



PGMA Transfers NCIP to DENR

To preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the country's indigenous groups, and for them to enjoy all the rights and opportunities all Filipinos deserve, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed Executive Order (EO) No. 726 transferring the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) from the Department of Land Reform (DLR) to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) last May 23, 2008 .

President Arroyo stresses in the EO that "there is a continuing need to remain vigilant in protecting the rights and guaranteeing the respect for the cultural integrity of indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples."

She added it is important to "ensure that all members of indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which national laws and regulations grant to other members of the population."

The EO is meant to effect, coordinate and facilitate policy and operational activities in as far as the management and utilization of natural resources, which the State owns, in ancestral domains, which belong to the ICCs/IPs .

Both the DENR and the NCIP share the responsibilities over the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, consistent with the objective of sustainably managing natural resources and conserving specific terrestrial and marine areas in ancestral domains.

The NCIP is a creation of Republic Act 8371, otherwise

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Champion of Indigenous Peoples. Atty. Eugenio Insigne chairs the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples and is an elected representative of Asia/Pacific to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

VP Noli Graces Environment Day

Blood Compact for the Environment

In celebration of the World Environment Day, themed this year "Kalikasan Ating Yaman, Alagaan!", Philippines Vice President Noli de Castro and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) secretary Jose

Atienza led the signing of the Declaration of Commitments to Water Conservation and Protection (Kartilya ng mga Pangako sa Wastong Paggamit at Pangangalaga ng Tubig), together with representatives from National Government Agencies (NGAs), Local Government Units (LGUs), Non-Government Organization (NGOs), media and the private sector, including the Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA), with their own blood last June 5, 2008 at Plaza Mexico, Intramuros, City of Manila.

The Kartilya was first read by the provincial governors of Cavite, Laguna, Rizal and some mayors of Metro Manila. The Kartilya is a document of their common pledge to do their best to protect and sustain the sources of water for the present and future generations.

In his keynote speech, de Castro said the Philippines is a very blessed for having a climate that permits the planting of crops all year round and the maintenance of rich and diverse natural resources, including water. He added that he would not like the country to experience a water crisis which is now being experienced by some countries, nor its people to suffer from scarcity of natural resources in the midst of their plenty. For these

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Blood Compact for the Environment. VP Noli de Castro (center, back row in barong) and DENR secretary Lito Atienza (to the right of the VP) with the stakeholders of the environment including PWPA chairman Fernando Lu (seated, extreme right) and PWPA director Robert Kua (seated, extreme left).

PWPA Pledges Support to the National Flag Day Commemoration

The Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) committed to support the celebration of the National Flag Day to be held on May 28, 2008.

The pledge was made by it, through chairman Fernando Lu, during the meeting on the preparation for the National Flag Day called by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that was attended by stakeholders of natural resources last May 12, 2008 in Diliman, Quezon City.

DENR secretary Jose Atienza, himself present in the meeting, heads this year's Flag Advocacy Committee.

"The Philippine flag reflects the natural beauty of our country. If we love and respect the Philippine flag, then it could be said that we also have love and respect for our country," Atienza said, as he encouraged all to join the celebration by displaying the flag in various public establishments and even houses.

National Historical Institute executive director Ludovico

Badoy said Republic Act 8491, otherwise known as the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines, mandates that every year, from May 28 (National Flag Day) to June 12 (Independence Day), all private and public facilities are enjoined to display the Philippine flag visibly in their premises. This is to instill respect and reverence to the country's highest symbol of national sovereignty, the national flag. He said this year's theme is, "Igalang ang Ating Watawat, Sa Isip, Sa Salita, at Sa Gawa."

DENR undersecretary Tessam Castillo presented some activities the government agencies and other sectors of society can do to be able to contribute to a meaningful celebration of the National Flag Day.

She said displaying the flag in office buildings, vehicles, houses and other creative ways of displaying it can be made by each and everyone to commemorate the celebration.

PWPA committed to donate Philippine flag stickers for distribution by the DENR and to urge its members to hoist the Philippine flag in their office and factory premises starting on May 28, 2008 and onward to June 12.

PGMA Transfers...

(Continued from page 1)

known as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997. It was originally attached to the Office of the President but later placed to the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) via EO No. 364 which also renamed the DAR into the DLR on September 27, 2004.

Atty. Eugenio Insigne currently chairs the seven-person Commission. Each person-member represents an ethnographic region of a major or groupings of indigenous cultural communities (ICCS) or indigenous peoples (IPs) in the Philippines.

There are 110 ethno-linguistic communities spread over the country with an estimated population of 13 million in the 7 ethnographic regions. They occupy 6 million hectares, so far, of ancestral domains and ancestral lands the law considers as private lands.

Generally located in erstwhile forestlands, no use permit nor agreement of any nature maybe issued by the government over the natural resources in ancestral domains without the free and prior informed consent of the ICCs or IPs; hence, the need for a close coordination between the DENR and the NCIP.

VP Noli Graces...

(Continued from page 1)

reasons, he is very committed to support all efforts at conserving and protecting the natural resources and the environment, he said.

