



(L-R) H.E. Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community; Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim, Executive Director, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity; Atty. Jonas Leones, Undersecretary for Policy Planning, and International Affairs of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Chair of the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment, Philippines; Mr. Sophea Chhin, ASEAN Biodiversity Hero-Cambodia; Mr. Xavier Canton-Lamousse, Project Manager, EU Delegation to the Philippines; Dr. Angel Alcalá, ASEAN Biodiversity Hero-Philippines; Josuard Gonzales, President, Southeast Asian Leaders Organization; Mr. Alex Waisimon, ASEAN Biodiversity Hero-Indonesia; For. Ricardo Calderon, Assistant Secretary of the Staff Bureaus of DENR; and Ms. Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez, OIC Director of DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau

Biodiversity Heroes of Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines return to Manila

As part of its continuous effort to promote biodiversity conservation by having first-hand accounts of people who fight for the environment, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) held the second leg of the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Regional Forum at the Dusit Thani Manila in Makati City, Philippines on 4 and 5 September 2018.

With support from the European Union (EU) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB), the forum featured the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes of Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines and highlighted the noble acts of each of the heroes that contributed to the improvement of biodiversity in their respective countries.

“Some fragments of the population do not seem to be aware yet of the importance of biodiversity, let alone to take extra efforts in conserving it. If there is no urgent action to tackle this, the lack of awareness will continue to

be a stumbling block to biodiversity conservation efforts in the region,” said His Excellency Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee, Deputy Secretary-General of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. “It is, therefore, critical for all of us to work together to make biodiversity conservation much more well-understood and well-attended, especially by the younger generation—our future decision makers,” he added.

His Excellency Arthakaivalvatee also shared highlights of the conceptualization and realization of the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes. “Today’s event is particularly special to me as it brings me back to the discussion of its inception when I floated the idea of having an ASEAN-wide biodiversity heroes program about two years ago. Today, I am very proud to witness the fruits of the labor by the ACB and all ASEAN Member States in making the initiative a great success.”

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The ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes from Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines are joined by representatives of various sectors invited to participate at the Second Leg of the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Regional Forum

Representing the EU Delegation to the Philippines was Mr. Xavier Canton-Lamousse, Project Manager of the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN or the BCAMP Project of the EU and ACB. “We need a global vision and political will at the highest level to halt biodiversity loss, and I have no doubt that the ASEAN-EU partnership can reinforce that vision towards a common objective and interest,” he stressed.

During the opening program, ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim addressed the guests representing the youth, academe, media, national agencies, and non-government organizations. “We have been conducting meetings, workshops, conferences, and disseminating communication materials promoting conservation for the longest time—but biodiversity needs FACES.”

She added, “Now, we are fortunate that we already have 10 ‘modern-day heroes’ who are helping us mainstream biodiversity in their own spheres of influence. These heroes are ordinary citizens of ASEAN; each has inspiring stories to tell on how they continue combatting biodiversity loss.”

Heroes Up Close

A highlight of the program was the talk-show segment, wherein the Heroes were individually interviewed by Ms. Antoinette Taus.

Ms. Taus, who is a known actress and singer in the Philippines and later became the founder of the non-profit organization known as Communities Organized for Resource

Allocation (CORA), asked each of the Heroes several questions, and also encouraged the student participants to ask their own questions to the Heroes.

“It is education and awareness. Sometimes, they don’t know what biodiversity means. Why I need to conserve and protect the species? The best thing to do is bring the information and the beauty of wildlife to the city,” said Mr. Sophea Chhin when asked what is his conservation advocacy.

The youngest among all the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes, Mr. Sophea Chhin recalled that his interest in biodiversity conservation began when, as a young boy, he witnessed his villagers in his community in Cambodia hunting and killing birds for food. His interest was furthered as he decided to pursue studies related to the environment, taking up Biology and later on, Management Information System. He is currently a PhD candidate of Ecological Conservation.

Among his significant contributions to wildlife research and education in Cambodia include founding the Birds of Cambodia Education and Conservation, a program that promotes the photography of birds and other wildlife in protected areas, and allows the works of various enthusiasts to be featured in scientific books that will be distributed to libraries in Cambodia.

The ASEAN Biodiversity Hero from Indonesia, Mr. Alex Waisimon, had extensive work experience from different areas of the world but decided to return to his home in

Papua, Indonesia to find ways on how he can help protect the forests while providing for the economic needs of the community. He developed a sustainable ecotourism program that features the birds of paradise. While providing guided tours, he conversed with the guests on importance of the birds of paradise and other wildlife, as well as the importance of biodiversity and the role that people have in its conservation. “Home is home. Some call me crazy because despite having a career in Europe, I still chose to go back to the forests. There, we have no electricity, life is tough. So I knew I have to help my community; then I decided to start the ecotourism program,” Mr. Waisimon shared.

