



DENR Proposes Reforms in ECC Issuance

To cut process from 6 months to 1 month

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Jose Atienza, Jr., in a consultation on June 30, 2009, announced proposed drastic changes in the agency's procedures in the issuance of environmental permits, including forestry and mining permits, in an effort to improve efficiency, promote transparency and eradicate opportunities for corruption.

"I assure investors and businessmen, both foreign and local, that the Department will undertake reforms that would hasten the issuance of permits by removing unnecessary requirements that would impede their operations," Secretary Atienza said during the Multi-sectoral Consultation on Environmental Impact Statement

(EIS) System Policy Direction at the Social Hall in Quezon City.

Atienza said the main reason investors are reportedly setting their focus on other areas for business opportunities is because of unreasonable and restrictive rules that accompany the issuance of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

He said the simplification of procedures in the DENR permitting system is in consonance with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's program on reducing bureaucratic requirements that block the flow of investment into the country.

Atienza said the issuance of ECC will be reduced from six months to 20 working days to one month, while the Certificate of Non-Coverage (CNC)

will be cut down from three weeks to one day.

He emphasized, however, that the proposed simplification process will not compromise environmental protection as he stressed for strict monitoring to be undertaken by the DENR.

The DENR secretary also said local government units (LGUs) will be given greater responsibility in the determination of social acceptability aspect of the proposed projects.



DENR Secretary Jose Atienza, Jr.

(Continued on page 2)

Directors Visit PWPA IFMA Area

Also, Hold Board Meeting in Morong, Bataan



Bonding with Indigenous People-Partners. PWPA Chair Fernando Lu (center) discusses with the KAICC representatives the proposed pre-implementation activities in the IFMA area in Morong, Bataan.

The members of the Board of Directors of the Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) visited the 584-hectare Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA) area in Morong, Bataan last June 3, 2009 and had a bird's eyeview as to the possible appropriate development the area may require.

The area was awarded to the PWPA by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to serve as a demonstration site for forestry and related projects along the Greening Program of the Association consonantly with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the DENR.

During the inspection of the area, the directors met and talked with the representatives of the Kanawan Ayta Indigenous Cultural Communities (KAICC) led by chieftain

(Continued on page 2)

DENR to Ink Forum on “Greening” the Industries

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is holding a forum on ‘greening’ the industries to promote a low carbon economy, on June 8, at the Agency’s Social Hall in Quezon City.

DENR Secretary Jose Atienza, Jr. said the forum, a part of the celebration of June as the Philippine Environment Month, and in support of the World Environment Day (June 5) will highlight the importance and benefits of utilizing low carbon production practices for the country’s local industry sector.

“The shift to a low carbon economy will change how industries operate, the products that we use and our

lifestyles. Businesses and consumers can benefit from significant savings and resource efficiency measures that will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and help make our climate a safer one,” Secretary Atienza said.

He said the forum is in preparation for the Philippine hosting, in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), of the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia on September 9-11, 2009 at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) in Pasay City.

“The DENR is very grateful for President Arroyo for designating it as the lead agency in hosting the conference as the main output of this meeting will go a long way in the

global efforts to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change and global warming,” Secretary Atienza said.

The conference will focus on policies, strategies, regulatory and institutional framework as well as support services required by industry sector to shift to more sustainable patterns of production. How countries in the region can best benefit from new opportunities created by the shift to a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy will also be tackled.

Expected to attend the September conference include Asian ministers and senior officials of trade and environment, representatives of industry, government, civil society, academe and media.

Source: www.denr.gov.ph

Atienza Announces...

“The local government units, being at the forefront of development in the countryside, are more in a position to determine the social acceptability of projects within their respective areas, in accordance with their land-use plan,” Atienza said.

Present during the meeting were land developers, industry associations representing mining and forestry, business groups, non-government organizations, representatives from international development agencies and media.

Chair Fernando Lu and Director Aristeo Puyat headed the Philippine Wood Producers Association representatives.

Directors Visit...

Josefina Alejo. KAICC is the organization of the local indigenous people (IP) who gave to the PWPA its “free and prior informed consent” for the development and use of the area, a part of its ancestral domain, through a MOA entered into by and between the PWPA, the KAICC and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples on November 20, 2008.

The directors had appreciated the area only from a distance due to the heavy rains. They observed it as still rich in natural forest as they were informed that a few non-IP settlers were already inside the area even before it was awarded to PWPA.

The KAICC members who were with the inspection of the area joined the lunch with the directors at the Anvaya Cove Seaside Leisure Community. The PWPA presented to chieftain Alejo gifts of

a huge casserole and wide cauldron which were requested during the past assembly-dialogues for the KAICC use .

The meeting of the Board of Directors focused the discussions mainly on the plans for and their implementation in the IFMA area.