He concluded that a unified multi-sectoral approach would be the best strategy to nurture the environment and the natural resources for the benefit of all.

Secretary Atienza encouraged the stakeholders concerned to actively participate in the protection and maintenance of the interconnected water system of Laguna Lake, Pasig River and Manila Bay as well as the waters of lakes and rivers throughout the country.

In this celebration, PWPA was represented by chairman Fernando Lu, directors Robert Kua, Evaristo Narvaez, Jr. and Ramon Uy as well as all members of its staff.

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Atienza Bares Setting Up of 'Green Courts'



Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Lito Atienza warned yesterday that violators and would-be violators of environmental laws, particularly Republic Act (RA) No. 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 will now face swift prosecution with the setting up of "green courts" in various parts of the country.

Atienza, who was guest speaker to the opening session of the Seminar-Workshop on Capacity-Building on Environmental Procedures organized by the Supreme Court and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), said those found to be continuously degrading our bodies of water will be the first to be prosecuted in these green courts. Among those who choke our bodies of water are owners of fishpens and fish cages and other illegal structures.

The DENR chief explained that though there are many incidents of environmental violations, only a few reach the court and very few result in conviction. He said the green courts will now facilitate the speedy resolution of pending environmental cases.

But he pointed out that the green courts will only be effective if the lawyers that will compose the government prosecution panel have an in-depth knowledge of environmental laws, its aspects and procedures.

"We should have an in-depth knowledge of laws and programs of the government for the benefit of all people, especially the poor, and being equipped with legal arsenal is the start of working effectively as environmental protectors."

Source: *The Philippine Star Business*, May 20, 2008

Slumping US Housing Industry

WASHINGTON (AP) - Like spring flowers, the "For Sale" signs are sprouting in front yards all over the United States. But anxious sellers are facing the most brutal environment in decades, with a slumping economy, falling home prices and rising mortgage foreclosures.

And even the faint promise of better days ahead might not come true, given all the headwinds the housing industry is facing at the moment.

Said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com. "I think we are at the beginning of the end of the housing downturn, but it is going to be a long and painful end."

The devastation is certainly a far cry from the boom years from 2001 to 2005 when sales of new and existing homes were setting records for five straight years. During that time, home prices were soaring, luring thousands of investors into the market, hoping to buy homes and flip them for quick profit.

But since 2006, the country has been mired in a housing bust which, in many ways, is the worst since World War II.

Construction is expected to drop to the slowest pace since the 1940s and prices are expected to decline by the largest amount since the Great Depression.

Hardest hit are the states where sales boomed the most: California, Florida, Nevada, Arizona and parts of the Northeast.

The National Association of Realtors reported that 46 states saw sales decline in the first three months of this year compared with the same period in 2007. Two-thirds of 149 metropolitan areas saw prices decline during the same period, the largest percentage of cities reporting price drops in the history of the NAR survey, which goes back to 1979.

So just how much worse will things get?

Lawrence Yun, chief economist for the Realtors, sees some hopeful signs. Some parts of the country that have been hammered with sharp declines in sales and prices, such as San Diego, California, and Fort Myers, Florida, are now reporting sales increases, as buyers are being lured back into the market, looking for bargains.

"Lower prices and low interest rates are starting to generate results," Yun said, noting that 30-year fixed-rate mortgages averaged 5.92 percent in April, down from 6.18 percent in April 2007. That reflected an aggressive rate-cutting effort by the Federal Reserve to try to keep the country out of a recession.

Sales should also be helped in coming months, Yun predicted, by the reappearance of more mortgage products as lenders reopen the tap for certain loans. That supply had been closed following the credit crisis that hit last August, triggered by rising defaults in subprime mortgages.

Other economists are not so optimistic, noting that the Realtors' latest report showed the number of unsold single-family homes jumping to a 23-year high, reflecting, in part, a rising tide of mortgage foreclosures, which are dumping more homes on an already glutted market.

Adding to the foreclosure problem is the weak economy, which has resulted in four straight months of job layoffs, an indication to some analysts that the country has already fallen into a recession.

Rising job layoffs and higher gasoline and food prices have sent consumer confidence plunging — not a great environment to mount a rebound in housing.

And then there is the problem of the huge overhang of unsold homes generating further declines in prices, which seem to be keeping more prospective buyers on the fence.

Source: *The Philippine Star Business*, May 29, 2008

Asia's Rainforests Rapidly Vanishing



ANOI - Asia's rainforests are being rapidly destroyed, a trend accelerated by surging timber demand in booming China and India, and record food, energy and commodity prices, forest experts warn.

The loss of these biodiversity hot spots, much of it driven by the illegal timber trade and the growth of oil palm, biofuel and rubber plantations, is worsening global warming, species loss and poverty, they said.

Globally, tropical forest destruction "is a super crisis we are facing, it's an appalling crisis," said Oxford University's Professor Norman Myers, keynote speaker at the Asia-Pacific Forestry Week conference in Hanoi.

