



ACB marks ASEAN's 50th Year with Inauguration of New Headquarters

As part of ASEAN's Golden Anniversary celebration, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) will be holding the formal inauguration of its newly constructed headquarters on 29 July 2017.

Located within the University of the Philippines Los Baños in Laguna, Philippines, the new building was designed and built using principles of sustainable construction. It will also serve as a testament to the long-standing commitment of the 10 ASEAN Member States (AMS) to the conservation of biological resources in the region. ACB sees the new building as a staging platform to further amplify its message of conserving biodiversity.

"We dedicate the new ACB building to the present and future generations. It is a hallmark of our commitment to sustain efforts towards biodiversity conservation. We at ACB hope that this building will become a venue for all sectors, groups, and individuals to come together and solidify initiatives to inspire everyone to take action for the web of life," said ACB Executive Director Atty. Roberto V. Oliva.

Atty. Oliva expressed appreciation to the Government of the Philippines for supporting the construction of the building through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The Philippines is the host country of ACB by virtue of a Host Country Agreement signed in 2009.

Dignitaries from the 10 AMS, the ASEAN Secretariat, dialogue partners, private sector partners, local government partners, and other friends of biodiversity will join ACB in celebrating its new headquarters.

Apart from the formal launch of the building, one of the highlights of the event is the signing ceremony between ACB and the European Union (EU) for the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP), a 5-year mission that aims to improve the management of protected areas in the ASEAN, develop and mobilize knowledge and scientific basis for biodiversity conservation, and mainstream biodiversity into the education system and to strengthen the regional capacities.

continued on page 2...

**What's
Inside?**



**Philippine Ocean
Conference led to
Voluntary Commitments
to Sustain Life Below
Water**
page 3



**ASEAN welcomes
Bai Tu Long National
Park, Viet Nam as
38th ASEAN Heritage
Park**
page 9



ASEAN-associated entities with the Ambassadors from the 10 ASEAN Member States, joined by His Excellency DSG Mochtan (13th from left).

ACB participates in the First Forum of Entities Associated with ASEAN

Aiming to welcome members to the ASEAN family, the First Forum of Entities Associated with the ASEAN was held on 4 May 2017 in the ASEAN Headquarters, Jakarta, Indonesia.

The ASEAN Secretariat, through the Community Relations Division (CRD), organized the Forum, with the objective of orienting the associated entities of the pillars of the ASEAN community.

Duties and responsibilities of an entity were also discussed, such as submission of accomplishment reports and duties to attend meetings to provide updates on their activities and programs. The event also aimed to serve as a platform for ASEAN

bodies to explore possibilities of partnership and collaboration in implementing activities beneficial to the ASEAN community.

His Excellency Dr. AKP Mochtan, Deputy Secretary-General of the Community and Corporate Affairs Department stressed that the forum aims to synergize the efforts of all the entities, and that by working together, the ASEAN community can achieve more and overcome the challenges that come its way.

Her Excellency Elizabeth Buensuceso, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN provided inputs through a video-recorded message. She shared that the Philippines is

very happy and proud as the Chair of the ASEAN 50 celebration. She acknowledged the contribution of all the associated organizations in making the ASEAN region what it is today – a thriving community of opportunities. She expressed high hopes in the forum as a means to streamline efforts among different entities with ASEAN Secretariat as its common denominator in implementing significant activities for the good of the ASEAN community.

ACB is one of the organizations associated with ASEAN in the context of biodiversity conservation, under the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Pillar.

ACB marks ASEAN'S 50th year ...continued from page 1

The Centre will also launch the Second Edition of the ASEAN Biodiversity Outlook (ABO 2), which provides a midpoint assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in the ASEAN region.

