Protected Areas.

According to PENRO Rostata, the ENR Management Course made them to reflect on the past and re-think on the future. It gave them the opportunity to analyze the necessary adjustments they need to make in order to be more proactive, collaborative, and people-centered in their management of ENR. The various workshops used in the course honed their skills and provided them additional knowledge. They got the chance to review theories, management principles, and other aspects like finance, operations and policies. They realized the vital importance of planning and people-centered policies. Their Ombudsman lecturer helped deepen their understanding on good governance, particularly the importance of transparency, responsibility and accountability in public service.

PENRO Rostata concluded, "The ENR Management Course gave us a different kind of learning - one that would take DENR operations to a higher level, under new trend of management paradigm. Thus, it denotes much higher responsibility and accountability on our part."

## PENRO Ronnel Sopsop

**PENRO Sorsogon**



Atty. Ronnel Sopsop, is the Class Valedictorian of this year's batch of ENR Management Course. For him, the management course is a tremendous help for implementers like them, who need to refresh their minds about management, enforcement of laws, and leadership.

As a Forester-Lawyer, he finds the technical and legal aspects of ENR management as among the most important lessons of the course, which he thinks he can efficiently and effectively implement in his place of assignment. Just like other DENR offices, he admits that his office also faces difficult problems such as lack of manpower, lack of work ethics and values of employees, and conflicting policies. That is why in his Re-Entry Action Plan (REAP), he emphasized the importance of strengthening integrity, transparency, and accountability in governance.

Regarding leadership, Atty. Sopsop said, "We were taught that leadership is not a popularity contest, and as a leader, our decision must always be anchored on the benefit that it could bring to the organization regardless of who will be affected by such decision." "Leadership, as we were taught, is a relationship and credibility is its foundation. If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message," he stressed.

## CENRO Ariel Mendoza

**CENRO Masinloc, Zambales**



"We were able to experience to be students again - listening to lectures, jotting down notes, taking exams, mingling with old and new friends. It felt like going back to regular school," said CENRO Ariel Mendoza.

One important lesson learned by CENRO Mendoza from the Course is the significance of working as a team in attaining goals and objectives. "We need to assess the strengths and weaknesses of our co-workers because it could help us in accomplishing our targets... it could help us determine what role or tasks to assign to each one so that the team would work at its best," said the CENRO. ► **TO PAGE 6**

Equipped with thirty years of technical experience and unclouded national perspective on biodiversity protection and conservation, Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim now faces the much broader international arena as she assumes leadership of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

Executive Director Lim, refined through time, has her humble beginnings at the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), now Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Started as a Veterinarian in the Marine Turtle Conservation Program, she rose from the ranks and became the Director of PAWB for fifteen years. Endowed with deep knowledge, wide experience, and expertise in biodiversity management, she passionately accepted the challenge to lead ACB, the ASEAN member states, and regional organizations in their pursuit for sustainable use and management of biological diversity.

“It will be a tough job for me, but I realize I need to get out of my comfort zone. The ACB is an opportunity to advance my capabilities and an avenue to contribute my learning,” stressed Executive Director Lim. “ACB is a new institution, I want to lend some experience on structure and protocol with them,” she added.

A stronger and more visible intergovernmental organization is what Executive Director Lim envisions the ACB to become in the coming years. For her, biodiversity has no boundaries, what happens to the biodiversity in one country would eventually affect the biodiversity in other countries within a region and soon within the whole world. All living creatures are interconnected; one cannot protect human existence while neglecting to protect biodiversity, she stressed.

Guided by personal and management principles, Executive Director Lim lays down her ten-point thrusts, in fulfilling ACB’s mandate

#### Align plans and programs with ACB mandate

Executive Director Lim reviewed the long and short term plans of ACB to ensure that its programs and projects are strategically aligned with its mandate. She wants to ensure that ACB would meet the needs of its ASEAN Member States (AMS) in effectively implementing their national sustainable development strategies, as well as accomplish the ASEAN Strategic Plan on Environment (ASPEN), ASEAN Community Vision 2025, and ASEAN Integration. Further, ACB would be instrumental in capacitating AMS.

#### Mainstream biodiversity for sustainable development

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) promotes the idea that “biodiversity conservation is a pre-condition for achieving sustainable development.” Executive Director Lim firmly believes on this. According to her, “biodiversity is a crosscutting concern and it cannot be separated from the development process.” Biodiversity should be mainstreamed into all sectors and across sectors. To achieve this, she wants to focus on strengthening ACB’s partnership with the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity, ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment, ASEAN Working Group on Sustainable Cities, and others. She also commits to work with the development sector and create linkage with development organizations and individuals to leverage resources.