"It's one of the worst crises since we came out of our caves 10,000 years ago," Myers said at the five-day meeting of 500 foresters, researchers, state officials and activists held last week in the Vietnamese capital.

Over-logging in Southeast Asia caused 19 percent of global rainforest loss in 2005, Myers said, compared to cattle ranching -- once a leading cause, mainly in South America -- which now caused five percent of world losses.

The rapid growth of palm oil and other plantations accounted for 22 percent, and slash-and-burn farming, unsustainable as more poor people exploit fast-shrinking forests, caused 54 percent of rainforest destruction, he said.

Asia's forest cover, including tree plantations, in fact grew by three million hectares from 2000 to 2005 -- largely because of China's 1998 logging ban and afforestation -- said the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

"In contrast, forest loss persists at a very high rate in several countries," said an FAO report. "Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Australia and Papua New Guinea and a number of other countries have seen significant losses."

Ecologists stress that new forests in China, India and Vietnam are man-made plantations lacking high varieties of plant and animal species.

"Many plantations, in terms of biodiver-

sity, are green concrete," said Peter Walpole, head of the non-profit Asia Forest Network.

Yet what environmentalists call "tree farms" are set to grow at the expense of natural forests, especially palm plantations, which produce oil used in products such as soap, chocolate and cosmetics as well as biodiesel.

Commercial crops "will be the most important factor contributing to deforestation in Asia-Pacific countries," said the FAO report, citing record prices for food grains, energy and commodities.

Demand for forest products is also surging in Asia's boom economies.

Imports to China, now the world's top furniture exporter, increased more than tenfold from 53 billion dollars in 1990 to 561 billion dollars in 2004.

India's imports of wood products, including paper, grew from about 750 million dollars in 1990 to 3.1 billion dollars in 2005, the FAO said.

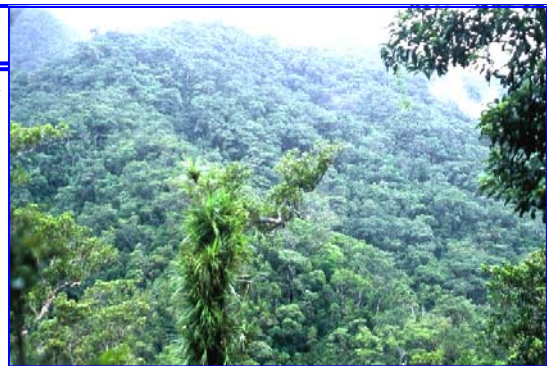
Asia's boom economies are now importing timber from as far as Central Africa and South America, said FAO forestry economist C.T.S. Nair.

"In a way, they are exporting the problem to other countries, especially those where policies and institutions are extremely weak," he said.

The illegal timber trade, fuelled by poverty and corruption, is rife in much of Asia, where 78 percent of forests are state-owned and often managed by the armed forces, not the people who live in or near them, experts said.

"The history of logging in Southeast Asia has been under the auspices of the military and of political families," Walpole said. "If you look at how Cambodia has been logged, this cannot happen without military acknowledgement."

"Burma has been logged by Thai generals. And if you look at the corruption of forestry in the Philippines, it's tied in many areas during the Marcos years to military presence and control. It's still in many military families."



Rainforest of the Philippines. Portion of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range in Isabela Province, considered as one of the most biologically rich in the country.

Precise data is rare in the world timber trade, but spot checks by environmental monitoring groups have revealed disturbing trends.

Vietnam was named as a major hub for illegally-logged timber from neighbouring Laos in a recent report by Britain's Environmental Investigation Agency and Indonesian group Telapak -- a claim Hanoi has strenuously denied.

"Indonesia has had an export ban on sawn timber since 2004, and yet countries are still accepting sawn timber from Indonesia," said Chen Hin Keong of TRAFFIC, which monitors the illegal trade in endangered flora and fauna.

"Malaysia, Singapore, China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, the UK, Germany, France, Italy, the US -- in big or small volumes, they are all accepting that."

Tropical timber is relatively cheap because key functions of forests -- clean air and water, and biodiversity -- are not factored into market prices, said Dr Daniel Murdiyarso of the Center for International Forestry Research.

"These services are underpriced or unpriced. It's a market failure."

Solutions are being debated -- including a universal timber certification system to rein in the illegal trade, and carbon credit schemes that would reward countries for preserving forests and offsetting pollution elsewhere.

But for now these are ideas, not realities, and the FAO report called support for forestry carbon offset schemes "disappointing" so far.

Source: The Borneo Post, May 4, 2008

DENR & PWPA Tackle Entry of Illegal Wood Products to the NCR

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) and the Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) discussed last June 18, 2008 on how to prevent the incessant entry to the NCR of wood products manufactured out of suspected illegally-sourced logs.

Their unstoppable flow has been distorting prices of wood products, like lumber, in the NCR, averred by PWPA chairman Fernando Lu and VP-director Ramon Uy.

Wood products manufactured by PWPA members cannot compete against those processed out of untaxed, illegally sourced logs which are sold cheaper, they added.