Previously a chef and a tour guide, Mr. Waisimon became a community leader who is now going to other areas to share his conservation stories. He spoke at international events such as the Marrakech Climate Change Conference 2016 and the International Conference on Biodiversity, Ecotourism, and Creative Economy 2016.

“Biodiversity conservation is not easy. When I started, I had no income. I started from zero, to hero,” Mr. Waisimon shared with the audience. “Many people are scared to start. But you have to start now. Trust and believe that you can,” he concluded.

A multi-awarded marine biologist and educator, Dr. Angel Alcala, the ASEAN Biodiversity Hero from the Philippines, is a National Scientist who was given the prestigious title in 2014. Dr. Alcala founded the Silliman



ABH in Focus. Ms. Antoinette Taus hosted the talk show with the three ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes. Above, she discusses with Mr. Alex Waisimon, ABH from Indonesia on how he developed sustainable ecotourism projects in Papua Province and how he engaged the participation of local communities to join him in his advocacy.

Marine Laboratory, now known as the Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences. He also established the Philippines' first no-take marine reserve, the Sumilon Marine Reserve, as well as the Apo Marine Reserve.

When asked during the interview on what are the changes he would like to see with respect to biodiversity, Dr. Alcala responded, "The change that I would like to have in this country is to change the attitudes of people on biodiversity. And we can change this through education. Another thing that I would like to emphasize is that the conservation of biodiversity must be done with the conservation of the environment. Without conserving their natural habitat, conserving life forms will be put in vain."

The second day of the forum was conducted in the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) on 5 September 2018. Acting Assistant Director, Mr. Angel P. Bautista of the NMNH welcomed the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes, AMS representatives, ACB, BMB, and senior high school students from Manuel G. Araullo High School. Mr. Waisimon and Dr. Alcala shared with the students, their stories of how and why they chose to do something significant for the environment. They also encouraged the students to do actions locally to spark interest on



A moment with a Hero. Mr. Alex Waisimon (fifth from left) with the students from Manuel G. Araullo High School during the guided tour in the National Museum of Natural History. The ABH Forum aims to create venues for the youth to learn and be inspired from the stories of the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes. It is hoped that such inspiration will serve as a foundation for personal actions to conserve biodiversity.

conservation advocacy. After the meet and greet activity, the students toured the museum's Galleries 9 and 10 – rich showcases of the coastal and marine realm with NMNH museum guides.

ASEAN's exemplary citizens for biodiversity conservation identified

Recognized during the 50th Anniversary of the ASEAN on 8 August 2017 in Manila, Philippines, the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes are 10 outstanding individuals who were chosen for their notable actions in biodiversity conservation. The ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes 2017 are the following: (1) Eyad Samhan of Brunei Darussalam; (2) Sophea Chhin of Cambodia; (3) Alex Waisimon of Indonesia; (4) Nitsavanh Louangkhot Pravongviengkham of Lao PDR; (5) Prof. Zakri Abdul Hamid of Malaysia; (6) Dr. Maung Maung Kyi of Myanmar; (7) Dr. Angel C. Alcala of the

Philippines; (8) Prof. Leo Tan Wee Hin of Singapore; (9) Dr. Nonn Panitvong of Thailand; and (10) Prof. Dr. Dang Huy Huynh of Viet Nam.

The first leg of the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Regional Forum was held on 26 and 27 March 2018, at Viet Nam's Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment (HUNRE). At that event, the spotlight was on the Heroes from Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Eyed to be held in mid-2019, the third and final leg of the Regional Forum will invite the Heroes from Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and Singapore to come together and share their own biodiversity conservation activities to encourage the audience to also join in protecting ASEAN's rich biodiversity.

ACB and PEMSEA tie up for conservation and sustainable management of key coastal and marine ecosystems

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) signed a Letter of Cooperation (LoC) that strengthens collaboration between the two towards conservation and sustainable management of key coastal and marine ecosystems in the East Asian Seas through the implementation of Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia, or SDS-SEA and the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together (referred to as ASEAN 2025).

