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**PENARROYO:
CHALLENGES AND OUTLOOK FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

**BUNYE:
FINDING A WAY FORWARD FOR PH MINING**

**STRATBASE AND DENR ON REVITALIZING
THE PH MINING INDUSTRY**



**ORICA PHILIPPINES:
CELEBRATING 55 YEARS OF
INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE
IN THE MINING INDUSTRY**

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Finding a Way Forward for PH Mining

written by: PATRICIA A. O. BUNYE | Photo credit: STRATBASE GROUP



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It has been a busy time for earnest discussions on the way forward for the Philippine mining industry with mining being identified as one of five priority areas for investment and clear signals from the national government that it is recognized as a key driver for economic growth.

On 10 May 2024, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and The Stratbase Group held a forum entitled “Revitalizing the Philippine Mining Industry: A Pillar for Inclusive and Resilient Economic Growth and Development”. In light of the powerhouse roster of speakers and panelists from the government, diplomatic corps, mining industry, and the private sector, as well

as the breadth of the topics covered, it was fittingly dubbed a “mining summit”.

In the panel I moderated on “Addressing Philippine Mineral Agenda Bottlenecks”, we looked at the regulatory hurdles and bottlenecks hindering the advancement of the mining industry. Former Division Chief of the Mining Environment and Safety Division of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Engr. Michael Cabalda, reminded us that there is no need to reinvent the wheel as there is an existing and comprehensive Minerals Action Plan prepared by the Minerals Development Council back in 2004, with specific and detailed items to address the identified challenges. Even 19 years

later, it is replete with implementable action items.

One concrete outcome of the event was the signing of the DENR-Mining Industry Joint Declaration [with the mining industry being represented by the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, Philippine Nickel Industry Association, Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association, and Philippine Mining and Exploration Association], which has the following objectives to push mining companies to go beyond mere compliance with the applicable laws and rules:

1. Enhance regulatory frameworks to ensure the protection of biodiversity and the rights of local communities

2. Promote the use of environmentally friendly technologies and rehabilitation of mining sites
3. Encourage transparency and accountability in all mining operations
4. Strengthen the enforcement of environmental laws and regulations
5. Create a conducive and stable policy environment

Among the initiatives under the Joint Declaration are that: (1) the DENR shall station personnel in each active mine site for more efficient coordination and resolution of any concerns related to mine operation; and (2) mining

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organizations shall establish an Ethics Committee to oversee the environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance of their members to uphold and promote the highest standards of practice.

On 18 June 2024, I emceed the Sweden-Philippines High-Level Sustainable Mining Forum, with the theme “Pioneering the Green Transition: Advancing Sustainable Mining”. The Embassy of Sweden [led by Her Excellency Ambassador Annika Thunborg] and Business Sweden (also known as Team Sweden) have been working with the Philippine government in promoting the development of various industries. Having observed the renewed importance and emphasis that the Philippine government has placed on priority areas for advancement, including mining, Team Sweden hopes to build a stronger partnership around the mining industry, particularly revolving around sustainable mining.

We took away from the forum information and insights from Sweden in developing a Philippine mining industry that leverages technological innovations and promotes sustainability.

Sweden has long been a global leader and we are fortunate that it is adding its voice to the rejuvenated Philippine mining industry. It is the leading producer in the EU of 90% of iron ore and over 1/3 of zinc and lead. The mining ecosystem in Sweden [mines, mining equipment, services, steel and metal production], among others, supports 3% of Sweden’s national GDP, represents 8% of its exports, and accounts for 1.2% of total tax payments.

Most significantly, Sweden



(L-R) Emil Akander, VP Business Sweden, Ambassador Cecilia Eckholm, SDENR Loyzaga, Ambassador Annika Thunborg, Atty. Mike Toledo

Cecilia Eckholm, Sweden’s Ambassador for Sustainable Business

Photos courtesy of Business Sweden

has a dedicated Ambassador for Sustainable Business, Cecilia Eckholm (one of the esteemed speakers at the event), who has been in the role since 15 January 2021 and is responsible for promoting the Swedish Government’s Sustainable Business agenda. She brings to the role a unique perspective, having previously served as Sweden’s Ambassador to Peru, another global leader in mining.

At the forum, several Swedish manufacturers and

service providers, including Sandvik and Ericsson, presented a wide range of solutions for electrification, digitalization and automation that actively contribute to the green transition and to more efficient and safer mining operations.

We were also introduced by eminent speakers from Luleå University of Technology and the University of the Philippines to the “triple helix model” as it applies to the mining industry, where there is

dynamic interaction among academia, industry and government, to encourage innovation and find research-based solutions to our local challenges.

With the many best practices shared by the resource persons from Sweden, I certainly look forward to closer collaboration between Sweden and the Philippines towards further developing a responsible, resilient and sustainable Philippine mining industry. **PRJ**