The inauguration marks another milestone for ACB, which traces its

roots to 1999 with the creation of the European Commission-funded ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC). The ARCBC fostered strong collaboration among the AMS and between ASEAN and EC partner institutions, gradually gaining recognition in the regional and global biodiversity arena. Stakeholders agreed on the need for a permanent institution, as against a mere time-

bound instrument. This promptly translated to the creation of ACB – a center that facilitates cooperation and coordination among the 10 AMS and regional international organizations on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair sharing of benefits arising from the use of such natural treasures.

Philippine Ocean Conference led to Voluntary Commitments to Sustain Life Below Water

Representatives from numerous groups such as local and international organizations, the academe, private sector and various government bureaus gathered in Cebu City for the Philippine Ocean Conference held on 16 – 17 May 2017.

Hosted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), the Conference aimed to develop voluntary commitments from the participants with respect to attaining United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14), which is Life Below Water. The commitments of the different organizations were used in preparation for The Ocean Conference held on 5 – 9 June 2017, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA.

Regional Director for DENR Central Visayas Ms. Emma Melana and Regional Director for DA-BFAR Field Office VII Mr. Allan Poquita each gave their own welcome messages, and shared the challenges that their respective offices have been facing, such as how fishing has become a threat to livelihood of residents, as well as actions done in compliance with SDG 14.

In his message to the participants, UNDP Country Director Titon Mitra emphasized the urgency of the Conference by raising that the



deadline of the SDGs is only three years away. "But to be brutally honest, globally, we are not in a good place. We lack data, and a good understanding on the impact we are having on the oceans, and how much we depend on them for our own survival."

"The Philippines, being an archipelagic county, and regarded as a global epicenter of marine biodiversity, oceans are vital to the Philippines... We have no time to lose. Our oceans are in danger, and we have to act now", Mr. Mitra added.

Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim, Director of DENR-BMB, highlighted on the achievements of the Bureau, such as the Philippine Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (PBSAP) and the progress in the Tañon Strait. Additionally, she announced that the Philippines will host The Twelfth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP12).

Commodore Eduardo Gongona, Undersecretary for Fisheries from DA-BFAR, presented on the projects of his Bureau. He showed a short, animated video produced by DA-BFAR, which he then followed by reminding the participants that our daily actions have a direct impact on our coastal areas and marine environment.

Following the messages of the Keynote Speakers, other representatives from UNDP, DENR-BMB, and DA-BFAR, as well as from Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) and National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) delivered presentations concerning the Philippine oceans.

Towards the latter part of the Conference, the participants were divided into groups, and were given a theme to focus on. Each breakout group had a pre-assigned facilitator, who gathered and summarized the commitments of the participating organizations. The commitments were presented in plenary.



Representatives from numerous groups convened in Cebu for the Philippine Ocean Conference



MAB Stakeholders Met for the Sustainable Development of Biosphere Reserves

The 10th Southeast Asia Biosphere Reserves Network (SeaBRnet) Meeting, with the theme “Interaction among UNESCO Programmes toward the Sustainable Development of Biosphere Reserves”, was held on 16-17 May 2017 at Jakarta, Indonesia.

The Meeting concluded that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated sites such as biosphere reserves can be models for sustainable development, provided that they take into consideration the adoption of the Lima Declaration in their local plans in the next 10 years; design local appropriate framework for sustainability; think of ways to raise visibility; build connections; create innovative approaches within local setting; and come up with sustainable financing.

Stakeholders from the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme in Southeast Asia, including MAB National Committees and biosphere reserve managers, with International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and International Geoparks and Geosciences Programme (IGGP) representatives, including the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) participated in the meeting. The SeaBRnet aimed to discuss how to jointly promote biosphere reserves to serve as models for sustainable development, including how the MAB Programme

could collaborate with other UNESCO programs and networks such as the IHP and the UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGG).

Programme Officer from ACB’s Programme Development and Implementation Unit (PDI) Ms. Claudia Binondo presented on ACB’s portfolio on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. She briefly introduced the Centre’s mandate and core projects, and elaborated on the AHP Programme. Ms. Binondo also shared that ACB is strengthening partnerships and mobilizing more resources as a response based from lessons on implementing the AHP Programme.

