



ACB welcomes new CBD Executive Secretary

Warmly welcomed by children clad in ASEAN costumes, Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, the newly appointed Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) visited the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines on 20 October 2017.

With extensive knowledge and experience in global policy making and international development focusing on green economy, environmental sustainability, and environmental diplomacy, among others, Dr. Palmer served Romania's Minister for Environment, Waters and Forests. She also served as the former Head of the Climate Change, Environment and Natural Resources Unit within the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO-EuropeAID) and Vice-President of the United Nations Environmental Assembly's Bureau (UNEA 1).

"We, at ACB, are deeply honored to welcome you here in the Philippines. We are glad to share with you all our efforts, together with the ASEAN Member States, in combatting biodiversity loss in the ASEAN region," said Roberto V. Oliva, ACB Executive Director. "We highly

value our cooperation and we will continue to do our best in working hand in hand with the AMS in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets," he added.

"Your Centre has provided tremendous and valuable support to the implementation of the Convention and its protocols in the region, and we benefit greatly from this collaboration and your support to AMS on the delivery of the biodiversity agenda in this region," said Dr. Palmer in her opening remarks. "You have done admirable work to support National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan development and implementation, training on Global Taxonomy Initiative, Access and Benefit Sharing, Communication, Education, and Public Awareness, Clearing-House Mechanism, monitoring and indicators, organizing major conferences such as ASEAN Biodiversity Conference and ASEAN Heritage Parks Conference, and organizing Champions of Biodiversity awards and Zooming in on Biodiversity Photo Contests, to name a few," she added.

The following day, Dr. Palmer, accompanied by Mr. Robert Höft, Acting Senior Programme Officer, Scientific

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Assessment of the SCBD, Executive Director Oliva, and several officers and staff from ACB, visited the Taal Volcano Protected Landscape (TVPL), a Key Biodiversity Area in the province of Batangas. Here, Dr. Palmer met with officials of the protected area, representatives from industries surrounding the TVPL, and leaders of organized groups of fisherfolk from the area, and discussed about their livelihood and issues concerning biodiversity. Atty. Maria Paz Luna, Undersecretary for Manila Bay Concerns and Related Water Concerns of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was also present in the meeting and aided in addressing the concerns raised by the residents.

In 2008, ACB and SCBD signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on general cooperation and on the implementation of a joint work

program consistent with their respective annual work plans in the areas of biodiversity, research, capacity building and training, public education and awareness, exchange of information, policy development and coordination, and technical and scientific cooperation. In 2016, ACB and SCBD renewed their partnership during the Second ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity in Bangkok, Thailand to strengthen both parties' efforts in promoting the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The CBD, which entered into force in December 1993, is an international legally-binding treaty with three main objectives: (1) conservation of biodiversity; (2) sustainable use of biodiversity; and (3) fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. Its Secretariat is based in Montreal, Canada.



ACB joins Parties to the CBD for SBSTTA 21

Along with representatives from the numerous parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), officials from the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) attended the 21st Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) on 11 to 14 December 2017.

Held in Palais des Congrès de Montréal, Canada, the Meeting tackled topics such as scenarios for the 2050 vision for biodiversity

and the links between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); guidance for achieving a more sustainable bushmeat sector; and biodiversity mainstreaming in the energy, mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing industry, and in the health sector, among others. Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim of the Philippines served as the Chair of the Meeting.

One of the highlights of the Meeting was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the CBD and Future Earth, an international



ACB, UN Environment strengthen partnership



ACB Executive Director Roberto Oliva (left) and UN Environment Executive Director Eric Solheim (right) sign the ACB-UN Environment Letter of Intent *Source: ADEC Innovations*

To further strengthen collaboration to achieve their common objectives in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem management, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) signed a Letter of Intent on 5 December 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The ceremonial signing was graced by the presence of Roberto V. Oliva, ACB Executive Director, and Mr. Eric Solheim, UN Environment Executive Director.

The ACB and UN Environment affirmed their intention to operationalize the ASEAN-UN Action Plan on Environment and Climate Change 2016-2020, particularly the Strategic

Priority 1 on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity. The specific areas of collaboration include the following: joint support to ASEAN Member States (AMS) in implementing biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); joint support to AMS in marine and coastal planning and management towards the implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan; joint support to AMS in integrated management of land and seascapes; and joint support to AMS in improving knowledge and decision support systems to facilitate the adoption of Green Growth practices and Natural Capital investments in decisions and operations of key economic sectors the application of ecosystem economic tools and methodologies.

