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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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Mainstream use of bamboo in construction urged amid housing shortage and climate change

By: Edg Adrian A. Eva

Bamboo, a known sustainable construction material, should be incorporated into the National Building Code (NBC) of the Philippines for mainstream use, a civil engineer and bamboo advocate said.

Engr. Luis Felipe Lopez, general manager of BASE Foundation Inc., told BusinessWorld that the usage of bamboo in construction would address key issues like housing shortage and climate change.

Since 2014, BASE has been conducting research and development on alternative building technologies, such as bamboo, exploring its potential for mainstream construction.

Mr. Lopez said that bamboo lowers housing costs by 30% compared to the current standard housing costs.

This sustainable approach is ideal for social housing projects, helping address the country's backlog of 6.5 million housing units, according to the UN-Habitat Philippines Country Report in 2023.

Houses made with Base Bahay technology also produce fewer carbon emissions, as climate change-contributing materials such as concrete, steel, and aluminum are reduced exponentially, Mr. Lopez said.

"Imagine if all the housing or social housing projects in the Philippines switched to a technology like ours; you would see a 70% reduction in carbon emissions in the project," Mr. Lopez furthered.

BASE has been advocating for the inclusion of bamboo in the NBC for the past five years, in collaboration with various organizations such as the Structural Engineers of the Philippines and Bukidnon Rep. Jose Manuel F. Alba.

In February 2024, Mr. Alba filed House Bill 9144, or the "Act Integrating Bamboo as a Sustainable Material for the Built Environment."

The bill seeks to enable the mainstream adoption of bamboo in construction, including its use in high-rise structures.

"If this bill becomes law, it will pave the way for the establishment of a bamboo structure code and a bamboo architectural code, which will be included in our National Building

Code,” Mr. Alba told reporters during the Department of Science and Technology press conference in November.

“We can now introduce engineered bamboos as columns, beams, and for constructing our buildings. Malaki ang impact nito sa construction industry natin [this will have a significant impact on our construction industry],” Mr. Alba added.

Skepticism

Bamboo in Filipino construction has existed since the pre-colonial period, largely due to its abundance across the islands and its ease of setup.

However, this very familiarity has also led to lingering skepticism, with many still reluctant to consider bamboo as a construction material for commercial infrastructures, Mr. Lopez said.

“What we want to do at BASE is, through research, publications, and scientific information. We want to prove that bamboo is a strong material that, if treated properly, can last for 50 to 60 years,” Mr. Lopez said.

On January 30, members of the press visited one of BASE’s treatment facilities adopted by Kanya Kawayan, an independent social enterprise in Nasugbu, Batangas.

Kanya Kawayan produces 1,100 treated bamboo poles per month, along with flattened bamboo poles, locally known as “tad-tad,” which are used as inner walling for housing projects.

Paulo Ferrer, director of business and strategic development at BASE, told reporters that construction-grade bamboo in Kanya Kawayan undergoes a nine-step treatment process to meet industry standards.

Mr. Ferrer also said that BASE’s housing projects, which utilize treated bamboos, are designed to be insect-resistant, fire-resistant with a two-hour fire rating, and capable of withstanding category 5 typhoon.

Just a few kilometers from the facility, members of the press visited an ongoing housing project in the “drying-in” phase, set to benefit 42 families in nearby communities.

This project adds to the more than 2,500 houses BASE Bahay has constructed locally and internationally over the past decade, with plans to expand further into critical areas across the country in need of sustainable housing solutions.

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According to the 2023 Sustainable Travel Report, 76% of travelers prioritize eco-friendly options, prompting destinations to adopt greener initiatives.

To support this growing trend and encourage sustainable development in the country, the Department of Tourism promotes the ANAHAW Philippine Sustainable Tourism Certification, recognizing eco-friendly accommodations that adopt energy-efficient and carbon-reducing practices.

Building on these efforts, solar power presents a scalable solution for reducing costs, increasing energy stability, and aligning with global sustainability goals, making it a key investment for eco-conscious tourism.

Harnessing Solar Energy to Power Bohol's Top Destinations

Bohol, the Philippines' first UNESCO Global Geopark, is harnessing renewable energy to support its booming tourism industry.