MAB and BR partners presented their country reports during the first day of the meeting. Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam were among the ASEAN Member States (AMS) who presented their country reports. Most of the projects that were presented were on community-based sustainable livelihood projects, the role of the local governments in implementing the MAB/BR Programme, and how the Lima Action Plan is reflected on each of the country strategies. Reviewing the national action plans of the UNESCO sites for the implementation of the Lima Action Plan in Southeast Asia was also done during the second day of the meeting.



ACB’s Dr. Filiberto Pollisco Jr. served as one of the speakers during the 2017 Subic Ecotourism Festival

Festival aimed to Strengthen Ecotourism held in Subic

As part of the celebration of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, the 2017 Subic Ecotourism Festival was held last 29 May to 1 June at Subic Bay Exhibition and Convention Center, Philippines.

To share best practices on ecotourism from international experts in the field and to create a resolution for ecotourism stakeholders in the Philippines were two of the festival’s objectives. Apart from representatives from ecotourism and sustainable tourism, the festival was also attended by practitioners from various fields such as biodiversity, architecture and media and communication.

Programme Specialist for Conservation and Policy from the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) Dr. Filiberto A. Pollisco Jr. was one of the invited speakers during the event, wherein he discussed Ecotourism Standards in Southeast Asia, such as having environmental management as one of the major criteria.

The Ecotourism Festival was held to improve and strengthen ecotourism in the Philippines. The event was organized by the International School of Sustainable Tourism (ISST) and the Department of Tourism (DOT).



MAB Stakeholders Met for the Sustainable Development of Biosphere Reserves

ACB and UNESCO hold Workshop on Sustainability Science



Experts on Sustainability Science from various organizations attended the Workshop organized by ACB and UNESCO

In order to integrate sustainability science approach in the management of ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) and UNESCO Designated Sites, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) held a workshop entitled “Strengthening Science-Policy-Society Interface for Implementing Sustainability Science for Biodiversity Conservation in ASEAN and Asia Pacific Region” on 19-20 June 2017 at the Crimson Hotel, Filinvest City, Manila, Philippines.

Around 60 participants were present in the workshop, including representatives from UNESCO, the Environment Ministries of the ASEAN Member States (AMS), the Japanese National Commission, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Also present in the event were managers of AHP Parks and of UNESCO Designated Sites, representatives from the Science Harnessed for ASEAN Regional Policy (SHARP) Project, and from the Sustainability Transformation Across the Region (STAR) project.

In his welcome address, ACB Executive Director Atty. Roberto V. Oliva said that the Workshop aims for better understanding of the Sustainability Science approach through the success stories of its application. He added

that this enhanced understanding can help improve the management of protected areas such as the UNESCO Designated Sites and the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs). Stressing the importance of cooperation among stakeholders, Atty. Oliva said, “We should work together because only when working together can sustainability be achieved.”

Apart from sharing the results of projects applying Sustainability Science, the Workshop was also held to reinforce the link among UNESCO Designated Sites and AHPs. In addition, the Workshop aimed to provide recommendations on how Sustainability Science can help achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2-day workshop comprised of activities such as presentations, and group and panel discussions on the outputs of the STAR project and the implementation of Sustainability Science approaches on water-related issues on UNESCO sites. Panelists emphasized the need to involve those who are outside the circle of experts and academicians. Dr. Filiberto Polisco Jr., Programme Specialist for Conservation Policy and Research from ACB provided the summary of the event and reiterated that the conflict between science, policy, and society can be solved if stakeholders work together.



In his closing remarks, Professor Shahbaz Khan thanked the organizers and participants, and emphasized the need to create a “community of practice”. He ended by affirming UNESCO’s partnership with ACB, saying, “We will work with ACB and create a community of practice.”