#### Help AMS to achieve ASEAN Vision and Integration

The ACB commits to assist the AMS in uniting their efforts to achieve the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the ASEAN Integration. The institution would endeavor to make biodiversity considerations significant in ASEAN discussion and policy-making on trade, commerce, health, food and agriculture, tourism, transport, energy, climate change, poverty reduction, infrastructure, peace and security, and other relevant

## IN FOCUS

# FROM DENR TO

# ACB: DIRECTOR LIM

## TAKES ON A NEW ROLE

by: Martina R. Constantino

sectors and influence leaders to use science as basis for policy and decision making.

“If we are able to do this, we can significantly contribute to achieving the ASEAN Vision and Integration, thus, further unifying and strengthening the efforts of AMS in conserving the region’s biodiversity for the benefit of the ASEAN,” Lim stressed.

#### Expand partnerships outside ASEAN

Executive Director Lim strongly believes that “partnership makes goals easier achieved,” thus, ACB offers technical assistance and other forms of support to the ASEAN community in building and expanding partnerships with other countries such as Australia, Canada, China, European Union, Germany, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, United States, New Zealand, etc. Through this, ACB is confident that in return, it will get ample support for biodiversity conservation and protection.

#### Engage business community

The ACB would venture on creating more “meaningful private sector partnerships” by promoting the benefits of biodiversity to the business community. Biodiversity provides raw materials and ecosystem services, which are vital to the business sector. However, not all businesses have the same appreciation on biodiversity; irresponsible business practices cause biodiversity loss and unsustainable investments.

Business community has the capability to provide enough human and financial resources, more than the combined resources of governments. With this, Lim expounds that “as business is a problem and a solution, they should be part of our mainstreaming effort.”

#### Involve youth and education sectors

Executive Director Lim believes on empowering youth as they are our future leaders. “The youth sector will benefit from what we are doing now,” Lim stressed. The ACB would create centers for excellence in biodiversity education, as well as provide scholarship programs for interested youth champions in the ASEAN Region. Through this, Lim expects to increase the awareness and involvement of youth in biodiversity conservation and protection.

#### Link science and policy

The ACB will act as a bridge to scientists and policy-makers to understand and work well with each other to come up with effective policies that will promote biodiversity conservation and protection. Lim commits to take steps to popularize biodiversity so that policy makers

can easily relate it to other sectors for development. “ACB will take the lead in having strong advocacy to push and facilitate the interface of science and policy,” Lim emphasized.

#### Communicate actively with stakeholders

As part of the goal to make ACB more visible, Executive Director Lim plans on strengthening ACB’s capacity to communicate biodiversity management to its stakeholders. She wants media to be partners in public awareness and mobilization. More than press releases and media coverage, Lim plans to engage media in ACB’s programs and projects for better information dissemination.

“We will now invest on social awareness and mobilization. We will use all possible resources and involve everyone in biodiversity conservation and protection,” she said.

#### Strengthen Philippines’ capacity on conservation

Given that Philippines is host to ACB, the country must take the lead and be a good model in the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources. Executive Director Lim works closely on building up the country’s capacity to conserve and protect its own resources.

“The Philippines would always be our priority in providing access and benefits that can be generated in ACB, hence we will utilize these to strengthen biodiversity conservation and protection in the country,” she said.

#### Promote transparency in operations

“I will promote transparency in governance to ensure that all resources poured in by the AMS and ACB partners are well accounted for,” Executive Director Lim said with conviction.

Just like how she led BMB for 15 years, Lim assures transparency in ACB system. She will promote the welfare of the institution’s staff to ensure that it gets and retains the best workforce in the field of biodiversity. To make this possible, she is working on an institutionalized staff development program to hone and reward its deserving personnel.

“I cannot do things alone,” said the Executive Director during her inaugural speech. Admitted of her limitations, she calls for support and cooperation from the ASEAN Member States and the ACB staff to achieve ASEAN’s vision of One ASEAN, Unity in Biodiversity and mission towards sustainable development for all ASEAN citizens.

“Let us leave a legacy wherein biodiversity is recognized as integral part of development that is progressive and sustainable,” said Lim.