With a remarkable 313% surge in visitors in 2023, the island taps on clean energy solutions to meet growing infrastructure demands. Central to these efforts is the Dagohoy Solar Power Project (DSPP), the island's first large-scale solar farm.

DSPP, a collaborative effort between Dagohoy Green Energy Corporation (DGEC), a member of the Yuchengco Group of Companies (YGC), the Department of Energy (DOE), and Bohol local government units, uses 40,000 Trinasolar Vertex modules with a capacity of 27MWp to generate 41,000 MWh of electricity annually. This clean energy powers approximately 18,000 homes and major tourism sites, including the Chocolate Hills—a unique natural wonder of cone-shaped hills, and the Tarsier Sanctuary, home to one of the world's smallest primates.

“The Dagohoy Solar Power Project is a key milestone in the transition to a net-zero future. Through our advanced solar technology solutions, we are supporting the transformation of energy systems and empowering communities. This project illustrates the vital role of renewable energy in meeting the growing demand for clean power,” said Elva Wang, Group Director of Southeast, South and Central Asia, Trinasolar Asia Pacific, a global leader in smart photovoltaic (PV) and energy storage solutions.

Trinasolar at the Heart of Sustainable Tourism

Trinasolar's high-performance bifacial Vertex modules are weather-resistant built to thrive in harsh environments, ensuring reliable performance for years to come. These modules showcase impressive energy yield and low degradation rate, which help reduce operational costs and maintain long-term efficiency.

This innovation guarantees consistent power generation even in remote or weather-prone areas, making them perfect fit for eco-tourism destinations like Bohol.

Sustainability That Strengthens Bohol's Economy

The Dagohoy Solar Power Project plays a critical role in Bohol's sustainability strategy, by reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 28,642 metric tons annually. It has also created over 600 local jobs during construction, boosting economic and business activities in the area.

"Bohol's success highlights the potential for solar power to revolutionize tourism across the Philippines and Southeast Asia, providing a model for other regions looking to balance growth with environmental responsibility," added Elva. As demand for sustainable travel continues to rise, renewable energy solutions like solar power are becoming essential to maintaining a thriving, resilient tourism sector.

"The Dagohoy Solar Power Project is a great step for Bohol's sustainable future. In partnership with Trinasolar, PetroGreen Energy Corporation (PGEC) is proud to help power an iconic tourism destination in the country and its stunning landscapes and rich biodiversity. This project also strengthens Bohol's clean energy adoption and resilience," said Maria Victoria M. Olivar, PGEC's Vice President for Business Development and Commercial Operations.

Bohol's integration of solar energy into its tourism infrastructure shows how clean power can support economic growth, reduce environmental impact, and enhance visitor experiences. By embracing renewable solutions, the island is setting a standard for responsible tourism that preserves natural wonders while building a more sustainable future.

FINANCIAL TIMES

[Most big polluters to miss UN deadline for 2035 climate targets](#)

By: Attracta Mooney and Alice Hancock

The EU, Australia, South Africa and India are among a host of big polluters expected to miss a UN deadline for new climate targets, coming up against economic constraints and political pressure following the Trump election.

Under the process started by the Paris agreement signed nearly a decade ago, almost 200 countries are due to submit fresh climate plans to the UN by early next week. The plans are meant to include a specific country-specific headline figures for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 2035.

Many countries are already far off track for the 2030 targets they had set, with emissions still rising despite scientists warning that to limit global warming they must fall by almost half by the end of the decade from 2019 levels.

While a handful of nations including the UK have succeeded in putting forward upgraded targets, many of the world's biggest economies are expected to miss the deadline, those with knowledge of the plans told the FT.

The order by President Trump to withdraw from the Paris agreement to limit global warming to well below 2C and preferably 1.5C has undermined climate action.

Nick Mabey, co-founder of climate think-tank E3G, said only about one quarter to one-third of the G20 economies were expected to submit their targets on time. "Because of the shock of the US presidency and all the other issues, there is not a lot of leader attention on this issue," he said.

