

DENR backs accounting of PH's natural resources

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is pushing for an honest-to-goodness natural resource and environmental accounting system to enable the agency to come up with specific policies and programs consistent with the sustainable integrated area development (SIAD) approach.

DENR Undersecretary for International Affairs and Foreign-assisted Programs Jonas Leones defines SIAD as a strategy that “weaves environmental considerations with social justice and human development,” examples of which are ecotourism and agro-forestry.

Through SIAD, the DENR will create “mini-economic zones” that can generate employment, livelihood and income-generating activities in communities where they operate, making it a way better alternative to destructive mining.

“At the DENR, we endeavor to achieve social justice by ensuring the integrity of our ecosystems on which local communities depend for food and livelihood,” Leones said.

Leones also said it is about time “we account and minimize the depletion of our wealth, especially when it does not benefit our people.”

The environment official issued the statement as the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) held last week a two-day national conference on National Capital Accounting (NCA), which served as the culminating activity of the World Bank-funded Philippine Wealth Accounting for the Valuation of Ecosystems Services or Phil-WAVES project.

With the theme “Accounting Nature, Capitalizing Partnerships for the Future,” the NCA conference was held at the Hotel Marco Polo Ortigas in Pasig City from March 30 to 31.

The conference came amid a government campaign against irresponsible mining, highlighted by an industry-wide audit that resulted in the closure and suspension of mining operations due to alleged environmental violations.