

Headline: Climate change challenge up at Green Forum

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Regional and local experts in the green technology field are scheduled to end their discussion on the challenge of climate change and the opportunities for innovative solutions in an annual gathering being held at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City.

The 9th Green Forum is being hosted by civic nonprofit organization Green Architecture Advocacy Philippines (Green AP), event organizer and manager LA Ducut and Co. Inc., cement manufacturer Holcim, elevator and escalator company Kone and paint manufacturer Boysen.

"We commend our partners in showing the leadership to support this forum and chart the course for future actions in the area of building technology in order to adapt to climate change," said Green AP chair architect Miguel Guerrero.

He added that new green technologies and sustainable design could contribute a lot in reducing the impact of human activity on the world and build a sustainable future.

Chaired by architect Joven Ignacio, the Forum with this year's theme "The Green Challenge: What's the Score," aims to present to its audience what government, local organizations, companies and designers are implementing to address the challenges of climate change through sustainable design and construction.

Erection to demolition

"Building in all its stages, from erection to demolition, has tremendous impact to the environment. Speakers, who are experts in their respective fields, will present case studies on actual projects that focus on the challenges they have encountered to implement green strategies and how they were able to manage these concerns," Ignacio shared.

Updates on the climate change hazards and vulnerability for the Philippines was discussed by Dr. Gemma Teresa Narisma yesterday. Narisma is the associate director for Research and head of Regional Climate Systems program of the Manila Observatory.

Joining her in Friday's forum was Chatiya Nantham, the head of Asian Development Bank's Facilities Planning and Management Unit. He shared experiences on how the multilateral development finance institution was able to invest in sound environmental and natural resource management, a move that also promoted a culture of green growth, low carbon development and climate change adaptation among its developing member-countries.

The efforts of ADB in minimizing environmental impacts of its headquarters building operations (in Mandaluyong City) through the environmental, health and safety management program have met with such success that in 2011 it received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) GOLD certification for an existing building.

Initiatives

Representing the local government units, lawyer Violeta Seva, senior advisor to Makati City Mayor Jejomar Erwin “Jun Jun” Binay presented the city’s initiatives on sustainability and governance.

Event organizer head Lilibeth Ducut-Abais said that during the first day of the Forum, they also invited foreign speakers including Kasetsart University’s Dr. Singh Intrachoo, who is Design Innovation Ambassador for Thailand’s National Innovation Agency as well as last year’s Silver Prize Holcim Awardee for Sustainable Construction (Asia Region) of the Holcim Foundation of Switzerland.

“The holder of a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Design Technology from Massachusetts Institute of Technology served as a key consultant to a project known as the Urban Farm Urban Barn in Thailand, a very interesting project that could serve as a viable model here,” Ducut said.

Located in a mixed urban zone in central Bangkok, Intrachoo explained that the project aims to bring back green areas to the booming city wherein a former textile factory and abandoned farmland on an adjacent block was being transformed into a 1.4-hectare agricultural production site and retail outlet.

The Urban Farm Urban Barn is designed to be an eco-community mall that would provide food security to Bangkok’s Rat Burana district during normal situations and when the district is faced with natural disaster such as floods and storm. This project located on a 1.6 hectares will allocate 3,000 square meters for the community mall, which is located close to Rat Burana road. Vegetables and fruit will be grown using organic farming methods to serve an eco-friendly living lifestyle.

Various projects from several of Green AP’s core group members will be showcased as the 9th Green Forum ends today, Saturday.

Case studies

Ignacio said various case studies and applied projects will be discussed. “Maja Olivares-Co, who has played a leading role in Philippine retail, commercial, corporate and residential design over the last 20 years, will talk about her ‘green’ designs for the 100-year-old Paco Market, which is being rehabilitated and expanded,” he said.

Co’s lecture will be followed by architect Daniel Lichaoco who will share the experiences that allowed his firm, Archion Architects, explore different “green” design ideas.

He will be followed by architect Paulo Alcazaren who will conduct a lecture on green roofs and sustainable designs. Alcazaren is a practising design consultant in urban design and landscape architecture for the last 30 years.

The two will also be joined by fellow architect, Nestor Arabejo, who will discuss Ecotecktonika’s projects in the Philippines in a paper titled “Going for a Green Building Certification.”

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Abais said: "This concluding day of the Forum is significant as every sector will be represented. Visitors will be provided with deeper insights on how these designers, planners, government leaders and advocacy groups are tackling sustainability against the backdrop of climate change."