Although there is no penalty for the failure to meet the February 10 deadline set under a UN work programme, it will deepen concerns about backtracking on climate action globally.

EU officials say the bloc will be late submitting its plan, known as a nationally determined contribution (NDC), amid concerns that its ambitious green agenda will test its economy.

Rising political strains over EU sustainability rules have also caused a delay in setting an interim emissions target for 2040, from which the 2035 figure will be drawn.

Poland, which holds the rotating chair of the EU presidency, is one of the governments which is most sceptical of climate targets and is unlikely to push the agenda ahead of presidential elections in May.

“The quality matters more than the speed of submission,” one European official said. The EU submits one overarching NDC for all countries within the bloc.

Officials in Mexico — where a new government led by climate scientist Claudia Sheinbaum came to power last year — said it would seek to submit its target around mid-year. South Africa said it aimed to have a new climate plan by around September.

People familiar with discussions said India’s NDC was not expected by the deadline, while China was still assessing geopolitical developments after the Trump election.

Other big G20 economies, including Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, did not respond to requests for comment. But Indonesia’s energy minister has questioned the usefulness of the Paris agreement following the US exit.

Argentine officials are also weighing a proposal to quit the Paris accord although people familiar with conversations say other countries and financial bodies are attempting to persuade the Latin America country to remain in the pact.

Mabey said pushing back submissions by three to six months “was not so much a problem”, because delays would ensure countries could produce robust plans. “It would be much better if it was as high ambition as possible, but also that it was linked very clearly to both national implementation procedures and international support,” he said.

UN climate change head Simon Stiell has described the climate plans as the most important policy documents of the century.

An UN official said the quality of the climate plans was the most important consideration and countries should take the extra time to deliver the best plans to underpin a clean energy boom worth \$2tn last year.

“We also appreciate the pressures different governments are under, particularly lower-income countries which are facing severe capacity constraints, debt crises, and high costs of capital,” they added.

MANILA STANDARD

[\[Opinion\] Teamwork for environmental protection](#)

By: Melandrew T. Velasco

Traversing Paranaque and Pasay, cities that host the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, is the storied Paranaque River. Considered a major channel, it is one of the 17 principal river systems that drain into Manila Bay.

During continuous rain or heavy downpour, Paranaque and surrounding areas including the Ninoy Aquino International Airport experience flooding. Motorists and airport-bound passengers have to bear with heavy traffic.

In an effort to improve water flow and address perennial flooding at Ninoy Aquino International Airport and surrounding areas, San Miguel Corporation, through its Better Rivers PH initiative, cleaned up Paranaque's waterways.

Aside from the Paranaque River, the cleanup included Don Galo River, and their junctions with the San Dionisio and Villanueva creeks. It covered 1.9 kilometers of river channels.

As of Jan. 23, 2025, SMC reported 93,000 tons of silt and waste from Paranaque rivers were removed.

SMC also de-clogged storm drain lines along Domestic Road and NAIA Terminal 4. This included reopening 54 manholes and constructing 10 new ones for better access and maintenance. These upgrades are seen to sustain flood prevention efforts around the airport complex.

The flood mitigation effort of SMC complements the rehabilitation of NAIA undertaken by SMC subsidiary New NAIA Infra Corp.

SMC Chairman and CEO Ramon S. Ang noted that flooding has been a long-standing issue for Paranaque and NAIA particularly during typhoon season.

"Through Better Rivers PH and with support from government agencies, we were able to implement sustainable solutions that we hope will deliver lasting benefits to residents, businesses, and travelers," RSA said.

River cleanup activities are conducted by SMC at no cost to the government.

Beneficiaries of the SMC initiative include Pasig River, Tullahan River, San Juan River, Pampanga River, among others, and waterways in Laguna.

Since 2020, SMC's Better Rivers PH has removed over 8 million tons of silt and waste from 156 kilometers of rivers.

For the cleanup of the waterways in Paranaque, bathymetric surveys were conducted to identify areas that restricted water flow into the Manila Bay.

The desilting of Paranaque rivers was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Transportation, Department of public Works and Highways, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the local government of Paranaque under the leadership of Mayor Eric Olivarez.