Regional executive director (RED) Cora Davis recognized the concern of the legitimate wood processors and traders. She agreed to look into the recommendations by the PWPA, some of which were:

- Strict implementation of the Chainsaw Act by way of strictly ascertaining the qualifications of and purposes of the purchase and the limitation of place of use by applicants, as well as the process of registering chainsaw.
- Review of the guidelines on the bidding process for confiscated logs which should consider qualifications of bidders such as owning a mill, the floor price offered to include forest charges, and the use and control of the documents and relatedly, the issuance of salvage permit should indicate a definite period for hauling the logs.
- The establishment/strengthening of multi-sectoral checkpoints in San Jose, Nueva Ecija; Sto. Tomas, Batangas; Sinoloan, Laguna; and Batangas and Manila ports which are the critical points of entry of wood products to NCR;
- Registration of kiln drying plants and furniture factories employing registrable wood processing machineries and requirement to their owners/operators to submit invoices or documents of the sources of their lumber or logs when transporting their wood products;



Prevent Entry of Illegal Wood Products. DENR-NCR and PWPA discusses ways on preventing if not stopping the entry of wood products sourced from illegal logs in the region. L-R. DENR-NCR forester Rolly Malamug, PWPA director Ramon Uy, chair Fernando Lu, DENR-NCR RED Corazon Davis, RTD-F Ali Bari, forester Barry Calderon and PWPA executive director L. D. Angeles.

- Shipment of sawn timber should be on an open cargo, but other finished wood products may be in container vans but invoices or documents of the sources of raw materials should be made available on demand by forest officers; and
- Transport permits for any wood products coming from Bulacan should indicate the sources of wood products.

RED Davis said that she will coordinate with DENR Regions III and IV-A regarding the establishment/strengthening of multisectoral checkpoints as one of the activities to be related to the habitat degradation prevention under the Manila Bay and Watershed Masterplan.

She will also recommend a round table discussion on the issue of illegal logging and wood products manufacturing among the different regions that the FMB may facilitate.

RED Davis was joined by her regional technical director for forestry, forester Ali Bari and division chiefs, foresters Rolly Malamug and Barry Calderon during the meeting at her office in Quezon City.

With chair Lu and VP-director Uy were executive director Leonardo Angeles and forestry & environment coordinator Maila Vasquez.

New Zealand Hosts World Environment Day 2008

New Zealand (NZ) hosted the World Environment Day 2008 - observed annually in more than 100 countries and one of the most popular days on the United Nations (UN) calendar - in partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The NZ Ministry for the Environment was the lead agency coordinating the event along with the UNEP.

In NZ, it was celebrated nationally through a wide range of community and regional events/activities.

In the Philippines, the NZ Embassy, the NZ Trade and Enter-

prises and the UNEP together with the Department of Energy (DOE) ran a 3-day exhibition, June 9-11, 2008 at Greenbelt 3, Makati City with the theme, "Towards a Low Carbon Economy" and with an international slogan "Kick the Habit" (the 'carbon' habit).

The well-attended local exhibit showcased some of the new technologies that will be part of the international efforts to combat global climate change/global warming.

The Philippine Wood Producers Association led by president Antonio Olizon and EVP Alfonso Keh, Jr. attended the local event and exhibit.

Yes, We Can!

by Jhonny Young

Free Seedling Program

Asia-Pacific Timber Plywood Company's (APTPCO) Free Seedling Program has been on-going for four years now. It involves distributing for free 20,000 seedlings, more or less, a month to local residents in and around Misamis Oriental, especially in Gingoog City.

With the LGUs serving as distribution outlets and the DENR providing link-support, the annual program involves at least 240,000 seedlings or future trees.

Now, if PWPA members, say 20 of them, would adopt a similar program, easily 5 million a year of future trees, properly maintained, would be produced. For a minimal cost of one peso per seedling, the return is incalculable, such as reforesting denuded forestland and protecting the environment, helping the people and communities economically, and providing raw materials to the plywood plants.

It is hoped that this endeavor, worthy of its every effort, becomes a continuing and enduring legacy to participating members.

Shortage of Raw Material Supply

Both records and experiences will show, the demand always overwhelms the supply of almost all things. Scarcity of whatever nature is not only a socioeconomic menace but it wrecks havoc to ecology and civilization. The rapid dwindling of the rainforest, for example, not only creates scarcity but speaks volumes about human survival and tragedy.

To save the forest, one important factor to do is to maximize wood recovery, especially in wood processing. China's plywood industry has a minimum of 65% recovery compared to the Philippines' maximum of 55%.

On top of the problem of increasing wood scarcity and poor recovery, the wood industry also faces the problems of expensive fuel, outdated machine technology, waste disposal, and government apathy .

The raw material situation, in particular, is getting worst by the day, but wood recovery could be substantially improved

through sharing of personal and corporate technical experiences. Pooling of know-hows must be a joint effort. By it, we can attain the commonly desired result, the outcome badly needed by no less than the members of PWPA themselves.

Malaysian Connection

Kuching, the capital of the State of Sarawak in the Federal States of Malaysia, is the site of the Sarawak Timber Association (STA), in which I was privileged to serve as one of the 14 members of its Board of Directors.