The Workshop served as the rounding up activity of both the STAR and the SHARP projects. STAR came from a proposal submitted by the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. The project’s main goal is to raise awareness about Sustainability Science, as well as to influence policymakers and researchers to use the emerging field in their work. The project is funded by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust, a pledge from Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) that aid UNESCO in the activities they plan to do in the Asia and the Pacific region. In a similar fashion, SHARP, financially supported by Malaysia Funds-in-Trust, supports the three sustainable science demonstration sites under the project: Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark (Malaysia), Siem Reap (Cambodia), and Davao City (Philippines). The project focuses on using a Sustainability Science approach in improving natural management resource frameworks and science policies.

ASEAN welcomes Bai Tu Long National Park, Viet Nam as 38th ASEAN Heritage Park

Endowed with unique ecosystems of marine and terrestrial mountain lands, limestone mountains, islets, and diverse fauna and flora, the Bai Tu Long National Park (BTLNP) joined the network of ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) – the best of the best protected areas that preserve a complete spectrum of representative ecosystems of the ASEAN Region.

The ceremonial AHP launch, attended by around 500 guests, was graced by the presence of Atty. Roberto V. Oliva, Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB); Ms. Corina Warfield, Deputy Director of Environment and Social Development Office, United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Mr. Hiroki Miyazono, Chief Technical Adviser, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Mr. Nguyen Song Ha, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Viet Nam; Dr. Hoang Thi Than, Deputy Director, Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA); Mr. Harald Leumanns,

Deputy Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Viet Nam, Ms. Le Than Binh, Viet Nam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment; and Heads of BCA. The launch was conducted in City Convention Center, Ha Long, Quang Ninh Province on 19 May 2017.

Bai Tu Long is the sixth AHP in Viet Nam, which include Ba Be National Park, Chu Mom Ray National Park, Hoang Lien Sa Pa National Park, Kon Ka Kinh National Park, and U Min Thuong National Park. Considered as a natural gem, BTLNP is a treasure trove of wonders from ridge to reef. It consists of numerous flora and fauna dotted with karst limestone mountains and islets comparative to its neighboring Ha Long Bay. Tropical evergreen forests in limestone island include broadleaf evergreen forests in soil islands, mangrove forests, seagrass cover, coral reefs, and valleys between limestone mountains of which the presence of “Tung ang” ecosystem, mark its unique features.

Director of Biodiversity Conservation Agency, Dr. Pham Anh Cuong, stated that the biodiversity of Quang Ninh in particular, is at risk because of some economic activities. Challenge in conservation of environment exists, as pollution is still prevalent because of consumptive use of biological resources. With this, he commended the People’s Committee of Quang Ninh in taking action such as the establishment of policies and strategies for environment protection.

Bai Tu Long National Park Director, Nguyen Than Phuong, said that biodiversity and sustainable tourism is the main battle cry of the Peoples’ Committee of Quang Ninh in making resources sustainable by infusing biodiversity conservation in plans and programs.

Atty. Roberto V. Oliva, Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, **continued on page 7...**



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Biodiversity Champions gather in First National Biodiversity Congress

Biodiversity leaders and practitioners gathered to witness and participate in the First National Biodiversity Congress at Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Philippines last 22-24 May 2017.

Held in parallel with the celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity, the Congress was attended by more than 500 individuals involved in biodiversity conservation from different sectors, such as the national and local government, non-governmental organizations, with the theme “Upwelling of Lessons, Sustaining Community Benefits in the Conservation of Landscapes and Seascapes”. The 3-day congress featured plenary and breakout sessions focusing on biodiversity conservation works in the Philippines.

Nine plenary sessions and 30 breakout sessions were held during the event. Sessions discussed technologies and new perspectives of the government and local and international organizations on “biodiversity conservation work in

areas of protected area management, landscapes and seascapes establishment and governance, building and strengthening biodiversity-friendly enterprises, conservation financing, and building an inclusive biodiversity conservation community” based from past years of conservation works in the Philippines.