The directors agreed on immediately funding the conduct of the survey of the boundary and inventory of the forest/ timber of the area as the resulting information could give direction to the crafting of the development plan.

Present during the field inspection and in the Board meeting, present were Chair F. A. Lu, President A. C. Olizon, Directors E. I. Alcantara, A. C. Keh, Jr., C. H. Liu, E. M. Narvaez, Jr., A. G. Puyat, R. Y. Uy and J. M. Young as well as the entire staff of the secretariat.

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PWPA-DENR Maintain Continuing Dialogue

[A DENR secretary stays in office at an average of two years; only to be replaced by a new one. The professional undersecretaries, however, remain to man the fort, as it were. The PWPA has always believed that maintaining a continuing, harmonious dialogue-interaction with them is an essential. Not only are they the paragon of civil service but they are also the well-spring of balanced directions and policies for the natural resources-based industries, such as forest/wood-based industry stability and the environmental integrity. The following are recent samples of the dialogue exercise. Ed]

Paje Broaches Sources of Forest Funding

Senior Undersecretary Ramon Paje of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in a dialogue-meeting with the directors and officers of the Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) on May 5, 2009, cited several potential sources of funding forestry projects such as reforestation and tree plantation development.

At the EDSA Shangrila Plaza Hotel in Mandaluyong City, Paje said this types of sourcing funding are innovative, being different from the mainstream or traditional mechanisms, such as the general annual appropriations (GAA) and financial loans.

At the outset, he revealed that there is not much money from GAA to support forestry projects as close to 90% of the DENR's budget goes to salaries, wages and maintenance operations.

He said that foreign grants and loans are tied to counterpart government funds and only good for short-gestating demonstration types of forest projects of the government.

Paje appreciated what the PWPA mentioned of the difficulty to access at financial institution because of their high lending rates and stiff collateral conditions to long-gestating tree plantation development project, for example.

On the innovative financing mechanisms, Paje encouraged the PWPA to explore with the DENR potential funds such as carbon trading under the Kyoto Protocol mechanism and also from the Reduced Emission from Deforestation and Degradation, a clean development mechanism adapted by the Climate Change Conference of December 2007 in Bali, Indonesia.

He also requested PWPA to help push for a law imposing the user's fee from those who use or depend upon the forest watersheds such as the power or energy producers, the telecom towers and transmission lines locators in forestlands. The user's fee shall be placed in a trust fund to be used to undertake reforestation, tree plantation development, and forest conservation and protection. The potential amount that could be generated will more than surpass the entire annual budget of the DENR, Paje said.

Gerochi's Sentiment with PWPA

Undersecretary Manuel Gerochi of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in a dialogue-meeting with the directors and officers of the Philippine Wood Producers Association (PWPA) on June 23, 2009 at his office told of his experiences in dealing with the wood industry and said he has his sentiments for the industry because he understands the science of it.

He suggested that the PWPA should be a pressure/influence group like other industries who have the ears of the national leaders as it should try to educate the public that what the industry is doing, are developmental and not exploitative activities like the IFMA. He said tree plantation development being undertaken by the wood industry makes the forest sustainable. He added that most of the healthy forest he saw are under IFMA tenure.

PWPA Chair Fernando Lu said PWPA has recommended years back for the packaging of potentially investible projects like ITP (IFMA), which would include the preparation of all needed permits so that an investor can start the implementation of the project from day one. Further, he said that the free and prior inform consent from the NCIP takes a year or more before it can be awarded and the ECC takes a long period likewise to be granted.

Gerochi said there might be some ways to streamline the ECC process but in the case of the FPIC, DENR has no way of doing it although it has a working arrangement with NCIP. To require only IEE instead of EIS for the ECC of IFMA, Gerochi agreed, for IFMA activities being environment-friendly. He said he will discuss it with the committee that currently reviews the EIS system.

Gerochi took note of the suggestions of PWPA that in the application for and grant of wood processing permits, the DENR considers the wood supply source and to examine the locations of plants. He said he will discuss the issue with FMB as he even thought of a third party doing the evaluation.

To the suggestion of PWPA of a simultaneous approval of the CDMP and the OP, Gerochi said he will explain it to Secretary Atienza, Jr. that the OP is but part of the CDMP.

The dialogue was very pleasant as they were productive.

PWPA Briefs FMB

The Philippine Wood Producers Association led by Chair Fernando Lu and Forest Management Bureau (FMB) Director Marlo Mendoza and his key staff met to discuss issues related to the wood industry last June 16, 2009 at Anabel's Restaurant, Quezon City.

Chair Lu thanked the new FMB

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DENR, Manila Jockey Club Forge Agreement in Fight vs Climate Change

The call of the government for public participation in the fight against climate change continues to draw positive response from various sectors, including horseracing aficionados.