STA has about 600 member-companies, all export-oriented, classified into nine categories, such as Swamp Logging, Panel Products, Timber Products, Marketing, and the like. Member companies in STA have some 100,000 workers.

The objectives of PWPA and STA are essentially similar, such as promoting the interest of their respective members. Like PWPA, STA issues a report cum directory annually, sets workshops with technical experts, and monitors going-on in the world market. However, my impression is that there are still much to be improved in the technical aspect of our local wood industry, such as improving wood recovery as STA members keep on doing.

Meanwhile, PWPA's present membership is dwindling, with very few exporters. It seems imperative to halt this downward trend by finding creative innovations. Creative innovations that not only would keep the members in but encourage others outside it to come in. Representing the PWPA's interests in meaningful areas, both locally and abroad, would be an example of innovation. I am certain we could benefit from the way STA does it.

If STA can do it, can we? I believe the answer is, "Yes, We Can!"

Column writer for this issue, PWPA director Jhonny Young, is the president of Asia-Pacific Timber & Plywood Corp. Ed.

I am certain we could benefit from the way STA runs its organization. If STA can do it, can we? I believe the answer is, "Yes, We Can!"

Average Plywood and Substitute Prices Survey in NCR

	Before (May 21, 2008)	Now (June 17, 2008)		Before (May 21, 2008)	Now (June 17, 2008)
	(in Pesos/piece)			(in Pesos/piece)	
3mm (1/8) plywood	225	224	18 mm (3/4) plyboard	722	750
4 mm (3/16) plywood	270	276	1/8 lawanit	167	169
5 mm (1/4) plywood ordinary	281	293	3/16 lawanit	190	210
5 mm (1/4) plywood marine	328	335	1/4 Hardiflex	363	371
10 mm (1/2) plywood	490	518			
18 mm (3/4) plywood ordinary	812	840			

Note: all pick-up prices inclusive of VAT retail prices

A Call to Bridge the Gap

by Jose P. Leviste

“It is not enough to give a check. The CEO must give his time.”

St. Ignatius Loyola, a Basque from Spain, first said a prayer in the 16th century that resonates till today “Dearest Lord...”teach me to be generous...to give and not to count the cost...”

An individual who does that is often called a philanthropist. At the company level, is known as corporate social responsibility or CSR.

A CSR program basically starts when the company takes actions that impact on its operations and affect the stakeholders, the community, customers and the local and national governments.

However, the scope of genuine CSR goes beyond the boundaries of a company's operations. The company should take the initiative to improve the quality of life not only of its employees but also all of its stakeholders. In this country, many people are in need and deserve our help. Since the government cannot do everything, CSR can do a lot!

The Role of the CEO

To take that extra step requires the full support of the country's top executives. The truth is that CSR must not only be a corporate thrust, but also a that extra step requires the full support of the country's top executives. The truth is that CSR must not only be a corporate thrust, but also a personal commitment of the CEOs and captains of industry.

It is not enough to give a check. The CEO must give his time.

When I served as chairman, president, and CEO of Mirant Philippines, we expanded the company's CSR program and refocused Mirant Foundation's mission to include not only rural electrification but also education and environmental protection.

Mirant Foundation provided funds to generate solar electricity in remote villages in Aklan, Masbate, Northern Samar, and Palawan that were hardly reached by the government's power transmission line. At the same time, we launched environment and education programs in the provinces, creating awareness among the people on how to take care of our natural resources and address the basic causes of poverty.

Link to people's needs

The secret to an effective CSR campaign is to link it to the real needs of the people. A one-time act of generosity, through donations, would hardly make an impact on their lives.

What we have learned from experience is that the people need sustainable livelihood, education and good living environments. That is why we need to build not only infrastructure but also provide educational inputs on environmental awareness even in the most far-flung barangays.

Companies can only do so much, given the poverty in the country. I am disappointed by the fact that the Philippines remains a country of poor people, while it is rich in natural and mineral resources.

Gold for the nation

Through CSR, we can remedy this decades-old economic problem. The Philippines contains vast mineral resources that can easily generate billions of dollars for the economy. The Philippines is to nickel what Saudi Arabia is to oil. To leave that wealth untapped underground would be an injustice to the millions of poor Filipinos who deserve better.

The best recourse is to explore and tap our mineral wealth with environmental awareness and use them to create jobs, expand investments, boost exports, strengthen government's finances, and

drive social and economic growth.

In Oceana Gold, a publicly listed Canadian, Australian and New Zealand company, we are committed to CSR not only in our host communities but in the whole country as well. Responsible mining is necessary for sustainable development and ensuring that its impact on the environment is reduced to minimum.

Social imperative

I believed that CSR should be a part of the development plans of all companies, particularly the large ones. The more successful the corporation is, the greater its social responsibility to the nation is. For them, CSR is not an economic option, but a social imperative.

Over the past three years, we saw the emergence of large corporations in the Philippines raking in double-digit growth in net income and revenues annually. These companies need to bridge the gap between corporate success and real poverty.

