



Philippine Resources

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**The Threat of Resources
Nationalism to the
Philippine Mining Industry**

**Illicit Oil Trade in
Philippines**

**Diwata Looks
Ahead**



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Diwata Looks Ahead

By Patricia A. O. Bunye

On the occasion of its first anniversary, Diwata-Women in Resource Development, Inc. presented a panel at the “Bulong Pulungan sa Sofitel, featuring its “rock stars”, three geologists and a mining engineer – all accomplished women who were ready to answer “Everything You Wanted to Know About Mining But Were Afraid to Ask (Geology 101)”.

The Bulong Pulungan forum has been in existence for 26 years, and is headlined by veteran women journalists like former Press Secretary Deedee Siyangco, respected columnists Rina Jimenez David, Domini Torevillas and Joanne Rae Ramirez, and others who have just about seen and hear it all in Philippine politics, business and society.

Yet on July 23, they were genuinely engaged and interested to hear how the women in the resources industry are



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contributing to national development through their work.

The same forum had previously featured the anti-mining talking heads, and it was apparent from the journalists’ questions that they were hungry for information on responsible minerals development.

Diwata Chairman Delia Albert never fails to point out that Diwata was founded on July 18, 2012, the birthday of the acknowledged father of the South African nation, Nelson Mandela.

Mandela has said that, to address poverty, you must create wealth and to create wealth, you must use both natural and human resources.

This, she says, spells out in one sentence what the mining industry could contribute to the development of our country, and that Diwata’s role is to serve as a platform for learned dialogue on this.

The first speaker, Eliza (Ging) Laudencia, the Executive Director of Geoscience Foundation Inc., who has worked with the National Power Corporation as Principal Geophysicist, introduced the work involved in geology and its various fields (economic geology, marine geology, petroleum geology, among others).

She debunked the misconception that women only do the easy work when she stated that she continued to work in the field until her fourth month of pregnancy.

Dr. Maria Ines Rosana (Sana) Dacanay Balangue-Tarriela, an Associate Professor in the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences and its Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, explained that while many geologists are involved in the mining industry, many others are immersed in other fields such as energy, environment and volcanology.

Mining essential

Her presentation on “One Normal Day in Mining” left no doubt that mining is essential for daily human activities, both for material and non-material needs.

Redempta (Dempta) Baluda, Vice President for Exploration of Philex Mining Corporation, recalled that, early in her career at Philex, there no women in technical positions or management. This began to change in the 1990s and today, there are 17 female managers [roughly 20% of managerial force] at Philex’ Padcal Mine alone.

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She credits Philex for the best years of her professional and personal life. Professionally, her work has developed her leadership over the years, from strengthening the company's exploration team to her involvement in community development.

On the personal front, she met her husband, an Ibaloi from Tuba, Benguet and a nurse at Philex, and they raised their four sons (a geologist, a mining engineer, an IT professional and a physician) in the mines.

Rodalee Ofiaza, a Mining Engineer from the University of the Philippines and board topper during the 2009 Mining Engineering Licensure Examinations, was the youngest presenter.

She said that her license number, 2856, shows that there are not very many in her profession compared to accountants, doctors and nurses notwithstanding that it is one of the oldest engineering courses in the Philippines.

In her work, she is heavily involved in development and monitoring of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines' "mining scorecard" for mining companies' social and environmental programs.

She explained that, long before the term

"corporate social responsibility" or CSR was defined, it was already being practiced by mining companies, starting with the Philippines' oldest mining companies, which built roads, power plants and infrastructure even before beginning to operate and even before they profit.

She expressed hope that mining companies will be recognized for being responsible for the development of remote localities into first class municipalities or even cities, through their presence and operations.

With this type of development, she said that it will one day be possible that people in the provinces will not have to come to Manila in search of livelihood as there would be ample opportunities in their hometowns.

The speakers are conscious of their role in encouraging young women to consider careers in the same fields. Dr. Tarriela, in particular, said that her being a professor has allowed her to mentor many students, some of whom continue to consult her even after they had become professionals themselves.

Barely three weeks after the Bulong Pulungan forum, an opportunity arose for Diwata to informally mentor young geology and mining engineering students who had attended the presentation of Mitch Hooke, CEO of the Minerals Council of

Australia (MCA), at the Philippine Mining Luncheon.

Immediately after the luncheon and Mr. Hooke's press conference, Diwata members had a brief but lively meeting with him and these students, as well as other special guests, South Africa Ambassador to the Philippines Agnes Nyamande Pitso, Catherine Rees, First Secretary of the Australian Embassy; Tata Corpus of Australia; and Nelia Halcon, Executive Vice President of the Chamber of Mines.

A note of thanks must also be extended to our "honorary Diwata", Atty. L. Dominguez (who has supported Diwata from Day One and made the effort to participate in all our major activities) who together with Gavan Collery of Dophil and the Melbourne Mining Club kindly arranged the meeting with Mr. Hooke.

As we waited for Mr. Hooke to conclude his press conference, the Diwatas got to know the students (Paola Grace Tuyor, Rializza Maramba, Lia Hernandez, Jolly Joyce Sulapas, Regina Marie Maximo and Marie Grace Gabuyo, as well as Nandini Narayanan, an AIM graduate student from India who is interning at SGV), who shared with us their reasons for choosing to major in geology or mining engineering.

They all struck us as smart and idealistic – very well the future of not just Diwata but the Philippine resources industry!

Mr. Hooke revealed that he had a personal stake in ensuring a diverse workplace, being the father of three girls. This would only be possible, he said, with the right culture and an attitude "built on a platform of respect". Without these "institutional arrangements we've made to encourage women in the industry would be worthless."

Perhaps the most valuable advice that was imparted to the young women that day was to "(B)e courageous. Only you can allow yourself to be discriminated against and put down".

