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Nickel Asia Corp. becomes first mining company in PH to create sustainability committee

For Nickel Asia Corp. (NAC), sustainability is more than a buzzword but a commitment it is taking to heart.

This month, it became the first mining operation in the country to create a Board-level sustainability committee and designate a Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) as it hammers down on its environment, social, and corporate governance (ESG) goals.

The Sustainability Committee is in charge of overseeing, identifying, and assessing the economic, environmental, ethical, and social impact of NAC's operations, and has the immense responsibility of steering the company into becoming a better business operator and contributor to national development.

These milestones are in line with the company's OneNAC vision which is to become the premier ESG investment in the country and to be counted among the top 25 PSE-listed companies in terms of market capitalization by 2025.

"More than just a simple revision of the old statement, this one heralds the changes that our company is today undergoing as we formalize our ESG process - changes that we believe will enable us to be at the forefront of truly sustainable development of our country's natural resources result in an even more stable and successful company," NAC President and CEO Martin Antonio Zamora said.

"Ultimately, our aim is to help bring products that would move the world towards a progressive and sustainable future, always conscious of being stewards of the environment where we operate," he added.

As early as 2014, NAC incorporated the pillars of ESG in its operations. The sustainability report in its annual reports was assessed using the Global Reporting Initiative standards and it continues to align its business operations with globally recognized sustainability standards and best practices.

Over the years, NAC has been recognized both locally and internationally for its exemplary efforts in promoting environmentally and socially responsible mining operations in the country.

All of its operating mining subsidiaries in Palawan, Surigao, and the Dinagat Islands have been conferred the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award, considered as the highest form of recognition in the country, and have amassed various awards from both the government and the private sector.

During the first ASEAN Mineral Awards in 2017, Coral Bay Nickel Corporation (CBNC), operating in Rio Tuba, Bataraza, Palawan, also won the Best Practices award in the Metallic Mineral Processing category. CBNC is the first nickel processing plant in the Philippines in which NAC has a minority interest of 10 percent.

Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation also bagged runner-up status in the Metallic Mineral Mining category.

"ESG is now a fundamental element of business, higher-level evolution of the 'triple bottom line' that was all the rage in the 1990s. No company worth its salt - especially those who claim to or aspire for leadership in its industry - can avoid embracing ESG as part of the way it does business," said newly installed CSO Jose Bayani Baylon.

"Embracing ESG means a lot of work, principally because some industries like metals and mining are by their nature already challenged in acing ESG also means a lot of work, principally because some industries like metals and mining are by their nature already challenged in some areas of ESG, particularly in the environment pillar. They start off on their ESG journey with a handicap, so to speak. But the global universe of companies in the metals and mining industry includes very good examples worth emulating," he added.

For NAC, embracing the ESG ethos is more than bowing to public opinion but an essential component that must be ingrained in the company's DNA as a responsible corporate entity.

"Moving forward, we at NAC will put a premium on the development of a sustainability culture within our company and across our subsidiaries, and ensure that we continue to operate with the utmost respect for the people and the environment," said Zamora.

About Nickel Asia Corp.

Nickel Asia Corp. (PSE: NIKL) is a diversified natural resources development company in the Philippines, comprising five operating and three exploratory mines with interests in the country's only two high-pressure acid leach plants and in a renewable energy subsidiary. Here at NAC, our aim is to contribute to sustainable national development by adopting our ESG roadmap in order to achieve the highest standards in the responsible utilization of our country's natural resources. Our mines produce two types of saprolite ore: high-grade and mid-grade. Most of our high-grade saprolite ore is used as feed for ferronickel smelters while our mid-grade saprolite ore is used as feed for electric furnaces to produce high- and medium-grade nickel pig iron. Our renewable energy subsidiary aims to engage in power generation exclusively from renewable sources. In a short period of time, we have built up through acquisitions a portfolio of renewable energy service contracts across solar, onshore wind, and geothermal which are at various stages of development. Through our operations and along with our partners of over 1,000 employees across communities, we aim to help bring products that would move the world towards a progressive and sustainable future, always conscious of being stewards of the environment where we operate. Learn more at www.nickelasia.com and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.