Yesterday's (June 20) event: "Atienza Grand Championship: Karera Para Sa Kalikasan II" race at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, highlighted by tree planting and signing of a memorandum of agreement between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Manila Jockey Club, Inc. (MJC) for a tree planting project.

Secretary Jose Atienza, Jr., who signed for the DENR, expressed appreciation to the MJC for manifesting its interest in protecting the environment through tree planting. MJC president Alfonso R. Reyno, Jr. signed in behalf of the club.

"I strongly believe that environmental activism is finally getting headway in our country as more and more sectors of our society want to play a key role in protecting, conserving and rehabilitating our damaged environment," Atienza said.

He also said the decision of the MJC to participate in the DENR's greening efforts was laudable as enhancing the country's vegetative cover which is critically important in mitigating global warming and climate change.

Under the agreement, the MJC will undertake tree planting activities in areas that will later be identified, including site preparation and protection and maintenance of the planted seedlings. It shall likewise coordinate with the DENR in undertaking all other forestry development and environmental protection activities.

The DENR, on the other hand, will assist the MJC by providing planting materials and in monitoring the planted sites. It will also extend

technical guidance as well as training in seedling nursery establishment and maintenance.

The DENR has initially committed to donate some 5,000 seedlings to MJC.

Atienza also said that the Philippines is truly blessed with rich biodiversity and natural resources. But its richness should be managed correctly to ensure maximum benefits to the people and as a vehicle to the nation's economic progress.

Considered the grandest horse racing event this year, the 2-day (June 20-21) "Atienza Grand Championship: Karera Para sa Kalikasan II," consisted of 23 races with an offering prize monies amounting to P1.47 million.

PWPA officers present during the Carmona, Cavite event were Chair Fernando Lu and President Antonio Olizon.

Main Source: www.denr.gov.ph

DENR, GTZ Embark on Climate Change Project

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is embarking on two major projects that would help address climate change, with funding support of EUR4.43 million from the Republic of Germany through Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

The projects, recently approved by DENR Secretary Jose Atienza, Jr. and GTZ's Director and Principal Advisor Walter Salzer and Project Manager Dr. Uwe F. Scholz, are the "Adaptation to Climate Change and Conservation of the Biodiversity in the Philippines (ACCCBIO)" and the "Support Program for Solid Waste Management for LGUs (SWM4LGUs) Phase II".

"Both projects are in line with the program of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to address the problem of global warming and climate change. We would like, therefore, to thank the GTZ in particular, for these very significant agreements we have forged with them," Atienza said.

The first project, ACCCBIO, is aimed at developing and implementing relevant adapta-

tion strategies to compensate for the effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity in selected areas in the country. The project will run for three years, with funding support of EUR2.43 million.

"ACCCBIO will also provide support to the implementation of measures that will protect and keep the unique marine and terrestrial biodiversity of the country, including the enhancement of public awareness on climate change and other environmental issues," Secretary Atienza added.

According to the DENR chief, the country's natural wealth of flora and fauna, comprising 52,177 species, stand to be adversely affected by climate change. Thus, he said, under the ACCCBIO, the DENR will provide funding to micro projects intended to protect biodiversity such as management of protected areas, rehabilitation and protection of sea-grass beds, coral reefs, upland and coastal forests, including mangroves.

The project also seeks to strengthen the Inter-agency Committee for Climate Change, which recently has been upgraded to Climate Change Office (CCO) by virtue of DENR Administrative Order No. 2009-04.

The CCO shall serve as the coordinating mechanism - internally among DENR offices, and externally, with other national government agencies, non-government organizations and local government units - in the development and implementation of climate change strategies, programs and projects.

The other project, SWM4LGUs Phase II", is a 3-year, second phase of a project intended to assist selected local government units in the effective and efficient implementation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act No. 9003). It has a funding support of EUR two million from GTZ.

"This project is to enable municipal administrators to operate integrated waste management systems in a correct and economically efficient manner so as to reduce the emission of methane gas from garbage into the atmosphere," Atienza said.

Based on the agreement signed earlier, the GTZ will allocate EUR20,000 from its total contribution of EUR2 million for use in the establishment of small, selected pilot projects and activities in selected towns and cities in the country.

Source: www.denr.gov.ph

ASEAN Forestry Experts Meet to Strengthen Social Forestry

Some 30 forestry experts from member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) attended the 3rd ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Meeting on June 9-13, 2009 to pursue efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in promoting social forestry as a strategy towards sustainable forest management.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Forest Management Bureau, hosted the meeting at the Subic International Hotel in Zambales.

"The governments of ASEAN countries, including the Philippines, have taken keen interests in the social approach to forestry conservation," DENR Secretary Jose Atienza, Jr. said.