“ACB and UN Environment have been working together in providing biodiversity and ecosystem-related technical and capacity building support to AMS under the ASEAN-UN Cooperation Framework,” said ACB Executive Director Oliva. “We at ACB are also pleased to further enhance our existing cooperation with other attached agencies of UN Environment such as the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre through this partnership,” he added.

The UN Environment is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

Established in 2005, the ACB is an intergovernmental organization that facilitates cooperation and coordination among the AMS and with regional and international organizations on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of such natural treasures. It is the sole ASEAN centre being hosted by the Philippines.



organization that uses research and innovation to advance global sustainability. This symbolizes a significant and mutual commitment by both groups to work towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs.

A total of 48 Side Events were conducted during the SBSTTA 21, some of which were: (1) Mainstreaming biodiversity in the manufacturing and processing sectors, (2) How do we conserve and sustainably use wildlife to meet conservation and community needs, and (3) Mainstreaming

Biodiversity and Health under Global Environmental Change: from Science to Implementation.

The SBSTTA is a scientific advisory body, wherein all Parties to the CBD can participate in. Main tasks of the Body include regular reporting to the Conference of the Parties (COP) concerning the implementation of the Convention; providing assessments of the status of biodiversity; providing assessments of the types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention; and responding to questions that the COP may raise to the body.

ACB hosts forum for conservation of ASEAN migratory species

To emphasize on how individuals and organizations alike can aid in conserving the various migratory species in the ASEAN region, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) hosted a side event during the Twelfth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP12).

Held on 25 October 2017 in the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) in Pasay City, the side event featured presentations from the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), the German Federal Ministry for the Environment,

Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, and the ACB.

Tomoko Ichikawa, Communication Officer of EAAFP, in her presentation entitled ‘Conserving Migratory Waterbirds and their habitats in the ASEAN Region,’ highlighted that the ASEAN region is located at the heart of the Flyway, and stressed the need for a new initiative and cooperation among the countries within the region in the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats. Ms. Ichikawa also announced that they are working on a new project, called the South East Asia Network, that aims to improve knowledge and

monitoring on waterbirds and to enhance capacity of site managers and stakeholders, among others.

“The quantity of plastic entering the ocean is alarming,” said Dr. Christiane Paulus of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. To support this, she presented statistics that emerged from previous case studies, as well as the negative impacts of marine litter, during her presentation entitled ‘Avoidance of marine plastic debris to prevent negative impacts on migratory marine species and other

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Resource generation campaigns for ASEAN biodiversity launched

To generate funds for biodiversity conservation activities and projects in the ASEAN Region, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) launched two resource generation strategies – One Dollar for ASEAN Biodiversity and the ACB Benefactors’ Wall. The launch was held during the ACB Side Event on the Twelfth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP12) on 25 October 2017 at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City, Manila.

One Dollar for ASEAN Biodiversity is a fundraising campaign which will be implemented through a crowdfunding strategy, using mainly an online portal or website. This will target the stakeholders of the ASEAN Member States, the Centre’s strategic and dialogue partners, and the private sector. The modes of donations may be via debit, credit, or PayPal, and other similar services.

“For some, it may just be a dollar, but if every ASEAN citizen will give a dollar for biodiversity, then we can raise a significant amount for capacity building activities, species conservation projects, among other initiatives geared towards biodiversity conservation. One little act of sharing can definitely make a

big difference,” said ACB Executive Director Roberto Oliva.

The ACB Benefactors’ Wall is a direct appeal campaign targeting a captive market to pledge donations for conservation activities, with their names immortalized in the wall of the new ACB headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna. This will serve as a lifetime recognition for donors on their contribution to ASEAN biodiversity.

“One Dollar for ASEAN Biodiversity and the ACB Benefactors’ Wall were designed not just to generate funds – through these mechanisms, the Centre aims to involve ASEAN citizens and the private sector to become co-champions of biodiversity

conservation by raising awareness on the values of biodiversity and by engaging them in the Centre’s activities and projects,” added Executive Director Oliva.

All proceeds from the campaigns will go to the ASEAN Biodiversity Fund (ABF), a form of endowment fund which can only be used for the following related purposes: to provide funding for regional or ASEAN-wide biodiversity programs of ASEAN; to leverage financial resources and collaboration actions for regional cooperation programs and projects undertaken by ASEAN with partners; and to sustain and enhance the operations of the Centre in fulfilling its mandate.



ACB Executive Director Roberto V. Oliva presents the two resource generation strategies of the Centre – One Dollar for ASEAN Biodiversity and ACB Benefactors’ Wall.

