



A DUTY FOR ALL

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It is disheartening to think that the country's natural world heritage sites are being destroyed by people for profit. The Chocolate Hills, often hailed as the Eighth Wonder of the World and recognized as the Philippines' third national geological monument, were destroyed due to their development into Captain's Peak Garden and Resort.

The government's issuance of a construction permit in the midst of a beautiful scenery in the Philippines has become unjust. It's a disrespect to the country's resources and to the laws that protect the preservation of such natural treasures of the nation. The development of this resort has the potential to cause the deterioration of this distinctive geological formation, which holds significance as a National Cultural Monument and UNESCO World Heritage site.

Progress often trumps preservation, the debate over tourism development has reached a boiling point. The clash between private interests and public welfare has never been more apparent, with the stakes higher than ever. At the heart of this discord lie the broader cultural and ecological implications of unchecked development.

It's time to address the elephant in the room: stewardship versus ownership. The prevailing narrative in recent articles underscores the pressing need to prioritize stewardship over mere ownership. Why? Because prioritizing private interests without due regard for the common good can have devastating consequences. Ill-conceived developments not only ravage the environment but also disrupt the delicate balance of local communities.

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In Balayan East Central School, the historical heritage preserved is the Gabaldon Building, designed in 1901 during the American colonial era by the Insular Government of the Philippine Islands. These buildings feature contemporary designs with elements drawn from the traditional bahay kubo and bahay na bato. On January 18, 2019, Gabaldon buildings are protected under the Gabaldon School Buildings Conservation Act or the Republic Act No. 11194, which prohibits their modification, alteration, destruction, demolition, or relocation.

But there's hope on the horizon. A growing chorus of voices is advocating for a paradigm shift in how we approach tourism development. It's time to embrace a more responsible and sustainable model—one that prioritizes the preservation of our nature for future generations.

This perspective isn't just idealistic; it's pragmatic. After all, what good are tourist attractions if they're devoid of their natural charm? What legacy are we leaving for our children if we continue down this path of reckless exploitation?

It's time for action. Governments, businesses, and individuals alike must come together to chart a new course—one that values conservation as much as commerce. From implementing stricter regulations to promoting eco-friendly practices, there's no shortage of steps we can take to ensure a brighter future for our environment.

In conclusion, the time for complacency is over. We owe it to ourselves, and to future generations, to be better stewards of our planet. Let's heed the call for responsible tourism development and preserve our natural landmarks for all to enjoy. The choice is clear: it's either profit at any cost or a sustainable future for all. It is our duty to protect and respect our natural wonders. And that is everyone's responsibility.

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