According to Atienza, the concept of involving upland communities in the country's reforestation program could be traced back to the early 70's through a two-year forest occupancy permit that evolved into a renewable 25-year Certificate of Stewardship Contract under the Social Forestry Program (SFP), now known as the Community-based Forest Management Program (CBFMP).

Forest Management Bureau Director and

head of the Philippine delegation Marlo Mendoza keyed the ASEAN meeting as Mr. Ali Wafa Pudjiono, secretary of the ASFN secretariat and Mr. Pralong Dumrongthai, ASFN chairperson and ASFN leader of Thailand, gave the opening remarks.

Comprising the key agenda for the meet were: country reports on the ASFN and its strategic plan of action (2007-2012); status of implementation of policy framework on ASEAN cooperation in forestry, particularly the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint; Sustainability Plan for the ASFN; and proposed collaborative projects with organizations like the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

A field visit to a CBFM site in Barangay Cawag, Subic on June 12 enabled the ASFN delegates to dialogue with CBFM beneficiaries comprising of about 150 families from the Cawag Upland Farmers Association who are undertaking agroforestry and tree plantation development activities.

A side event on June 10 had the experts tackled the issue of promoting the role of social

forestry in climate change mitigation and adaptation, while the implementation status of CBFM, including its challenges and opportunities, and the other programs related to CBFM was discussed on June 9.

The creation of ASFN was hatched during the 7th ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF) Meeting in Brunei, Darussalam in 2004, urging ASEAN member countries to close ranks in advancing the concept of a community-based approach in protecting the region's forests.

In 2007, the 1st ASNF Meeting was held in Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia attended by delegations from six countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Brunei Darussalam, and the Philippines). An agreement was reached for the conduct of a regular meeting to monitor and evaluate the implementation of all collaborative activities through the establishment of information and communication system for strengthening the ASEAN cooperation in social forestry.

In its meeting in Bangkok, Thailand in August 2008, Thailand, Singapore, Myanmar and Vietnam joined the ASNF.

Source: www.denr.gov.ph

33,387 Upland Farmers Given Jobs under DENR Upland Development Program

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has so far awarded 33,387 job contracts or "Letters of Agreements" (LOA) to upland farmers under its Upland Development Program (UDP), representing 64 percent of this year's target goal.

DENR Secretary Jose Atienza, Jr. also said that another 7,200 applications or "Letters of Intent" (LOI) are presently being processed at various DENR field offices and are expected to be issued with LOAs within June or early July.

"At the rate the UDP is moving, I wouldn't be surprised if our target of providing 'green collar' jobs to residents in the uplands as well as in coastal areas is attained within the third quarter of the year," Atienza said, noting that the latest figures on LOIs and LOAs issued

altogether represents 77 percent of UDP's targeted 52,425 jobs.

Launched last February, the UDP is in support of the government's "Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program" (CLEEP), which is a part of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's efforts to curb the country's unemployment rate being aggravated by the current global economic crunch.

According to Atienza, the DENR has already released a total of P724 million to its 15 regional offices nationwide, including the DENR-Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, following the issuance of a Special Allotment Release Order by the Department of Budget and Management last June 11 for the release of UDP funds amounting to P1.5 billion.

"This is in synch with NEDA's formula on accelerated government spending on job

creation to keep up, if not overtake, the rate of lost jobs as a result of the global financial meltdown," Atienza added.

Through the UDP, the DENR aims to reforest, to be boosted with agro-forestry activities, some 50,000 hectares of denuded upland and 2,000 hectares of mangrove areas.

"Such opportunities will help give our upland families economic resiliency in dealing with the impact of the current global financial crisis while enabling them to take active part in fighting global warming," Atienza said.

As much as one hectare will be allotted to every UDP beneficiary to develop into an agroforestry farm, with a yearly projected earning of around P23,000 from the proceeds of his agro-forestry activities, including a monthly allowance of P3,270.

(Continued on page 11)



(Above photos) Kiwanis Club Tree planting at the National Bilibid Prison Compound last June 20, 2009 with Vice Mayor Artemio Simundac of Muntinlupa City. PWPA supplied planting materials from its NBP/BOC seedlings nursery and attended the event .



(Left photos) Tree planting and MOA signing at the San Lazaro Leisure and Business Park, Carmona, Cavite last June 20, 2009 with DENR Secretary Jose Atienza, Jr., MJC Chair Alfonso Reyno, Jr. and PWPA Chair Fernando Lu and President Antonio Olizon. PWPA supplied the planting materials from its NBP/BOC seedlings nursery.



(Right photo) Unveiling of the Heritage Tree at the Veterans Medical Memorial Center on June 25, 2009 with DENR RED Jose Diaz, VMMC Director Antonio Sison and PWPA Chair Fernando Lu.





PWPA directors field visit to the PWPA IFMA area in Morong, Bataan and Board Meeting at the Anvaya Cove last June 3, 2009.