Speakers included Senators Loren Legarda and Cynthia Villar, Ifugao Representative Teddy Baguilat, Jr., Occidental Mindoro Representative Josephine Y. Ramirez-Sato, National Scientists Dr. Angel C. Alcala and Dr. Gavino Trono, Undersecretary for Climate Change Service and Operational Focal Point for GEF Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, Climate Change Commission, Vice-Chairperson Frances Veronica Victorio, and many more.

Aside from plenary and breakout sessions, the congress also featured an exhibition to promote biodiversity-based products of communities that naturally depend on resources.

The First National Biodiversity Congress was spearheaded by the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and BMB-implemented Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme.



ACB Programme Specialist and Project Coordinator Ms. Corazon de Jesus Jr. presented on the Small Grants Programme during the First National Biodiversity Congress

ASEAN welcomes Bai Tu Long National Park ...continued from page 6

Biodiversity, acknowledged the passionate effort of Viet Nam in biodiversity conservation. He emphasized that Bai Tu Long National Park is now a part of the AHP family where the doors for many opportunities along institutional and

capacity development are now ready for access.

The ACB serves as the Secretariat of the ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme. Protected areas benefit from being declared as an AHP

through capacity building activities for park managers and stakeholders, and technical assistance from the AHP Secretariat.

Being an AHP also increases its visibility as a prime ecotourism destination and model for effective protected area management through the Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) program of ACB.

The AHP Programme provides a regional platform for information sharing among AHPs by way of AHP Committee Meetings and AHP Conferences. Parks declared as AHPs are first in line for available funding through ACB programs and projects.



Viet Nam pioneers ABS decree among ASEAN Member States

Viet Nam became the first ASEAN Member State (AMS) to pass a law in support of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits, through its Decree No. 59/2017/ND-CP.

Through the joint efforts of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and other concerned parties, the Government of Viet Nam approved the law, entitled “Decree on The Management of Access Genetic Resources and the Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization”. The decree was approved last 12 May 2017 as Viet Nam’s stride in integrating the Nagoya Protocol into its law.

The decree had been outlined since 2014 to provide a transparent, legal framework for Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) of genetic resources, and went through public consultation and discussions among cabinet members, ministries, and representatives from different

institutions. In addition to being Viet Nam’s step in achieving a concrete, legal framework for ABS, the Decree was also the next foot forward for Viet Nam’s Law on Biodiversity, which was enacted in 2008.

Ms. Cuc Dang Thu Nguyen, Head of the Genetic Resources and Biosafety Management under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment stated that the decree would make the process of acquiring license to access to genetic resources and its benefit sharing easier and more functional. “We hope that this decree will be operational in the process of acquiring a license.” Ms. Nguyen said. The Decree covers several provisions, including the parties that are involved, the Competent National Authority that would grant the license, the contract between the Provider and the Accessor, and the procedures, all subject to a set of clear and specific requirements in order to gain a license for ABS. The renewal of license might be achieved only if a permission would be submitted months prior to the expiration of the license. However, any violation to

the terms stated in the decree would mean revoking of license.

Moreover, Ms. Nguyen thanked the experts and organizations, including the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, for helping Viet Nam achieve this step in promoting ABS in the country.



Ms. Cuc Dang Thu Nguyen during the Consultation Assessment on ABS in Viet Nam

TEEB Philippines to Create a Policy on Manila Bay Land Reclamation

To achieve sustainable communities and to contextualize a policy on land reclamation in Manila Bay that poses threat to the Las Piñas – Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, the results of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) Philippine Country Study were discussed during the last leg of the TEEB Philippines National Workshop series held last 20-21 June 2017 at the Hotel Jen Manila.

The Study is led by United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), and is implemented by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB)

in collaboration with the Resources, Environment, and Economics Center for Studies, Inc. (REECS).