The city government of Paranaque has programs to promote environment protection as well as on flood control and prevention.

Even with its programs in place, the local government needs the cooperation of its constituents.

In his speech before city government officials and employees during the Jan. 13, 2025 flag ceremony, Olivarez exhorted every one not to throw their garbage on the streets or into the rivers.

Paranaque is ranked one of the top local government units in national standards set for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

It garnered 2nd place in the 2023 Manila Bay Clean-Up, Rehabilitation, And Preservation Program Local Government Units Regional Compliance Assessment.

It is also recognized as top performing SWM Cluster Local Government Units Regional Compliance Assessment.

It was on Dec. 18, 2008, when the Supreme Court issued SC Mandamus on Manila Bay (G.R. 171947-48), which directed 13 government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay, and restore and maintain its waters to SB level to make them fit for swimming, skin-diving, and other forms of contact recreation.

Paranaque is also an active partner in protecting the Las Pinas-Paranaque Wetland Park or the Las Pinas-Paranaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area through coastal cleanup.

In line with its greening program, trees are planted in available spaces in the center islands, major thoroughfares, secondary roads, and subdivisions.

The city, which has a Material Recovery Facility, adheres to zero waste management.

As Executive Director of Million Trees Foundation, Inc., I am pleased to know the city of Paranaque is relentless in its tree planting and environment protection activities. We look forward to collaborating with the city in one of our tree-planting activities.

Meanwhile, San Miguel Corporation through RSA has been MTFI's institutional partner since its establishment. Its annual endowment has financed many of MTFI projects.

Like MTFI, SMC has continuously endeavored to support the National Green Program of the national government through its various tree-planting programs in its different subsidiaries, aside from its involvement in mangrove restoration.

Let us be team players in protecting and nurturing our environment. Caring for the environment is integral to sustainable development.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Baguio's garbage down as residents practice proper waste mgmt](#)

By: Liza Agoot

Mayor Benjamin Magalong on Tuesday said the city's garbage generation has dropped by at least 50 tons per day as more residents get involved in proper waste management.

"The city managed to bring down its daily residual wastes production from 250 tons in 2023 to 188 tons in 2024 or (an average of) 50-ton reduction," the mayor said in a media interview on Tuesday.

The decreased generation translates to reduced expenses in hauling and tipping costs in transporting and processing waste to engineered sanitary landfill outside the city, he said.

Baguio transports the residual wastes generated by residents and the business sector to the engineered sanitary landfill facility in Urdaneta, Pangasinan, thus, the expenses.

Magalong said that aside from proactive waste management practices, the garbage volume reduction is also due to the fact that more residents are now practicing segregation at the household level.

The operation of a black soldier fly (BSF) facility since last year also contributed to the processing of food wastes generated at the city market and the central business district.

Several barangays have also initiated their own segregation schemes with more recyclables being recovered.

Magalong said the city is leading towards sustainability and resiliency to attain a livable, inclusive and creative status in 2043 amid the challenges of urban decay and climate change.

"We have undergone positive changes in the past years and this boosts the city's thrust to fully transition from linear to circular economy where wastes are turned into useful materials instead of just ending up in the trash creating economic opportunities," he shared.

Magalong said they launched the Baguio Circular Economy Program last week which is a significant breakthrough in the pursuit of a sustainable and resilient future.

"It is more than just an environmental initiative —it is a major and conscious shift in the way we manage our resources, minimize waste, and promote economic opportunities that are both innovative and responsible," he added.

Magalong said the city intends to make it a way of life to realize a sustainable urban life for the benefit of the future generation.

Councilor Betty Lourdes Tabanda who heads the committee on Health and Environment and the author of the ordinance institutionalizing an “eco-waste sustainability fair”, said that slowly, more “basura” warriors are joining in the activities and contributing to the campaign to reduce, reuse, recycling, repurpose what are considered as garbage.