Tree planting at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife compound at the launching of the Centennial Tree Program last June 25, 2009 with DENR-NCR RTD-F Raymund Crisostomo, PWPA Chair Fernando Lu and Director Ramon Uy.

On SFM, Change in DENR, Forestry Forum & Site-Seminar

POLITICAL SEASON will very soon be upon us as the typhoon months intensify. It's up to you to draw your own conclusions.

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I SAID IT BEFORE and I will say it again: I personally believe that the Sustainable Forest Management Bill (SFM) will not pass in our current Congress. Our lawmakers have other more urgent matters to attend to and in spite of a lot of public discussions on the importance of forests and the environment, some lawmakers will not prioritize this bill.

x-x-x

THANKS to the House of the Representatives for approving the SFM. We can't say the same about our Senate, where the bill still awaits action.

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IF SPECULATIONS ARE CORRECT, DENR will have a new top honcho. Rumors are ripe that DENR Secretary Atienza will run for the mayor's seat in Manila where a classic political battle is expected.

YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE. Who will take the place of Sec.

Atienza on a temporary capacity up to election time? His replacement has six months to do either good or mess up the DENR. Six months is certainly a short period. Let us all pray that things will turn out for the best, especially for the professional and personal life of the interim DENR Secretary.

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HOPE RUNS HIGH among DENR personnel that the new Secretary will come from their ranks to ensure the continuity of DENR programs. Imagine a DENR Secretary unfamiliar with the intricacies of managing the peculiarities of our environment and natural resources issues. He or she would need a five month learning curve only to realize that when he/she has become acquainted with his/her job, he/she would bid his DENR family and stakeholders goodbye.

x-x-x

ONE MAY ASK: Why aren't our industrial forest plantations not moving fast enough? Why aren't forest-based industries as active as those in other ASEAN countries? Those in government could provide the answers. They don't need to be brilliant thinkers. They don't even need to build from scratch because successful business models exist in other countries.

A few decades ago
o t h e r

ASEAN countries including Vietnam used to regard the Philippines as the *kuya* or big brother of modern forest practices (including but not limited to forest products). Where did we fail? What did we miss? Private sector effort seems to have been swept under the rug.

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WATCH OUT for the August forum on "Investment on Philippine Forestry", sponsored by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), UNDP, DENR, UPLB, and PWPA. Whatever is tackled in this meet should move the forestry sector forward.

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A SUGGESTION TO THE PWPA MEMBERS: Let's hold an on site-seminar at the RI Chemical Corp. experimental farm at Claveria, Misamis Oriental (about 40 mins from Cagayan de Oro). Our company executives and company foresters will certainly learn a lot and appreciate the efforts of this remarkable company. Their advocacy to improve and modernize tree plantations will certainly boost our forest industries.

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PWPA-DENR Maintain...

(Continued from page 3)

Director for accepting the invitation of PWPA as he expressed delight for both PWPA directors/officers and FMB officials (mostly division chiefs) to meet together for the first time.

PWPA Executive Director L. D. Angeles, through a powerpoint presentation, introduced to FMB the PWPA as an organization and a partner in sustainable forest management as he enumerated the "big picture" and "small picture" (urgent) issues facing the wood industry and PWPA's recom-

mendations to overcome them.

Mendoza thanked also the PWPA for the invitation as he told about the Investment Forum the FMB will hold on August 12-14, 2009; its output will be packaged so that when it will be presented to investors, everything is ready and they can start from day one.

Chair Lu said that PWPA has also proposed the same concept, adding that the identification of areas has even been made, however it did not materialize because of some reasons.

Mendoza requested the PWPA to

provide them with the concept and what has been done already to make them happen.