“Let us leave a legacy wherein biodiversity is recognized as integral part of development that is progressive and sustainable,”

- **Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim**

# INITIATING REFORMS, FORGING ALLIANCES FOR BETTER LAND GOVERNANCE

by: Fatima R. Leya

The recent completion of the century old National Cadastral Survey and the implementation of the Land Administration and Management Systems (LAMS) are remarkable reforms that address the long time, deep-seated problems in land governance in the country.

The cadastral survey and the establishment of a standard computer-based land records management of LAMS serve not only as an accurate system of national base land information and quick process of land transactions, updating of land records, and tracking of land applications, but also preventive measures to safeguard land management from illicit land processing practices and fraudulent land transactions.

However, remarkable as they are, such reforms are not enough to sustain ideal land governance in the country. The complexities in land management are also brought about by inefficient and ineffective coordination among land administration institutions that causes overlapping, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies in land surveys and records.

Such predicament also affects land titling and land distribution process of the government, placing land governance as a matter of national concern – serious enough to make it as one of the 10-point Socio-Economic Agenda of the President.

President Duterte's Six-Point Agenda, "Ensure security of land tenure to encourage investments, and address bottlenecks in land management and titling agencies," is a necessary precursor to actualize the "AmBisyon Natin 2040," a collective vision of Filipinos that sees the Philippines prosperous and predominantly middle class society by 2040.

To attain this vision, the government has to triple real per capita income and eradicate hunger and poverty by 2040. Ensuring security of land tenure plays a crucial role in achieving this objective. Distribution of lands to poor landless farmers, peasants, fishermen, and local communities in the country could enhance agricultural, fishery, and forestry production, boosting local and national economy of the country.

The DENR, as the main agency responsible for the management of land resources in the country, leads other agencies and government institutions towards the direction of national land reform. Through its Improved Land Administration and Management Program, a comprehensive land tenure reform would be carried out to fast track the processing and issuance of titles over alienable and disposable lands.

## Fixing institutional and structural deficiencies

"In the past, our approach to land management has been fragmented, with several agencies going in different directions" says Undersecretary Ernesto Adobo, Jr., who was tasked by Secretary Roy Cimatu to handle the Improved Land Administration and Management Program, one of the ten priority programs of DENR.

Such fragmented approach bore issues that undermine the integrity of the country's land administration and management system. One way to correct this approach is to encourage agencies and other stakeholders to work together and fix the loopholes for better land governance.

The DENR, fully aware of the dispersed land administration functions among government agencies, will adopt a coherent and consistent set of land policies and laws, stipulated in the Land Administration Reform Act (LARA). The LARA bill aims to fix the institutional and structural deficiencies that land administration in the country currently have. By designating a lone agency to do the full land administration functions; high cost transactions, low investment, and graft and corruption, and other associated impact of poor administration services can be addressed.

Once the bill is approved, all land administrative power and functions will be streamlined in one government agency. This will ease delivery of land administration services and rid of unnecessary costs on the part of agencies and clients.

Reforms would also be carried out on land information and management. A multi-purpose cadastre will be adopted to support readily available comprehensive land-related information at the parcel level. Likewise, the DENR will utilize the one control map, an integrated map of the country's environment and natural resources that will aid in evidence-based planning and decision making in environmental governance.

By next year, 2019, the DENR Land Management Bureau (LMB) will fast track the issuance of residential patents through the Accelerated Land Titling Program. LMB will intensify the implementation of Rapid Land Tenure Appraisal, a procedure that will determine the number of lots suitable for titling; and adopt the systematic adjudication approach to simplify, streamline and fast track titling of alienable and disposable lands.

## Strengthening land records in field offices

In order to deliver LMB's target of 390,000 patents for residential areas from 2017 to 2022, the bureau will have to strengthen existing land records in the DENR field offices. Currently, discrepancies in land records are evident in the field hence



Undersecretaries Atty. Ernesto D. Adobo Jr. and Atty. Analiza Rebueta-Teh, with LMB Director Atty. Emelyne V. Talabis unveil the pledge board of the Declaration of Commitment and Support during the National Land Summit

the need to conduct an on-the-ground validation of the potential and workable lots for titling. This will be done through the Rapid Land Tenure Appraisal (RLTA), which involves tapping the local knowledge to assess land tenure situation on the ground.