[Global leaders gather in PH for regional open governance meet](#)

By: Darryl John Esguerra

Over 800 government officials, civil society leaders, and policymakers from more than 40 countries gathered in Manila for the country's hosting of the 2025 Open Government Partnership (OGP) Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM)

The regional meet will run from Wednesday to Friday at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Taguig City, featuring high-level roundtable discussions on advancing open government and addressing regional challenges through the sharing of best practices across the Asia-Pacific region.

"This meeting is more than just a showcase of achievements. It's a call to action, the rallying cry for solidarity amongst nations... Through trust, collaboration, and the belief in the power of our people, we can build a world where every citizen's voice is heard and every government is accountable," President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said in his solidarity message for the event, as quoted by a Department of Budget and Management (DBM) release.

The OGP is a multi-stakeholder initiative that includes 75 countries and 150 local governments, representing more than two billion people, and thousands of civil society organizations that advocate transparent, participatory, inclusive, and accountable governance.

Marcos will deliver the keynote address at the opening plenary on Thursday.

Philippine-OGP Steering Committee chair and Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman will deliver the opening remarks.

Meanwhile, Malayang Lapiang ng mga Kababaihan Inc. Executive Director and PH-OGP Co-Chairperson Aurora Chavez will provide a welcome statement for the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), while OGP incoming Chief Executive Officer Aidan Eyakuze will also grace the plenary and talk about the partnership.

Three high-level roundtable discussions are set to be held as the highlight of the gathering, namely, "Leadership in Action: Ambition and Collaboration for Strategy 2023-2028," "Rising to the Challenge: The Road Ahead for Open Government," and "A Regional Agenda for Open Government: How Economic Development, Democratic Security, and Open Government Go Together."

The event also includes over 20 breakout sessions and 35 side events covering relevant topics including youth, climate change, economics, policymaking, justice, anti-corruption, and digitalization, among others.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Top climate scientist declares 2C climate goal 'dead'](#)

Holding long-term global warming to two degrees Celsius -- the fallback target of the Paris climate accord -- is now "impossible," according to a stark new analysis published by leading scientists.

Led by renowned climatologist James Hansen, the paper appears in the journal "Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development" and concludes that Earth's climate is more sensitive to rising greenhouse gas emissions than previously thought.

Compounding the crisis, Hansen and colleagues argued, is a recent decline in sunlight-blocking aerosol pollution from the shipping industry, which had been mitigating some of the warming.

An ambitious climate change scenario outlined by the UN's climate panel, which gives the planet a 50 percent chance of keeping warming under 2C by the year 2100, "is an implausible scenario," Hansen told a briefing Tuesday.

"That scenario is now impossible," said Hansen, formerly a top NASA climate scientist who famously announced to the US Congress in 1988 that global warming was underway.

"The two degree target is dead."

Instead, he and co-authors argued, the amount of greenhouse gases already pumped into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels meant increased warming is now guaranteed.

Temperatures will stay at or above 1.5C in the coming years -- devastating coral reefs and fueling more intense storms -- before rising to around 2.0C by 2045, they forecast.

They estimated polar ice melt and freshwater injection into the North Atlantic will trigger the shutdown of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) within the next 20–30 years.

The current brings warmth to various parts of the globe and also carries nutrients necessary to sustain ocean life.

Its end "will lock in major problems including sea level rise of several meters -- thus, we describe AMOC shutdown as the 'point of no return,'" the paper argued.

The world's nations agreed during the landmark Paris climate accord of 2015 to try to hold end-of-century warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

Scientists identified the threshold as critical to preventing the breakdown of major ocean circulation systems, the abrupt thawing of boreal permafrost, and the collapse of tropical coral reefs.

The 1.5C target has already been breached over the past two years, according to data from the EU's climate monitoring system Copernicus, though the Paris Agreement referred to a long-term trend over decades.

At 2C, the impacts would be even greater, including irreversible loss to Earth's ice sheets, mountain glaciers and snow, sea ice and permafrost.

The authors acknowledged the findings appeared grim, but argued that honesty is a necessary ingredient for change.

"Failure to be realistic in climate assessment and failure to call out the fecklessness of current policies to stem global warming is not helpful to young people," they said.

"Today, with rising crises including global climate change, we have reached a point where we must address the problem of special interests," they added, stressing they were "optimistic" for the future.

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