According to the World Bank, more than 30 million Filipinos, mostly in the provinces, live on less than \$2 a day. Yet, the largest publicly listed firm in the Philippines is now worth more than \$12 billion.

The challenge for companies is to revisit their corporate mission and check if CSR can play an even more important role in their overall operations. Investing more resources in CSR is guaranteed to yield the best return for all stakeholders of free enterprise.

As Winston Churchill once said, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

Source: With permission, abridged from the article of the author who is the chairman of Oceana Gold Philippines, Inc. First printed in NewsBreak CSR special edition, March-May 2008.

On PWWA's Proposed IFMA

The Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWWA), led by chairman Fernando Lu, presented to the community assembly of the Indigenous cultural community (ICC) of So. Kanawan, Brgy. Binaritan, Morong, Bataan last June 13, 2008 the plan of development for its proposed IFMA project in nearby So. Minanga, Brgy. Mabayo in which the project area is within the domain claims of the ICC.

He said the project will be a demonstration of different sustainable environmental and livelihood activities involving the presently denuded forestland. He related that the forest is very important to the members of PWWA because it is the life of their businesses and that of the affected communities.

He cited what the benefits the demonstration project would bring to the community, such as employment in the immediate term and sharing of income in the long-term.

The more than 30 attending members of the indigenous community, led by its Indigenous People Organization (IPO) president Berlinda Restum, after their confirming that all elders/leaders present and mentioned were the ones they respect, underwent the review conducted by the local NCIP on the decision-making processes the members of the community will undertake, separately through: the elders; the council; IPO; the youth; and, the women who would have to discuss issues and finally come up with a unified decision the community and the NCIP will be informed about.

The free and prior informed consent process and the rights and the responsibilities of the IPs like maintaining ecological balance by bringing back the forest, were presented by the local NCIP headed by OIC provincial officer Pacito Liborio.

Executive director L. D. Angeles elaborated on the mechanisms of the project implementation as he helped in answering questions raised by the community members.

With chair Lu and executive director Leonardo Angeles were forestry & environment coordinator Maila Vasquez and system analyst Floren Andres.



Partners for Development. PWWA led by chairman Fernando Lu (3rd row, 3rd from left) posed with NCIP representatives and IP community in So. Kanawan, Brgy. Binaritan, Morong, Bataan during its community assembly.

On the SFM Bill

The Committee on Ways and Means of the Lower House, during its public hearing last May 6, 2008 at the Batasan Complex, Quezon City, approved the taxes and incentives provisions of the sustainable forest management (SFM) bill transmitted to it by the Committee of Natural Resources chaired by Cong. Ignacio Arroyo.

Cong. Exequiel Javier, chair of the Ways and Means Committee, earlier explained his committee's primary role is to review together with stakeholders concerned the taxes and incentives provisions of the bill.

After a brief deliberation on the said provisions of the bill, Cong. Darlene Antonino-Custodio, who represented the author of the bill, Cong. Rufus Rodriguez, moved for their approval which the committee accepted.

The provisions pertain to the taxes and incentives to tree plantation development and the processing, import and export of wood.

The representatives of the Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWWA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Department of Finance were among the resource persons invited by the committee. PWWA was represented by executive director Leonardo Angeles and forestry and environment coordinator Maila Vasquez.

[The SFM bill, as approved by the Natural Resources Committee and the Ways and Means will be transmitted to the Appropriations Committee for its public hearing. Thereafter, a joint report by the three committees will undergo the second and third readings in the plenary session for amendments and/or approval. Meantime, a similar process is now being undertaken by the Senate on its counterpart SFM bill (a joint technical working group is momentarily "refining" the bill). Once approved by the respective Houses, the bills will be reconciled by the Bi-cameral Conference Committee into a single bill that would have to be ratified separately by each House. If ratified, the President signs it into law or vetoes it. Ed.]

On DENR-NCR WPP Rationalization Plan

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) presented the revised DENR-NCR wood processing rationalization plan to the Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) and the Philippine Lumber Merchants Association (PLMA) last June 2, 2008 at its office in North Avenue, Quezon City.

Accordingly, the revised plan considered the comments and recommendations made last April 30, 2008 by PWPA and PLMA which, among others, were the following:

- Maintain the minimum of 70% wood recovery from logs to include the finished wood products and the utilized wood wastes;
- Continue the mill study of the plants of existing WPP holders and those of new applicants;
- Conduct a joint monitoring of wood processing plants by the DENR-NCR and associations concerned (PWPA and PLMA); and
- For the associations to contribute a counterpart fund, at most 30% of the annual funding set by the DENR-NCR.

PWPA and PLMA appreciated the DENR-NCR to discuss with them further its WPP rationalization plan as they hoped all other regions will also do the same on a participatory and transparent basis it did.

The PWPA was represented by its VP-director Ramon Uy, executive director Leonardo Angeles and forestry and environment coordinator Maila Vasquez while the PLMA was represented by its president Jose Lee and director Aquino Lee.