The conduct of the RLTA will be undertaken in partnership with the local government units (LGUs) which also do land titling activities within their jurisdiction. To also aid in the conduct of RLTA, the DENR has issued a memorandum directing regional offices to provide LGUs with the approved cadastral maps. The use of a uniform cadastral map in LGUs will be the basis for the issuance of land patents to claimants or land owners.

## Forging alliances and building networks

The DENR recognizes the valuable inputs of other sectors in land administration and management. In facilitating reforms, the agency solicits the essential support of stakeholders and partners. It forges alliances and builds networks to collectively address bottlenecks in land management.

On January 16-17, 2018, LMB organized and conducted the first summit on land administration and management held at the Manila Hotel. The summit laid bare the status of land management in the country. It convened different stakeholders in a two-day discussion to identify issues, formulate reforms, and think of strategies to adopt to improve land governance in the country. Land ownership, public land management, land tenure, socio-economic agenda, innovation, and land information management and security were among those deeply discussed.

Cabinet Secretary Leoncio Evasco made emphasis on land ownership. He stressed the right to property as among the basic human rights, alongside life and liberty. "Depriving people of their property rights also means depriving them of their

constitutional right and dignity to live a better future," he said.

Around 500 participants of the summit pledged to support DENR's undertakings in land reforms. An act that Secretary Roy Cimatu considers, "a priceless gift and a confirmation of willingness to be part of the reform process." The LMB and the participants committed to sustain the developments that have transpired and initiated, which include adoption of best practices and improvement of public-private partnership among stakeholders. They vowed to work jointly in identifying and addressing emerging issues in the land sector, and serve as information conduits to people on matters concerning the land sector.

In relation to the fire that gutted the LMB Building in Binondo, Manila, more than two months ago, the Land Management Bureau assures the public that all land records are intact. It has backup files in the DENR Regional Offices, and it will continue to process land related inquiries and transactions at its temporary office at the 3rd floor, New Mines and Geosciences Bureau Building, MGB Compound, North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

## ► GENROS...FROM PAGE 4

According to him, a good leader would make subordinates follow, and a conducive work environment could help increase productivity. He also stressed the benefit of acknowledging one's good work; it boosts morale and motivates efficient and effective work.

For his final message, he said, "I wouldn't forget my experiences in the academy, aside from the important lessons that I have learned, I was promoted to full time GENRO of Masinloc, Zambales, while taking the course."

# DENR LAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PEACEBUILDING IN MARAWI CITY

## REBUILDING A CONFLICT RELAPSE-FREE MARAWI CITY

by: Alvin D. Gatbonton

On May 23, 2017, the ISIS-backed Maute group armed with high-powered firearms, drones, two-way radios and scanners attacked the Islamic City of Marawi during its holy month of *Ramadan*, raging terror on strategic points of the city. They occupied Amai Pakpak Medical Center. They harassed Camp Ranaw; the Military headquarter of the city. They surrounded and released the prisoners of the city hall. They set ablaze the Protestant-run Dansalan College and the Catholic St. Mary's Parish. They took hostages, including Father Chito, a Catholic priest, and moved towards Banggolo, the city's commercial district, where they hold out for months and became the main battle area. After five months of fierce battles on the ground and intensive military air strikes, on October 16, 2017, Isnilon Hapilon and the two Maute brother ISIS leaders were killed. President Duterte, afterwards, declared the liberation of Marawi from the ISIS group, and announced the rebuilding and rise of a new Marawi City.

### Task Force Bangon Marawi

*Administrative Order (AO) No. 3, facilitated the immediate resettlement of displaced Marawi residents*

Just over a month after the war in Marawi broke on May 23, 2017, AO No. 3, series of 2017 was issued by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, creating the inter-agency Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM). Chaired by the Secretary of National Defense (ND) and comprised of different national and local agency members, the Task Force, in coordination with the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, addressed the immediate needs of the displaced and devastated residents of Marawi. It settled the people in temporary house shelters, provided them with food and basic utilities such as water and electricity, attended to their health, and maintained peace and order.

*AO No. 9 amended AO No. 3: for post war restoration and rehabilitation of Marawi*

After Marawi City was totally liberated from the ISIS-backed local terrorist group, a need arose to issue AO No. 9 and amend AO No. 3. The AO No. 9 reorganizes the composition of TFBM so that it can proceed to the full rehabilitation of the wide-scale physical destruction and economic devastation brought about by the war. The AO No. 9 made the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) the Chairperson of the Task Force, and the Secretaries of the Department of National Defense and Department of Public Works and Highways as the Vice-Chairpersons. It also gave way for members of the TFBM to organize additional Sub-Committees. Thus, aside from the early declared Sub-Committees in AO No. 3, other Sub-Committees were added bringing to 56 the

total number of members, with the Office of the Civil Defense as the Secretariat. The Sub-Committees include the Land Resource Management Sub-Committee, headed by DENR.

