

Informal waste sector an important part of collection system: DENR

Raphael Bosano, ABS-CBN News

MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is hoping to include the informal waste sector to the Expanded Producer Responsibility (EPR) system for plastic waste as the country slowly shifts to a circular economy.

Environment Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga acknowledged Wednesday the important role of the sector of waste collection and management as a potential backbone of collection services and recycling.

“Right now we’re actually developing the programs that can integrate all the informal workers in this particular sector so that they can be part of the overall collection system. We’re looking at those who are collecting and those who are segregating and effectively delivering what has been segregated to the various collection systems,” she said.

She added that a lot of those working in the informal sector do not have any form of social protection.

“It’s very important to realize that without this particular sector the whole collection system would not work,” Yulo-Loyzaga said.

But the Environment chief acknowledged that given the thousands, if not millions of those working in the informal sector of waste collection and recycling, it is extremely challenging to account for all of them.

“We hope to engage as well the DSWD, DILG because it’s really the local governments that will help us in the implementation. They know the communities better, they know who’s engaged,” Loyzaga said.

The initiative, she said, will complement efforts to reduce the amount of waste generated by single-use plastics under the Expanded Producer Responsibility Act.

Under the law, some 4,000 enterprises have been identified and encouraged to register with the DENR. Of this number, only 600 have complied, according to the agency.

Loyzaga hopes that programs and systems surrounding the EPR will be in place within the year.