On the Muntinlupa Nursery

Regional executive director Cora Davis of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources - National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) discussed last June 25, 2008 with stakeholders concerned about the plan to expand the nursery at the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) - National Bilibid Prisons (NBP) reservation and the greening of the said reservation which is now under the administration of the National Housing Authority (NHA).

She said that the nursery will be DENR-NCR main nursery to service the seedling needs of cities/towns south of the Pasig River and she would be assigning a full-time staff to handle the nursery and the greening activities.

Davis also proposed that the 45-hectare open/green space in the master-plan of the NHA's BuCor reservation would be the subject of a 5-year development plan of planting various shade, flowering and fruit trees.

She said the Muntinlupa local government wants to prioritize the development of the small man-made lagoon inside the reservation as an eco-tourism spot. She added that another priority area for development is the 50-hectare socialized housing of the NHA which Ms. Julie San Gabriel of NHA appreciated.

BuCor assistant director Joselito Fajardo said there should be coordination in the planting of trees like avoiding it close to prison wall for security reasons.

PWPA chairman Fernando Lu suggested the necessity of tapping of funds to implement the project, particularly in its aspect of maintenance and protection of the trees. He cited the example of the La Mesa Dam reforestation project being handled by the Bantay Kalikasan where funds from some groups are being used for planting, caring and protecting trees by planting areas.

Davis instructed her staff to prepare an action plan for the implementation of the activities. She also suggested that the plan be presented to the next LIAC meeting for their information and approval.

On the Zero Basura Olympics

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) led by secretary Jose Atienza, Jr. and the Earth Day Network Philippines, National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC), Zero Waste Recycling Movement of the Philippines, Mother Earth Philippines, Couples for Christ, Philippine Business for the Environment, and the Philippine Business for Social Progress launched the "Zero Basura Olympics: a Race to Conquer Garbage in 300 days" last June 20, 2008. It was hosted by the

Province of Rizal led by Governor Casimiro Ynares at the Rose Bowl Court, Provincial Capitol, Pasig City

The movement was meant to fast-track the implementation of RA 9003, otherwise known as the Solid Waste Management Act.

The event was attended by representatives of other LGUs and NGOs, as well as the church and private sector, and Olympic athletes.

Attending for the PWPA were chair Fernando Lu, VP-director Ramon Uy and the members of its staff.

Philippine Arbor Day

by Alejandro R. Roces

This week, cities and municipalities are busy with several activities to observe Philippine Arbor Day. The City of Tagaytay, for one, celebrates its 70th Foundation Day with the commitment to plant 70,000 pine trees. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources itself has also lined up tree planting activities throughout this week.

The word "arbor" comes from a Latin word which means trees. A journalist from Nebraska, J. Sterling Morton and his wife, were responsible for introducing the first Arbor Day in 1854. A visit to Nebraska today wouldn't disclose that the state was once a tree-less plain. Yet, it was the lack of trees that led to the founding of Arbor Day. Morton advocated for the value of trees and was the one who proposed to observe the forest tree-planting holiday in 1872. Later on, it became an official holiday and the permanent date of observance was declared on his birthday, April 22, 1874. Because of Morton's passion to spread his gospel about the importance of trees to our environment, the idea of Arbor Day has spread

beyond the United States and is now observed by almost all the countries in the world. The Philippine Arbor Day is observed on June 25 every year.

We cannot overemphasize the value of planting more trees considering the effects of global warming on our planet, which is caused by too much pollution from the emission of toxic chemicals in the air. In our country, there are many groups and individuals advocating for the environment, particularly saving the forests by planting trees. The Philippines is one of the countries in the world cited to be a "desertification in the making." In the 1900s, we had 21 million hectares of forest area. Thirty-five years ago, it was found that this number decreased to 16 million hectares of rainforest. In 2002, the forest area was found to be only 7 million hectares. The latest surveys show that today barely 2.8 percent remain. This shows that our forest area has declined significantly and rapidly over the century. We know that our forests were destroyed by years of illegal logging, conversion of timberlands into marginal upland and commercial agriculture, shifting cultivation by the landless poor and the conver-

sion of forestlands into subdivisions and resort areas. Add to this, the trees ravished and torn down by landslides and storms, like the damage wrought by Typhoon *Frank* yesterday, and extreme drought and heat.

I am happy that we have a tree planting campaign called "Green Philippine Highways," a project that aims to improve air quality in the country and reduce pollution by planting a record of over 500,000 trees along the country's main highways from north to south. Experts say at least ten trees are needed to absorb the carbon emissions of a single motor vehicle. Vehicle emission accounts for 70 percent of recorded pollution.

Trees help absorb the harmful carbon dioxide in the environment and restore the productivity and richness of the land and soil. Let us do our share in this global effort to plant more and more trees. It is true that only God can make a tree, as Joyce Kilmer said in her poem, but anyone can plant a tree. Let us each plant, not one, but several trees.

Source: *The Philippine Star*
Opinion, *Roses & Thorns*, June 24, 2008

Paje is DENR Chief of Staff

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) secretary Jose Atienza, Jr., in his memorandum dated June 24, 2008, designated undersecretary Ramon JP Paje as the DENR chief of staff directly reporting to him.