### *Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Marawi*

Initial estimate of the total needs in Marawi City was placed at P49.81 billion pesos, based on the post conflict needs assessment made by the PCNA Team led by the Office of the Civil Defense and Bangon Marawi Technical Working Group, chaired by HUDCC and regularly attended by DENR Geologist and Post Conflict/Disaster Technical Focal, Michelle E. Mendoza. The Bangon Marawi Recovery and Rehabilitation Plan developed by NEDA was presented to the Cabinet Meeting on June 11, 2018. An initial fund of P10 billion pesos NDRRM Fund will be released and used for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of damaged government facilities, land and aerial survey activities, and social data gathering, educational, housing, health, and relief support outside the most affected area. According to TFBM Chairperson Eduardo del Rosario, the inauguration or the full blast of the rehabilitation program within the most affected area will start in August 2018 and is set to be completed in year 2021.

### **DENR, Head of Sub-Committee on Land Resource Management**

As Head of the Land Resource Management Sub-Committee of TF Bangon Marawi, the DENR is responsible for handling all issues pertaining to land resources. The DENR plays a critical role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Marawi City for it would not only lay the groundwork for the physical rebuilding of new Marawi City, but also set the conditions that could establish sound land resource management in the area.

### *Laying the groundwork for new Marawi City*

Before the deep foundations of public infrastructures, houses, schools, hospitals and other facilities could be laid out in the areas, it is a must for the land to be surveyed for boundaries, zoned for land use, and planned for land resource management.

### *Resolving land tenure and land ownership deficiencies*

The conduct of accurate land surveying and zoning, and integrated planning for land use and land resource management could pave the way to clarify and correct land problems in the past such as overlapping land tenure and land ownership claims. To resolve these deficiencies, consultations and negotiations with concerned land owners or clans who have claim over them must be carried out.

### *Preventing multiple natural hazards*

DENR intervention in Marawi City and affected localities involves coming up with plans to prevent natural hazards. These include Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan (LDRRMP) and Local Climate Change Action Plan (LCCAP). These plans intend to stop deforestation in upland areas, address flooding and threats of geological hazards in urban or municipal areas, and rehabilitate affected waterways and watershed.

### *Stopping deforestation and watershed destruction*

The post-war situation could result to a higher demand for food and natural resource derived products such as timber or wood products, sand and other minerals. Sustainable production and use of natural resources must be ensured. A large section of the areas surrounding Marawi City are classified and unclassified forestlands or timberlands, but are currently settled or occupied. These forestlands are largely part of the Lanao Lake Watershed Forest Reserve and have been declared a protected area.

### *Establishing proper solid waste management (SWM)*

Because the local government units (LGUs) in Marawi and affected localities have no existing SWM Plans, the SWM Plan for Marawi, developed by DENR, will be implemented for two years. While carrying out the plan, the DENR will train the LGUs concerned and prepare them for the third year implementation of the Plan. The DENR will initially install 36 materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and close Marawi City's existing open dumpsite, which is in a slope flowing down to Agus River. For the meantime that a sanitary landfill has not yet been built, a temporary controlled dumpsite with sealed chamber for hazardous wastes would be constructed and utilized for final disposal.

### *Managing Lake Lanao protected area*

Almost all of Marawi City, including portions of the military reservation of Camp Keithley/Camp Ranao are inside the Lake Lanao Watershed Forest Reserve, which was declared a protected area under Proc. No. 871 in 1992. As part of the protected area, the Lake Lanao Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) must convene and come up with an approved management plan for the area.

### **DENR's environmental peacebuilding in Marawi**

### *Deep-rooted conflict for flag and territory*

The battle for Marawi has its roots in the complex and bloody history of Mindanao, where more than a half century of armed struggles have claimed hundreds of thousands lives. Populating dissenting Moro lands in Mindanao not only resulted to Muslims' political disenfranchise, poverty and discrimination, but also led to clan feud, which mostly are triggered by land or territorial conflict and claims. Clan feud over lands is a reality that permeates to the growth of local terrorism in the southern Philippines. Clan feuds oblige clan members, even the youth to arm themselves and participate in defending their kin network against a rival clan (Cabalza, 2017). Such customary actions can be exploited by terrorist groups and influence clans to join a much deeper cause such as secession, which the Maute local group did when the ISIS Asian leader Isnilon Hapilon infiltrated the group. The ISIS-backed Maute Group claimed war on flag and territory in Marawi.