Focused on enabling decision-makers to recognize, demonstrate, and capture the economic benefits and values of ecosystem services and biodiversity, the Study was conducted by the TEEB Philippines Team and employed various analyses to determine the possible effects should the plan for reclamation of 685 hectares of the Manila Bay push through.

Attendees of the Workshop included representatives from the academe, private sector, local government



Dr. Gem Castillo, Project Leader of TEEB Philippines Team

units, non-government organizations, and international development agencies.

Inputs and implications that were recognized by the stakeholders through focused group discussions were gathered and synthesized. The outcome was presented before the workshop drew to a close.

Youth Leaders gather for Workshop for Biodiversity Conservation

With the goals of building the Asia community of youth involved in biodiversity, and developing the capacity of young individuals in the implementation of their NBSAPs, the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GBYN) conducted the Asia Youth Capacity Building Workshop from 21-28 May 2017 at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Youth leaders from various parts of Asia attended the workshop, which was hosted by the National Parks Board of Singapore (NParks). The training focused on international biodiversity conservation policies, media campaign skills and project management to create or enhance existing programs that directly contribute to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

During the Capacity Building Workshop, innovative approaches for youth learning were employed, such as the Systems Thinking approach.

Upon the invitation from Singapore,

the Director of the Programme Development and Implementation (PDI) Unit of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) Ms. Clarissa Arida participated as an observer in the Workshop, and also served as a panelists in one of the sessions which focused on the role of young people in the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and in biodiversity conservation in the region. Ms. Arida participated in two other segments

of the Workshop, specifically during the guided brainstorming on priority issues in the region, and in the Systems thinking/analysis of priority issues.

The GBYN is an international youth network that provides voice to organizations and individuals that advocate biodiversity conservation at the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.



Youth leaders from different parts of Asia participated in the Asia Youth Capacity Building Workshop held in Singapore

MMFR gears up for Biosentinel

An Orientation Demo on the Biodiversity Sentinel (Biosentinel) Mobile Application was conducted for Mount Makiling Forest Reserve (MMFR) personnel at the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity Headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna on 12 May 2017.

The Biosentinel was developed by Instigators Inc., a start-up software development company, in partnership with Smart Communications, Inc. The solution provides a user-friendly mobile application that local personnel can use to record observations in real-time while out in patrol, and more importantly, allows



for short-term and long-term data analytics of ecological information and threats on customizable levels of granularity.

This protected area (PA) app is especially designed for conservation practitioners, particularly PA patrollers.



ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity's Executive Director Atty. Roberto V. Oliva was recognized as one of the Most Outstanding Alumni of the University of the Philippines Los Baños – College of Forestry and Natural Resources (UPLB-CFNR). Atty. Oliva received the Mancono Award, the highest recognition given to CFNR alumni during the 107th UPLB-CFNR Founding Anniversary and Alumni Homecoming held on 20 April 2017 at the ERDB Auditorium, Forestry Campus, UPLB.



His Excellency Mr. Morten Høglund, Norway Ambassador to ASEAN; Ms. Gry Rabe Henriksen, Deputy Director of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Mr. Odd Kristian Netland, Deputy Head of Mission/First Secretary of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila visited the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

Executive Director for ACB Roberto Oliva led the meeting, wherein the Centre's projects and activities were discussed. The guests were also given an exclusive tour of the new ACB Building, which will be inaugurated on 29 July 2017.

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As part of the Experiential Learning Program, Seconded Officers from Indonesia Sulviah Darmuh of Lorentz National Park and Elisabeth Devi Krismurniati of Way Kambas National Park visit one of the ASEAN Heritage Parks in the Philippines, the Mount Makiling Forest Reserve (MMFR). Park Manager Dr. Nathaniel Bantayan (center) discussed the features of MMFR to the Seconded Officers.

Other sites visited by the Seconded Officers were the Panguil River Eco-Park and the Tagaytay Picnic Grove, to observe good practices in park management and ecotourism activities.