The two parties signed the LoC during the second leg of the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Regional Forum

held on 4 September 2018 at Dusit Thani Hotel, Makati City, Philippines. The activity was organized by ACB, with support from the European Union and in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB). It aimed to increase the public's awareness on the values and conservation of biodiversity through sharing of stories of the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes from Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim welcomed this development with PEMSEA and mentioned that the two have been



Executive Director of ACB Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim (left, seated) and Ms. Aimee Gonzales, PEMSEA Executive Director (right, seated) sign the Letter of Cooperation between the two organizations during the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Forum in Manila, Philippines.

partners for a decade. She emphasized the importance of marine and coastal biodiversity and said that in the ASEAN region alone, some 170,000 kilometers of coasts and oceans provide various goods and services essential to the well-being of people, including habitats'

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Artist with special needs, communicates biodiversity through art

A multi-talented artist who expresses appreciation to biodiversity and nature through amazing artworks—indeed, this girl is special.

Samantha Kaspar, a 21-year-old Fil-Swiss artist, was diagnosed with autism when she was just three years old. Instead of being saddened with the diagnosis, restaurateurs Martin and Mitzi Kaspar, Samantha’s parents, gave her the much needed understanding and support, and helped her discover her talents and skills.

True enough, they discovered that Sam’s talents are immense. She can sing, dance, and play the violin really well. “What’s puzzling is that she barely talks to anyone. She speaks very few words but when she sings, she utters every line clearly and beautifully,” said Mitzi Kaspar, Sam’s mother. Aside from having all these talents, Sam is also good in swimming and ice skating.

Different, but special

Eventually, the world started to notice Sam and her exceptional talent. In 2017, the Center for Possibilities Foundation helped Sam put up her own art exhibit which featured 40 of her artworks which include hand painted fashion accessories and paintings in canvas. In the same year, Sam, along with seven more Filipino artists with autism were chosen to represent the Philippines in the Fashion Arts Autism Benefit (FAAB) event in New York. Their artworks in *piña* cloth were transformed into

clothing by well-known fashion designers.

In celebration of the World Autism Awareness Month, Sam was also invited to grace a two-day interactive art workshop from 5 to 6 April 2017 organized by the Autism Hearts Foundation in cooperation with the Philippine Consulate General at the Kalayaan Annex of the Philippine Center in New York.

Sam was also one of the artists with special needs selected by Banana Peel and Unilab Foundation to design a new line of slippers to be sold in the market.

Understanding autism

A person with autism finds it difficult to communicate and interact with others. Autism is characterized by struggles in communication, speech delays, and repetitive behaviors. Early signs of autism in children include: having little or no eye contact; having repetitive language or mannerisms; speech delay; and lack of interaction with other people.

“Some individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may display behavioral dyscontrol - having disturbances in mood (emotional) and thinking (mental) that may impair



functioning in significant areas of life,” said Dr. Alexandra Jean Palis, a psychiatric expert.

According to the World Health Organization, about 1 out of 160 children in the world has autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In most cases, the symptoms of autism can be seen in the first five years of life. People diagnosed with autism often suffer from other conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety disorder, and depression.



Some of Sam’s paintings (acrylic paint on canvas) of their family trips



“Persons like Samantha should not be considered as people with disability because a lot of them are even more capable of doing amazing things than most of us,” said Kenneth Sioson, Sam’s art coach. Kenneth is a Fine Arts graduate from the University of the Philippines Diliman. “What is rewarding about this job is having the opportunity to share to others that people with autism should not be disregarded; they must be given special care and must be embraced by the society,” he added.

Health and biodiversity

Sam and her family love to travel. They enjoy nature walks. After every trip, Sam would immediately paint what she saw in the place they visited. It is as if she would like to translate the visual images in her mind into paintings so that she will never forget how the place looks like. “She will make sure that she finishes the painting once we get back home. She never sleeps until the piece is done,” said Mitzi.

“Sam loves to paint sceneries. When she likes a place, she would paint it to tell us that she wants to go back there,” she added. Many of Sam’s paintings also depict nature and biodiversity.

“A healthy environment is nurturing to our mental health. It is not only within our households; it also includes our external surroundings. Nature is part of this external environment,” said Dr. Palis. “Physically, our bodies are supported by clean air, produce that we make, up to the food we eat and this comes from our environment. A healthy body begets a healthy mind. Exposure to trees, plants, grassy fields

to name a few; experiencing all of this first hand reduces stress. In mindfulness techniques, we are encouraged to connect with the stillness of nature. It makes us feel relaxed, a restorative process which we unconsciously avail when we are out and enjoying our unique surroundings,” she added.

“Biodiversity, as a subject for art, I believe, is truly inspiring and healing, and in this case, both for the artist and the beholder,” said the Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim.

