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LET'S MAKE IT A
BETTER 2021

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WOMEN AND
WATER

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THE WORLD'S LARGEST CALDERA
(PART 2)

THE CARMEN
COPPER
LANDSLIDE

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ACCURATE GROUND
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International Women in Mining and the Wawa Weir 2 Project



By Patricia A. O. Bunye

Kicking off International Women's Month, the International Women in Mining Alliance (IWIM) held its first ever-virtual Global WIM Summit on March 1-2. Through the wonder of technology, I had the pleasure of connecting with other IWIM leaders throughout the world without having to hop on a plane and despite our differences in time zones. The summit also combined live and pre-recorded sessions which made it possible to view sessions at leisure.

Diwata-Women in Resource Development, Inc. of which I was Founding President, is IWIM's member organization in the Philippines. There are currently at least 37 IWIM organizations throughout the world.

The Alliance is a pioneering initiative that brings IWIM organizations together to leverage their collective strength to provide a global, multilateral platform that will facilitate collaboration among them and promote the emergence of a strong, unified IWIM voice. Prior to its launch, the different IWIM organizations were under a loose umbrella, getting together only occasionally for teleconferences to exchange ideas and experiences.

Last year, IWIM embarked on a strategic partnership with the World Bank on a research project to gather information to understand the opportunities and constraints women in mining organizations face.

Results of the research project have been collated in a report to be published online and presented at international mining conferences starting with the Global WIM Summit. It will also be presented at Mining Indaba, PDAC, the World Bank's 2nd Gender Conference, and other events.

In November last year, Diwata's core group, led by our President, Atty. Joan Adaci-Cattiling, were interviewed by the World Bank's researcher on the challenges we have faced, the lessons we have learned and our recommendations for strengthening IWIM organizations. Hearing excerpts of the final report, it was heartening to know that our sisters in other IWIM organizations face the same challenges, including difficulty in obtaining funding, dependence on the efforts of volunteers and getting members who are busy with their day jobs to engage.

One session that I would have wanted to attend, but missed was on "Role Models and Mentors for Women in Mining". While women are very well represented in all facets of the mining industry (as geologists, mining engineers, metallurgists, environmental scientists, community relations officers, lawyers, accountants, human resources professionals, administrative staff, truck drivers, etc.), we want to see the numbers of women at the very top increase.

Recently, the Philippines topped Grant Thornton International's 2021 Women in Business Report, a global survey among 29 economies on the role of women in senior management. While I do not have the figures for the mining industry, a quick "scan of the room" will show the male mining CEOs still outnumber the women. Thankfully, we have strong figures like Gloria Tan Climaco, Chairman of the Board of Filminera Resources Corporation and Mt. Labo Exploration and Development Corporation, and Diwata's own Joan Adaci-Cattiling, President of OceanaGold (Philippines), Inc., as exemplars.

Before the March 2020 lockdown, Diwata was scheduled to launch its 'Industry Leaders' professional mentorship & networking program (with Gloria Tan Climaco as the first speaker), which is



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designed to benefit female professionals through interaction with respected resource persons, professional mentorship and networking opportunities. While it is entirely possible to hold this activity online in the near future, we are still looking forward to in-person connections with our members soon, particularly young women mining professionals who will most benefit from the program.

In the eight years of Diwata's existence, perhaps we have focused on the word "resources" in its name to refer to natural resources, but we have not lost sight of our equally valuable human resources. To build and sustain the mining industry, we must support the professional development and career progression of the women who "hold up half the sky".

□□□

On February 26, I had the pleasure of emceeing the Philippine Infrastructure & Construction Club's webinar on the Prime BMD Wawa Weir 2 Project featuring Prime BMD's CEO J.V. Emmanuel A. "Jocot" De Dios and Director of Operations, Jeff Gallus. They were joined by their colleague, Gisoue (Jeff) Pani, who focused on the technical aspects of the project. Once completed, the Wawa Weir 2 Project is expected to deliver 518 million liters per day (MLD) of water to 500,000 households within Manila Water Co. Inc.'s franchise area. The presentation was very timely as water is a basic necessity that cannot be taken for granted, especially as pointed out by Jocot, our population grows and migration into Metro Manila increases the demand for water.

In the webinars that I have hosted and attended, I have noted that the attendees are less shy about asking questions. Perhaps this is because 99% of webinars start punctually compared to live

events, and more time can be devoted to the Q&A. In the Q&A on the Wawa Weir 2 Project, the questions ranged from technical to practical ("who do we contact in your company"), but what I found most interesting were Jocot's responses to observations that Prime BMD appears to have handled its community relations well.

In the case of Prime BMD, Jocot says that there is no tried and tested formula or template, but what has worked well for them is ensuring respect for the communities, particularly the indigenous communities, in their project area, constantly engaging with them to understand their needs, and upholding their culture and traditions. This is of course easier said than done, but it seems, at least in this respect, Prime BMD has succeeded where other companies have faced much difficulty. ■



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conference. I noticed that participants in my webinars and lectures were more active in engaging me with their questions and comments. Surprisingly, even technically-challenged seniors have learned to master the internet and online meetings, including screen sharing of their presentations and files.

I wish an instant reboot of life if not a total deletion from my memory of the enduring tragedies we experienced in 2020. I desire to return to people interacting without wearing face masks and not conscious of any physical distance. But I realize that our lives will not return to our previous normal overnight. My motto is to survive in order to strive and prepare myself for the new normal.

It will be a gradual and slow learning process beset with both small victories and temporary setbacks. Chaos and crises will not follow a timeline. The underlying challenges we encountered in 2020 will continue to haunt us well into the forthcoming years until the virus has totally been eradicated and the traumatic memories would just become a mere footnote in mankind's history, like the Spanish flu of the previous century.

In 2020, we see how quickly our lives changed with the blink of our eyes. We realized that we are not in total control of the world. But the best part is that we are in total control of ourselves and we can

certainly control how we interact with the world around us. That basically makes all the difference.

We hope that 2021 will be a brighter and better year. Perhaps we can find inspiration in the biblical story of Job. After Job was made to suffer all misfortunes and tragedies in life, "...the Lord blessed the later days of Job more than his earlier ones ... Job lived a hundred and forty years; and he saw his children, his grandchildren, and even his great-grandchildren. Then Job died, old and full of years."

A better 2021 starts with a better "me". Perhaps after a full year of a better 2021, we can look forward to a 2022 that will be even better. ■



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