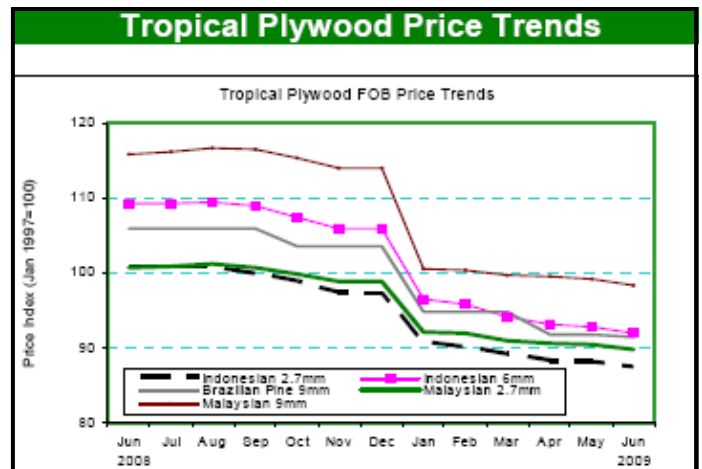
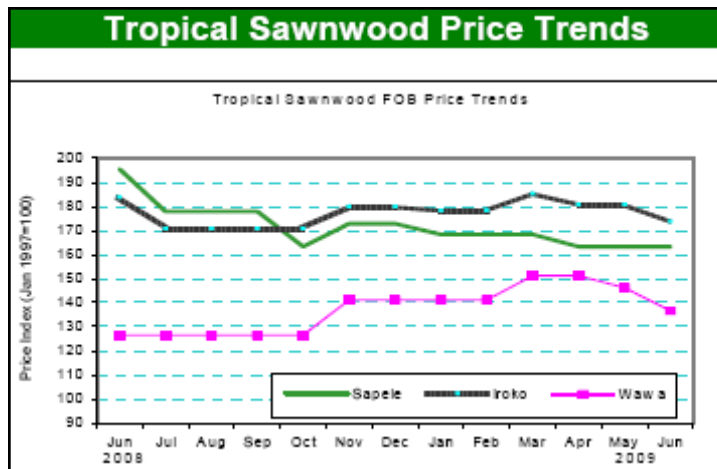
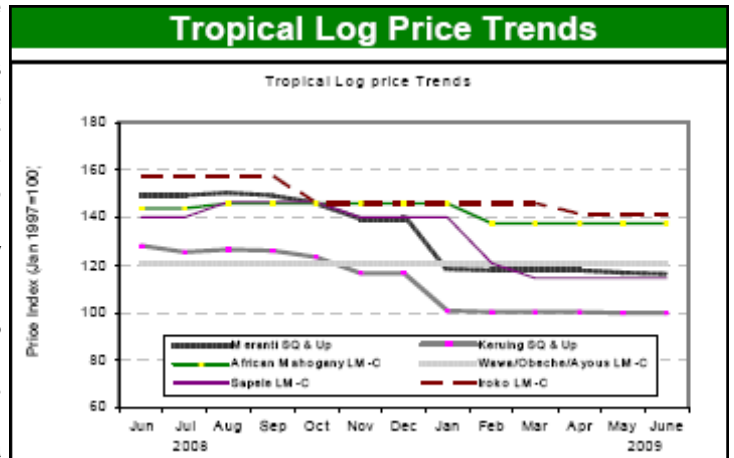
On the concerns PWPA raised, Mendoza said FMB is looking at PWPA to assist it and the DENR to solve them.

Mendoza said, to begin with, the FMB has prioritized its own programs however he suggested forming a body consisting of FMB and PWPA to brainstorm and prioritize these issues towards their resolution.

Snapshot of the Tropical Timber Market

Results from the first and second quarters were announced over the last fortnight. In Ghana, there were no major signs of price changes during the second quarter of 2009. The value of Malaysia's exports of logs and timber products fell 27% during the first four months of 2009. The Indonesian Central Statistics Agency reported a 28% decline in timber exports during the first quarter of 2009. Bolivia's forest products exports also declined over 10% by value during the same period.

For importers, Japan's updated statistics for 2008 showed a 9.6% drop in demand for raw materials. EU statistics revealed a massive 48% plunge in its log imports during the first quarter of 2009. Shortages in raw tropical forest materials also prompted government action or a response from the trade. Indonesia will impose greater export regulations on raw rattan to limit its export. The government of Myanmar was working to address firewood shortages in the country. Brazil began to use açai seed to produce energy in a more efficient and environmentally friendly manner. Trends in the Indian market revealed an ongoing search for imported substitutes for timber from India's natural and plantation forests.



Source: Tropical Timber Market Report
Volume 14, Number 12, June 16-30, 2009

Average Plywood and Substitute Prices Survey in NCR

	Before (June 16, 2009)	Now (July 21, 2009)		Before (June 16, 2009)	Now (July 21, 2009)
	(in Pesos/piece)			(in Pesos/piece)	
3mm (1/8) plywood	194	194	18 mm (3/4) plyboard	728	724
4 mm (3/16) plywood	249	253	1/8 lawanit	200	207
5 mm (1/4) plywood ordinary	273	270	3/16 lawanit	185	190
5 mm (1/4) plywood marine	326	329	1/4 Hardiflex	378	383
10 mm (1/2) plywood	512	515	Gypsum Board	330	336
18 mm (3/4) plywood ordinary	810	820			

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

Questions about climate change

By: Bjorn Lomborg

Copenhagen - One of the stranger spectacles of the climate change debate was the sight, earlier this month, of Nasa climate scientist Jim Hansen marching hand-in-hand with Hollywood actress Daryll Hanah outside the Capitol Coal Power Plant in Washington, D. C.

Hansen promised to brave arrest at what was billed as the world's largest direct-action climate change protest. Instead, the worst snowstorm in three years reduced the size of the crowd, prevented special guests from arriving and hindered efforts to use a solar panel to light up a protest billboard. The police reportedly told the crowd that they didn't want to arrest anybody who didn't want to be arrested, and nobody was.