There is no certainty that local terrorism similar as that of the Maute group could sprout and be prevented again. If the problem on land conflict and armed clan groups would not be resolved, a much higher level of violence may erupt again in the future or the generations to come. However, if mitigated through attempts to effectively resolve clan conflicts, terrorism is something that the country can control in the future.

### *Laying the groundwork and setting the conditions for strong and solid peace in Marawi*

"Guns and bullets merely destroy the body but not the corrupt ideology that propels the struggle" (Cabalza, 2017).

The Land Resource Management Sub-Committee headed by DENR, in its effort to establish a sustainable land resource management in Marawi, could set the conditions for strong and solid peace in Marawi. Such conditions could solidify peace in the area and prevent relapse of conflict in the City and surrounding areas, said Atty. Michelle Go, Assistant Secretary for Field Operations - Mindanao. The conduct of accurate land surveying and zoning, and integrated planning for land use and land resource management, as mentioned above, could pave the way to address and correct current land tenure and land ownership deficiencies, which are main causes of clan feud and other land-related armed conflict in the areas.

This is environmental peacebuilding pursued by DENR. Through the establishment of strong land tenure, appropriate and just occupancy arrangements, and sustainable land use and management in Marawi, conflict on land ownership by clans could be prevented and not be a problem in the future.

# BORACAY UPDATE: HOW'S THE REHABILITATION GOING?

by: Fatima R. Leya



Road Widening in Bulabog, Aklan

On April 26, 2018, the recommendation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism (DOT), and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to temporarily close Boracay and properly execute its rehabilitation plan finally got a nod from President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. This transpired after months of evaluation revealed that the island needs to rest and has to be restored.

Boracay has been receiving tourists beyond its carrying capacity. The uncontrolled influx and accommodation of tourists and residents, entangled by the government's neglect of duty and business establishments' abuse of environment and natural resources have resulted in the burgeoning of illegal structures and buildings, unregulated sewage discharge in beaches, and mounding of garbage and soil on half of wetland areas in the island.

A remark from President Rodrigo Duterte likening Boracay to a cesspool has prodded concerned agencies to take serious actions. Boracay, now off to healing and total makeover, the DENR and other national agencies are all hands on deck to save it from total degradation.

## Task Force Boracay Created

By virtue of the Executive Order No. 53 signed by President Duterte, the inter-agency task force spearheaded by DENR, DOT, and DILG was created to carry out the six-month rehabilitation of Boracay Island. Other agencies ordered to collaborate are Department of Justice, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Trade and Industry, and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority.

As chair of the Task Force and in-charge of fixing environmental issues besetting Boracay, the DENR focuses on five key areas:

- Drainage and Sewerage Rehabilitation
- Solid Waste Management
- Roads and Transport
- Forest Lands and Easement Recovery and A&D Lands Management
- Biodiversity Conservation, Wetlands Rehabilitation and Geohazard Management

## Drainage and sewerage rehabilitation

The waste issue in Boracay poses as a major threat to tourists. Restoring the island and turning it into a conducive eco-tourism destination is a serious work of fixing its solid waste and illegal sewage discharge.

At the onset of Boracay's closure, the DENR focused on these issues and laid out its action plan for the Island's drainage and sewerage system. After a series of meetings with Boracay's water concessionaires, it was found out that the two "outfalls" identified in Bulabog beaches is the result of a flawed sewerage system. Taking the fall, the two water concessionaires, Boracay Island Water Company (BIWC) and Boracay Tubi System Incorporated (BTSI), committed to fix the island's sewerage system. Together with the Task Force, they diverted the direction of the pipelines whose outfalls lead to the beach to a wastewater treatment facility, which cleans the effluents and discharges them one kilometer away from the Island.

Recently, more pipelines whose outfalls are all directed to the beaches have been discovered. Using MGB's Ground Penetrating Radar, the DENR had a quick survey of the 4.3-kilometer stretch shoreline, and discovered pipelines coming from establishments whose outflows are discharging effluents directly to the sea.

Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, aware that mere excavation of these pipes could consume the six-month rehabilitation period, sought the help of the Philippine Army, who lent its 100 army trainees, whom he called "Boracay Centurion" to fasttrack the excavation work.

The Secretary gave his assurance: "*Hindi natin papayagan buksan ang Boracay na wala sa standard ang water quality doon.*"

Such resolve translated to the frequent monitoring of water quality in Bulabog beaches. Water samples from the beaches are periodically tested for concentration of fecal coliform, and improvement in their water quality is an indicator that the problem in the island's sewerage system is being addressed. Sewerage rehabilitation is now gaining positive result as the water quality in beaches has improved by 80 to 90 percent.

The Secretary assures that those guilty of discharging effluents directly to the seas will be held liable by the law. At the moment these establishments that violated were given show cause orders and cases were filed to the DENR's Pollution Adjudication Board, who will sanction them with appropriate penalties if found to have violated environmental laws. The Secretary also signed a memorandum circular directing hotels and resorts with 50 rooms and above to disconnect from the sewerage line and secure their own sewage treatment plant (STP) by September. Those with 49 rooms and below are directed to have a clustered STP or may opt to build their own.

## Solid waste management

The local government unit (LGU) of Malay, Aklan, in partnership with other sectors, is set to institutionalize its proper solid waste management system. It has provided Boracay with additional trucks to keep a 24-hour garbage collection and daily transport of garbage from Boracay to mainland Aklan. It is starting its rehabilitation of Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) in barangays Yapak, Balabag, and Manoc-Manoc - manned by trained personnel to ensure that MRFs would facilitate recycling of materials.

## Road and Transport

To allow for a more spacious Boracay and enhanced road system, illegal structures that have plagued the island have to be removed. Two months prior to its closure, the DPWH has deployed 180 people and 18 heavy equipment to start the ground work for the road construction.

The 5.5 meter narrow main road of Boracay, with obstructions on the sidewalk, has been a pain in the neck for most tourists and residents due to the heavy traffic it causes. The DPWH heavy equipment is now rolling to implement its road widening project. It is expanding the current 5.5 meter - road to 12- meters to provide more lanes for vehicles. The main road is proposed to cater

tourists' travel, while a diversion road will be constructed to cater service vehicles of establishments transporting goods and logistics. With the expansion of the main road and the construction of a diversion road, the DPWH assures that road traffic will no longer be a problem.

Integrated in the road widening project is the construction of road drainage that will be connected to the sewerage systems of BIWC and BTSI. The design and construction of the road drainage will be made in conjunction with the rehabilitation of sewerage systems of the two water concessionaires.

Boracay residents have shown their full support to the ongoing rehabilitation since day one of the closure by volunteering to demolish their own establishments that obstruct the 12-meter right of way delineated by DPWH. This expression of support has made the execution of the road widening project easier.

## Forest lands and easement recovery and A&D lands management

Boracay is cleared with illegal structures at the beachfront, after some establishments have self-demolished, while others were demolished by the LGU. As of May 30, 2018, 188 out of the 234 easement encroachers were issued with show cause orders.

Meanwhile, encroachers in forestlands have to undergo the process of relocation. As of June 18, 2018, 392 were issued with Notices to Vacate (NOV) by the task force.

## Biodiversity conservation, wetlands rehabilitation and geohazard management

Currently, the DENR is checking six wetlands on the island with collectively 548 illegal structures (as of June 18, 2018). The DENR in coordination with the local government of Malay ensures that the identified families will be properly transferred in a relocation site identified in Malay. Temporary houses will be built as well to accommodate these families.

Recently, the DENR signed memorandum of agreements with Energy Development Corporation and Aboitiz Group for the rehabilitation of Wetlands 2 and 4, respectively.

According to Secretary Cimatu, what remains to be a dilemma is the rehabilitation of Wetland No. 6 which has become the one of the drainage outfalls of the island. But the environment chief assures that this will be addressed in time of the deadline as long as concerted efforts are at full speed.

Moreover, the sinkholes previously identified by the MGB are being studied and monitoring of Karst subsidence in the island will be undertaken all throughout the closure period. Such activities are also simultaneous with the MGB's coastal and flood hazard mapping which will be used in updating the island's disaster risk reduction management plan.

Almost three months since the Island's closure, the Secretary declares that rehabilitation efforts are now 50 to 60 percent complete. He says that with the maximum effort and dedication being put into by the members of the task force, Boracay's opening in October is on track.



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