ASEAN conservation officers undergo training on taxonomy of high elevation vascular plants

If awareness and knowledge are the backbone of informed and efficient action, then taxonomy is the pillar of successful biodiversity conservation. Insufficient knowledge of species, lack of trained human resources, and inadequate capacities in taxonomy have been stressed as among the obstacles to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. These are also identified as challenges to the implementation of the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly in the ASEAN region.

Recognizing the importance of taxonomy to biodiversity conservation, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) partnered with the Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden (QSBG), for an intensive Internship-Training on the Taxonomy of High Elevation Vascular Plants in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

With funding support from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), East and Southeast Asian Biodiversity Information Initiative (ESABII), and the Ministry of Environment-Japan, the Internship-Training was held on 1 to 10 October 2017. The training program included lectures and discussions on sample collection, processing, and management of specimens, and hands-on experience through field and laboratory exercises in collection, identification, and development of a field guide book.

Discussions with taxonomy experts from ASEAN and Japan were complemented with research activities at QSBG and Doi Inthanon National Park. Doi Inthanon is the highest peak in Thailand at 2,565 meters, and is ideal for studying high elevation vascular plants. Participants documented specimens of epiphytes and climbers, trees, small trees and shrubs, orchids, monocot herbs, dicot herbs, and ferns from various trails in the Park.

The photographed specimens were identified and studied at QSBG and the results were applied into the production of the Field Guide to the Vascular Plants along Nature Trails on

the Summit of Doi Inthanon National Park. The field guide is the third in a series, following the conduct of trainings and development of guide

books on ferns and mosses at QSBG, Thailand, and plants along the Deer Cave Trail in Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak, Malaysia.



Workshop participants study the specimens gathered during the field work at Doi Inthanon National Park.

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marine life'. However, she highlighted that different regions are addressing this issue by implementing various international policies.

Roberto Oliva, Executive Director of ACB, focused on the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP) Programme, which is "a flagship programme of the ASEAN that manages a regional network of representative protected areas created to generate greater collaboration among ASEAN Member

States in preserving their shared natural heritage." With currently 40 declared AHPs, Executive Director Oliva underscored the importance of these parks as they serve as home to a number of migratory species, some of which are already endangered.

The side event was also venue for ACB's launch of its two new resource generation strategies – One Dollar for ASEAN Biodiversity and the ACB Benefactors' Wall.



EAAFP Communication Officer Ms. Tomoko Ichikawa presents on Migratory Waterbirds, their habitats, and how to conserve them.



On 13 to 17 November 2017, the 25th South East Asian Zoos Association (SEAZA) Conference was held in New World Manila Bay Hotel, Philippines.

With the theme “Celebrating Life! Southeast Asian Zoos & Aquariums Bringing Nature Closer to People and People Closer to Nature”, the Conference had ACB as one of the co-sponsors.

Dr. Filiberto A. Pollisco Jr., Programme Specialist for Conservation Policy & Research from ACB, served as one of the Keynote Speakers. In his presentation, he showcased the programs and projects of ACB to representatives of zoos and aquariums from 36 countries.



The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity conducted a biodiversity forum attended by 1,200 students from state universities and colleges in Cagayan Valley on 6 December 2017 at Isabela State University.

The Centre also promoted the EU-ASEAN Youth Video Competition and the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes.

The forum served as a venue to increase awareness of the general public on the importance of biodiversity and its conservation as contribution to the attainment of Aichi Biodiversity Target 1.

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Organized by the Ocean Teacher Global Academy (OTGA), the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) held the OceanTeacher Global Academy Training Course: OBIS Nodes Train the Trainers on 27 November to 1 December 2017 in Oostende, Belgium.

The event, whose participants were OBIS node managers and data science managers, aimed to familiarize the participants with the metadata standards in OBIS and how to publish this and the actual data through Integrated Publishing Toolkit (IPT). Another objective of the training was to capacitate the managers with deeper understanding in the application of the Darwin core terms, and how to standardize the data according to specific formats, such as according to geographic coordinates.

Mr. Christian Elloran, Database Specialist from the Biodiversity Information Management (BIM) Unit of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), was one of those invited to participate in the training.



On 2 - 8 December 2017 in Cavite, Philippines, experts from The Forest Herbarium and Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden of Thailand, University of the Philippines Los Baños, Central Mindanao University, and the National Museum of the Philippines worked together to complete the "Field Guide to the Vascular Plants Along Nature Trails on the Summit of Doi Inthanon National Park."

The publication is a major output of the Development of the GTI Regional Action Plan for South East Asia 2016–2020 and Capacity Development on the Taxonomy of High Elevation Vascular Plants project supported by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund, East and Southeast Asian Biodiversity Information Initiative, and Ministry of Environment-Japan.