That didn't stop the protesters from proclaiming the success. "VICTORY: THIS IS HOW TO STOP GLOBAL WARMING," declared the website of Capitol Climate Action. And, indeed, the US House speaker and Senate majority leader called on the Architect of the Capitol to stop using coal for the Capitol Power Plant (albeit days before the rally).

Hansen condemns coal-fired power plants as "death factories," and his belief that coal is evil is widely shared.

It is also obviously wrong. If we were to stop using coal tomorrow, we would discover that it remains a vital source of life. Coal accounts for the almost half of the planet's electricity supply, including half the power consumed in the United States.

Coal keeps hospitals and core infrastructure running, provides warmth and light in winter, and makes life-saving air conditioning available in summer. In China and India, where coal accounts for about 80 percent of

power generation, it has helped to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty.

It is little wonder, then, that US Energy Secretary Steven Chu, who two years ago described the expansion of coal-fired power plants as his "worst nightmare," now calls coal a "great natural resource."

The vital question is what would replace coal if we stop using it. Judging from their chant - "No coal, no gas, no nukes, no kidding" and "Biofuels, hell no!" - the protesters in Washington would rule out many plausible alternatives.

Solar and wind power appear to be acceptable but both are much less reliable than coal, and much more expensive. Only about 0.5 percent of the world's energy comes from these renewable sources. Even with optimistic assumptions, the International Energy Agency estimates that their share will rise up to just 2.8 percent by 2030.

One reason is that we don't know how to store the energy from these sources: when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine, what powers your computer the hospital's operating room?

Moreover, renewables are still costly. Recently, former US Vice President Al Gore and United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon claimed that, "in US, there are now more jobs in the wind industry than in the entire coal industry." never mind that the numbers were massaged, because they still hold a valuable lesson. The US gets 50 percent of its electricity from coal but less than 0.5 percent from wind. If it takes about the same manpower to produce both, wind power is phenomenally more expensive.

The equivalent of more than 60 million barrels of oil is consumed in coal everyday, and there is no afford-

able "green" alternative. There is an ample cheap supply of coal for several centuries. We need to accept that much of the world's cheap coal will be burned - but we should focus on capturing the CO2. In agreements announced by the Obama administration, the US is working with China and Canada on projects to develop this technology.

The end of fossil fuel's stronghold will come when we have cheap alternatives, especially in developing countries. That day will arrive sooner if governments spend a lot of money on low-carbon energy research, which is woefully inadequate.

Every nation should ideally commit to spending 0.05 percent of GDP exploring non-carbon-emitting energy technologies. This would cost \$25 billion per year - a ten-fold increase in global financing - and create momentum to recapture the vision of delivering a low-carbon, high-income world.

Coal contributes strongly to global warming, but no amount of political theater can alter the inescapable fact that it also provides benefits that we cannot yet replicate with renewable energy. Braving arrest with Hollywood stars is a diversion. Declaring true victory over global warming will take a lot more pragmatism, and a lot more work.

*Source: Philippine Daily Inquirer
March 16, 2009*

Bjorn Lomborg, director of the Copenhagen Consensus Center, is an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School and author of "The Skeptical Environmentalist" and "Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming."

P20B in loans available for nature tourism

Persons or groups wanting to grow forests for nature tourism may tap at least P20 billion in loans, interest-free, from the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), Tourism Undersecretary Salvador Sarabia Jr. said Tuesday (February 24, 2009).

Sarabia said in Bacolod for the two-day conference-workshop on "The Environmental Security on Tourism" that protecting the environment is vital for the country's nature-based tourism industry.

The Philippines is a world-renowned tourism destination for the diversity of its ecology, Sarabia said, because of the country's white sand beaches, lush tropical forests and amazing dive sites.

Aid and credit facilities

He said those engaged, or are interested, in developing nature-related tourism facilities could access aid and credit facilities available for local tourism efforts, including a P20-billion DBP interest-free fund for forestation programs.

The Philippines last year had 3.139 million tourists, 20 percent of whom visited Western Visayas, mainly Boracay Island, he said.

This year, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has forecast a negative 2 percent to zero growth for the Asia-Pacific region with international tourism stagnating or declining by 2 percent due to the global financial crisis, Sarabia said.

The UNWTO recently rated the Philippine

tourism campaign as the best-improved in Asia with a 10.6 percent annual growth rate, the highest in Southeast Asia surpassing the 7 percent increase of tourist traffic in the Asia-Pacific region, he said.

Sarabia said new tourism markets were led by arrivals from Europe such as Russia (up by 34 percent), France (up 18.7 percent), the United Kingdom (up by 10 percent) and arrivals from Scandinavian countries also recorded increases like Finland (up by 19 percent), Norway (up by 16 percent) and Sweden (up by 6 percent). The opening of more chartered flights has brought into the Philippines more visitors from China and Taiwan.