Mr. Jorge de la Caballeria, EU Head of Unit of DEVCO for Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Enrico Strampelli, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to the Philippines, and Mr. Xavier Canton-Lamousse, Project Manager, EU Delegation to the Philippines visited the ACB Headquarters last 18 May 2017. Programs and Initiatives of the Centre were presented to the guests, which was followed by a tour of the University of the Philippines Los Baños.



The Ocean Festival 2017 was held on 28 May in Bonifacio Global City, Philippines. Organized by DENR-BMB with DA-BFAR and PaNaGat Network, and composed of activities such as musical performances and cooking demos, the Festival showcased the practices of organizations that prevent further destruction of the marine environment. ACB, as one of the invited organizations, featured artworks which are part of the "A SEA Story" exhibit.



In celebration of the World Environment Day and the Philippine Environment Month, the Environment Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-EMB), the University of the Philippines (UP), and the Office of Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte collaborated for "A Fair with Nature". With the theme "Connecting People with Nature", the event was held on 23 June 2017 at the UP Diliman Sunken Garden, Quezon City. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity was one of the exhibitors at the event, along with numerous government agencies and non-government organizations.

Philippines to host award ceremony of inaugural ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes

The Government of the Philippines will host the award ceremony of the inaugural ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes, a program designed to recognize outstanding individuals from the ASEAN region who have contributed significantly to biodiversity conservation and advocacy efforts in their respective countries.

Ten heroes from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam will be honored at the award ceremony to be held on 07 August 2017 at the New World Manila Bay Hotel. Apart from receiving their awards, the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes will share their experiences on biodiversity conservation in a forum to be attended by representatives from the government, business, youth, and conservation sectors, as well as the diplomatic community.

"I am proud that in this year of Philippine chairmanship of ASEAN, biodiversity occupies an important place in the collective ASEAN agenda. By recognizing the important contributions of 10 individuals from ASEAN Member States in promoting biodiversity conservation, the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Award creates fertile ground where inspiration can take root and prod other individuals to also act as heroes and initiate wider public involvement within the ASEAN community," said Ambassador Elizabeth P. Buensuceso, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR).

She added, "It is fitting that this recognition comes at a time when ASEAN itself is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. This landmark year not only calls for us to look back at the gains of the last half-century, but also forces us to examine the course of our present actions and their consequences on future generations. In the same spirit of introspective



"...the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Award creates fertile ground where inspiration can take root and prod other individuals to also act as heroes and initiate wider public involvement within the ASEAN community"

Ambassador Elizabeth P. Buensuceso

reflection, the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Award serves as a reminder for each of us to ask ourselves, what can I do to serve the common good? How can I help? And this is perhaps the most striking aspect of the Awards, in that it celebrates the power that every individual wields to effect real and positive change in the lives of countless others, both within and beyond the ASEAN region."

One of the commemorative activities for the Golden Anniversary of ASEAN, the Heroes project is supported by the ASEAN Secretariat; the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs; the European Union through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP) project; and HARI Foundation, Inc. (HFI), the corporate social responsibility arm of Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI). The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) serves as awards secretariat.

ACB Executive Director Roberto V. Oliva explained that in selecting the ASEAN

Biodiversity Heroes, "the nominating agencies considered the relevance of the nominees' contributions to biodiversity conservation, the impact of these contributions to biodiversity conservation efforts in their respective countries and the region, the replicability of their actions, and the recognition they received in communities where they belong."

Each ASEAN Biodiversity Hero shall receive a cash prize worth USD 5,000, a special heroes medal, a trophy, and a certificate. They will also receive the Hyundai Icon for Biodiversity Award from HFI.

The heroes from the 10 ASEAN Member States will be known as the faces of biodiversity conservation in the ASEAN region. They will be invited to speak in forums, workshops, press conferences, and other relevant events to share their experiences in conserving biodiversity with the aim of inspiring others to do the same.