As chief of staff, Paje shall be responsible for the review of documents for action/approval by the secretary as he is also authorized to periodically assess, in coordination with concerned offices, the performance of frontline bureau directors and regional executive directors and in connection therewith to issue reassignment orders, whenever necessary.

Paje is concurrently the executive director of the Minerals Development Council and supervises for the secretary the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

Other DENR Assignments

Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) director Marcial Amaro, Jr. was designated as regional executive director (RED) of DENR-Region IV-B in lieu of RED Vicente Paragas who was assigned to the office of undersecretary for field operations. Dr. Leuvina Tandug has assumed the post vacated by Amaro as the OIC, office of the director of ERDB.

DENR Special Concerns Office director Nilo Tamera was designated RED of DENR-Region IV-A in lieu of OIC RED Eduardo Principe who went back to DENR-Region II as its regional technical director for forestry.

Tamolang is OIC of FPRDI

Forester Felix Tamolang was recently designated by Department of Science and Technology secretary Estrella Alabastro as OIC, Office of the Director of the Forest Products Research and Development Institute (FPRDI).

FPRDI director Dr. Florence Soriano was on official leave-of-absence to head a study on wood utilization in ASEAN.



Pilipinas Kong Mahal. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) secretary Jose Atienza, Jr. (right) receives from Philippine Wood Producers Association president Fernando Lu (left) and chairman Antonio Olizon (center) the Philippine flag stickers it donated for distribution by the DENR in celebration of the National Flag Days starting on May 28 onward to Independence Day on June 12, 2008.



Covenant for Climate Mitigation. Department of Energy secretary and chair of the Philippine Task Force for Climate Change Angelo Reyes (center), National Power Corporation Sr. VP Pio Benavidez, and the Green Army Philippines Network Foundation Odette Alcantara smile after signing the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) witnessed by multi-sectoral representatives including the PWPA and the ICC/IP last May 9, 2008 at the Angat Watershed, Norzagaray, Bulacan. The MOA is aimed at promoting the conservation, development and protection of the natural resources and watersheds of the country.



Gearing the Nursery for More Greening.

Muntinlupa Nursery stakeholders, Department of Environment and Natural Resources - National Capital Region headed by RED Cora Davis (leftmost, partly hidden), Bureau of Corrections headed by asst. director Joselito Fajardo, National Housing Authority (NHA) Julie San Gabriel and Philippine Wood Producers Association led by chairman Fernando Lu and VP Ramon Uy (second & third, clockwise, respectively), discuss the plan of expansion of the common nursery and the greening of the BOC-NBP reservation, now under the jurisdiction of NHA, located in Muntinlupa City.



Arbor Day Makes a School Mini-forest Park. The Department of Environment & Natural Resources-National Capital Region led by regional executive director Cora Davis (fifth from left) together with the City of Muntinlupa led by Vice Mayor Artemio Simundac (center), the Muntinlupa Science High School led by principal Madeline Ann Diaz (fifth from right) and the Philippine Wood Producers Association led by executive director Leonardo Angeles (third from the left) celebrate Arbor Day last June 25, 2008 by establishing a mini-forest park in the school ground.

Date	Meeting/Occasions	Representative/s
May 2	FPI General Assembly Hotel Intercon, Makati City	Chair Fernando Lu, directors Ramon Uy and Stanley Tan, Mr. Richmond Ng, ED L. D. Angeles, FEA Jose Lorenzo, manager Regino Serafico and FEC Maila Vasquez
6	Public Hearing SFM Bill, Committee on Ways & Means, House of Representatives, Batasan Complex, Quezon City	ED Angeles and FEC Vasquez
9	Nursery Establishment and MOA Signing (Presidential Task Force on Climate Change, NAPOCOR & GAF), Norzagaray, Bulacan	ED Angeles, manager Serafico and coordinator Benjamin Bereña
12	Meeting re: Flag Day, DENR Social Hall, Quezon City	Chair Lu and FEC Vasquez
June 2	Meeting on DENR-NCR Wood Rationalization DENR-NCR, North Ave., Quezon City	VP-director Uy, ED Angeles and FEC Vasquez
5	World Environment Day Plaza Mexico, Intramuros, Manila	Chair Lu, VP-directors Uy, Robert Kua, Evarito Narvaez, Jr., ED Angeles, manager Serafico and FEC Vasquez
9	World Environment Day (DOE with New Zealand Embassy & Trade Commission, UNDP), Greenbelt Exhibition Area, Makati City	President Antonio Olizon and EVP Alfonso Keh, Jr.
13	Community Assembly of Proposed IFMA, Morong, Bataan	Chair Lu, ED Angeles, FEC Vasquez and SA Floren Andres
18	Meeting with RED Davis, DENR-NCR, North Avenue, Quezon City	Chair Lu, VP-director Uy, ED Angeles and FEC Vasquez

ED - Executive Director; FEA - Forestry & Env't Adviser; FEC - Forestry & Env't Coordinator; VP - Vice President; EVP - executive VP; SA - Systems Analyst

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