To compare species in the Philippines and Thailand, the taxonomy experts visited the Mount Makiling Forest Reserve, one of eight ASEAN Heritage Parks in the Philippines and among 40 in the ASEAN.



In cooperation with the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA), the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), conducted a writing workshop entitled Policy Research and Advocacy Training on 13 – 14 December 2017.

Held in Davao City, Philippines, the workshop gathered participants from at least 29 universities in Mindanao to help them popularize scientific researches through policy briefs.

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity participated in the 22nd International Conference of the Society for Human Ecology (SHE) held in the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

The Conference, held on 28 November – 1 December 2017, also served as a milestone as this was the first time that this international conference was held in the ASEAN region. It brought together global and regional experts to discuss health, aging, and demographic change; sustainable cities and landscapes; food and water systems; and implications of communities in transition for rural resilience, biodiversity and tourism.



ASEAN unites in biodiversity conservation with Indonesia's ratification of ACB

In support of the ASEAN's motto, "One Vision, One Identity, One Community", Indonesia completed the ratification of the Agreement on the Establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) by the 10 ASEAN Member States (AMS).

On 17 November 2017, Indonesia's Instrument of Ratification was signed by Foreign Minister of the Republic of Indonesia Retno L.P. Marsudi, and the document was deposited on 18 December of the same year to the ASEAN Secretariat.

"I would like to congratulate and express my appreciation to all ASEAN Member States for the complete ratification of the Agreement by the 10 AMS which confirms ASEAN's commitment to ensuring the sustainability of ACB in championing biodiversity conservation in the region and enhances its global standing as a

center of excellence for biodiversity conservation.", said H.E. Vongthep Arthakaivavatee, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community in his letter addressed to the Chairperson and Members of the Governing Board of ACB.

The ACB was established in 2005, upon the agreement of the Environmental Ministers of ASEAN. In the following years, nine of the 10 AMS ratified the Establishment Agreement: Brunei Darussalam (19 May 2008), Cambodia (26 February 2016), Lao PDR (2 October 2008), Malaysia (29 April 2013), Myanmar (8 July 2009), Philippines (14 July 2006), Singapore (28 October 2008), Thailand (19 February 2013), and Viet Nam (31 October 2006).

Roberto V. Oliva, Executive Director of ACB, welcomed the development

with gratitude and high hopes. He said, "The complete ratification of the 10 AMS is a very much anticipated event for 2017, especially that we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN. This is a milestone worthy to commemorate in the years to come. Now, that we have 10 out of 10 ratification, expect ACB to be on full sails along its delivery of its mandates along biodiversity conservation in the region."

The Instrument of Ratification is a binding document that indicates a state's consent to be bound to a treaty if the parties intended to show their consent by such an act, in this context, the establishment of ACB. The document speaks of the full support of Indonesia on the implementation of mandates of ACB as a biodiversity conservation organization in the ASEAN.

ASEAN and other EAS Ambassadors in Jakarta plant mangroves to celebrate ASEAN's Golden Anniversary

Jointly organized by the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to ASEAN and the ASEAN Secretariat, Ambassadors of the 18 East Asia Summit (EAS) participating countries in Jakarta, collectively referred to as the East Asia Summit Ambassadors' Meeting in Jakarta (EAMJ), planted mangrove seedlings at Taman Wisata Alam Angke Kapuk in North Jakarta, Indonesia.

The event was led by H.E. Elizabeth Buensuceso, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to ASEAN, and Chair of the EAMJ. Participants were representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia, Nature Conservation Agency of Jakarta and volunteers from the ASEAN Youth Organization.

Ambassador Buensuceso stressed the importance of the EAS as a Leaders-led, ASEAN-centered forum which addresses the major challenges, including environmental degradation, that confront the region. In addition,

the EAMJ is tasked to ensure that the Leaders' statements are translated into action, and environmental awareness through the mangrove planting event is one such on-ground example.

ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General for Socio-Cultural Community Vongthep Arthakaivavatee echoed that ASEAN is home to one-third of the world's mangrove forests and the event is expected to raise awareness of the people in the region on the importance of mangrove ecosystems.

The EAS is a regional leaders' forum for dialogue and cooperation on broad strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern with the aim of promoting peace, stability, and economic prosperity in East Asia. The 18 EAS participating countries are the 10 ASEAN Member States, Australia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America.



Officials from EAS planted mangrove seedlings to reiterate their commitment to biodiversity conservation Source: ASEAN Secretariat