Source: Abridged from the article of Ms. Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas Philippine Daily Inquirer, Across the Nation, February 26, 2009

33,387 upland farmers...

Under UDP's reforestation scheme, each beneficiary will likewise be given a hectare to plant and maintain trees suitable to the area. Each worker will get as much as P19,400 to defray the cost and services for seedling production (P8,500) and planting and maintenance (P10,900).

Areas for UDP's reforestation component include denuded areas in watersheds, stream banks, mangrove areas, and open and denuded forestlands outside of any DENR-issued

tenurial instrument like community-based forest agreement but needing immediate rehabilitation. At least 22 million forest and fruit-bearing trees are expected to be planted in the undertaking.

Atienza pointed to the upbeat employment figures recently released by the National Statistic Office (NSO) and National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) as indication that President Arroyo's economic stimulus plan is indeed gaining headway by mobilizing government resources to open up job opportunities especially in the countryside.

"President Arroyo's broad-based approach resulted in the employment growth posted as of April this year which particularly benefited economies in the provinces," Atienza noted as he cited NEDA figures showing a total of 408,000 new jobs were created in agriculture, fishery and forestry sector or 3.4-percent employment growth for the period compared to its 2008 record.

Source: www.denr.gov.ph

PWPA in Events

Date	Meetings/Events	PWPA Representatives
May 5	Meeting with DENR Undersecretary Ramon Paje and with ADB Study Team, Senju Restaurant, EDSA Shangrila Hotel, Mandaluyong City	Chair Fernando Lu, President Antonio Olizon, EVP Alfonso Keh, Jr., Directors Evaristo Narvaez, Jr., Aristeo Puyat, Stanley Tan, Ramon Uy, ED Leonardo Angeles, FEA Jose Lorenzo and FEC Maila Vasquez
13	PWPA Board Meeting, Makati City	PWPA directors and officers
15	Meeting with Ms. Tarja Kuokkanen, Head, Trade Section, Finland Embassy, Makati City	Director Uy, ED Angeles and FEC Vasquez
June 3	PWPA Board Meeting, Anvaya Cove, Morong, Bataan	PWPA directors and officers
4	PCARRD Governing Council Meeting, DOST Conference Room, Bicutan, Taguig City	ED Angeles
16	Conference on the Prospects of Carbon Credits in the Philippines DAP Bldg., Pasig City	FEA Lorenzo, Ms. Sylvia Cortes (ALSONS), For. Bernard Sinues (SUDECOR), Mr. Don Alto (Dacon Group)
	Meeting with FMB Director Marlo Mendoza and key staffs Annabel's Restaurant, Timog, Quezon City	Chair Lu, EVP Keh, Jr., Directors Alex Ong, Aristeo Puyat, Ramon Uy, ED Angeles, FEA Lorenzo, FEC Vasquez and Ms. Cortes (Alsons)

Date	Meetings/Events	PWPA Representatives
June 18	PPSQF Board Meeting, DTI Bldg., Makati City	ED Angeles and IC Ricardo Patawaran
20	Kiwanis Tree Planting, Sunken Garden, NBP Muntinlupa City Inaugural Tree Planting, San Lazaro Leisure Park, Carmona, Cavite	FEC Vasquez, SA Floren Andres and Coordinator Benjamin Bereña Chair Lu, President Olizon, FEC Vasquez and SA Floren Andres
23	Courtesy Call to DENR Undersecretary Manuel Gerochi, DENR, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City	Chair Lu, President Olizon, EVP Keh, Jr., Directors Alex Ong, ED Angeles, FEA Lorenzo, FEC Vasquez and Mr. Rudy Cabuay (SPLC)
25	Launching of Heritage Tree and Centennial Tree Program, VMMC and PAWB, Quezon City	Chair Lu, Director Uy, ED Angeles, Manager Regino Serafico, FEC Vasquez and SA Floren Andres
26	Earth Day Network Philippines Press Conference on Quezon Memorial Circle Development Issue, Serye Restaurant, Quezon City	FEC Vasquez
30	Consultation on the Streamlining of EIS DENR, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City	Chair Lu, President Olizon, ED Angeles, FEA Lorenzo, FEC Vasquez, Ms. Cortes (ALSONS), For. Bernard Sinues (SUDECOR) and Mr. Rudy Cabuay (SPLC)

Note: EVP – Executive VP; VP – Vice President; ED – Executive Director; Mgr.– Manager; FEC – Forestry & Environment Coordinator; IC – Industry Coordinator; FEA – Forestry & Environment Adviser; SA – Systems Analyst; PC – Plywood Council; SC – Steering Committee

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