Making a statement through fashion

Sam’s latest project is a Philippine

national costume called “baro” with paintings of some of the country’s endemic species. This was worn by the ACB Executive Director Lim in the State of the Nation Address of the President of the Philippines, His Excellency Rodrigo Duterte, on 23 July 2018. The material is *piña* cloth, designed with silk paint.

“I admire the works of Samantha that depict nature and biodiversity”, said Dr. Lim. “This piece of clothing embodies a two-fold advocacy; to raise autism awareness and to promote biodiversity conservation. Causes that are seemingly unrelated at first, but with Samantha’s unbelievable talent, she can make the two mutually reinforcing,” she added.



The national costume that Sam designed for ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim has illustrations of the Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*), Red Vented Cockatoo (*Cacatua haematuropygia*), Turquoise Jade Vine (*Strongylodon macrobotrys*), and Waling-waling orchid (*Vanda sanderiana*)

ASEAN, India see importance of protected areas in addressing sustainable development goals



Most, if not all of the ASEAN Member States (AMS) have taken the necessary actions towards the achievement of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 on the conservation of protected areas, according to the Second Edition of the ASEAN Biodiversity Outlook (ABO 2) of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 states that, “By 2020, at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically-representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.” The Aichi Biodiversity Targets is a set of 20 measurable and time-bound global targets under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020.

“We still have over 24 months until 2020. There is still time to complete our tasks and do some more. Since 2015, there have been efforts for Contracting Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, globally, towards enhancing efforts for the fulfillment of Target 11,” ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim shared in her opening speech during the “Regional Workshop on the Implementation of Aichi Target 11 in the ASEAN Region.”

The said workshop was held from 30 to 31 July 2018 in Manila, Philippines to gather updates on the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and to identify ways on how the AMS, non-government organizations (NGOs), and other relevant groups in the ASEAN region can work together to achieve this target. The ACB, with support from the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) of India and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), organized the workshop.

The event was designed to gather information from the AMS on the following: (1) their activities to expand the coverage of their terrestrial and marine protected areas from 2018 to 2020; (2) the connectivity and integration of these protected areas into wider landscapes and seascapes; and (3) the measures to determine and ensure management effectiveness of these areas.

“Here in Southeast Asia, we have been doing our part. According to our ABO 2, out of ASEAN’s total land area in square kilometers of 4,586,015, terrestrial protected area is 595,061 square kilometers or 13 percent; so just four percent shy of the 17 percent Aichi target. As to coastal and marine, we have more gaps to address, with only about two percent coverage,” said Dr. Lim.

Dr. Lim also stressed that intensifying protected area conservation could have the potential to protect a significant part of the world’s biodiversity, and

to provide more benefits to the people within and beyond the ASEAN region. “Achieving Target 11 is also achieving multiple benefits, including various Sustainable Development Goals and puts us towards the path of easily fulfilling other Aichi Targets as well, from Targets 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15. In addition to that, Parties to the CBD will also be in a position to fulfill other comments to other multilateral environmental agreements, not limited to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), but also UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and Ramsar Conventions,” she added.

Learning from India and other environmental organizations

Non-government organizations and other conservation organizations working on these areas were also invited to provide more details on these key elements of Target 11, aiming also to foster collaboration among these groups with the AMS for scaled-up implementation up to 2020 of Target 11 measures. Participating organizations include the following: International Union for Conservation of Nature; World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines; The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership; Wildlife Conservation Society; *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ)

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Indonesia goes car-free for ASEAN Day



In celebration of the 51st anniversary of ASEAN, Indonesia's Ministry of Health launched the ASEAN Car Free Day (CFD) to prevent air pollution and to promote healthy lifestyle on 5 August 2018 in Jakarta.

The launch was attended by leaders from other ASEAN Member States (AMS), namely Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia through a conduct of parallel activities.

Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi commended the advocacy of the ASEAN health sector to combat the threats of non-communicable diseases through physical activities for all ages towards a healthy ASEAN Community. The ASEAN CFD initiative aims to promote car-free days and be further conducted in identified cities and areas in all 10 AMS.

Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim lauded the ASEAN health sector and the Indonesian Government for their commitment to promote a healthy ASEAN region.

"The ASEAN CFD is a very timely initiative of Indonesia as we celebrate the 51st anniversary of ASEAN on 8 August 2018. I congratulate the ASEAN community, especially the Government of Indonesia through its Ministry of Health for initiating this campaign," Dr. Lim said.

"More than the traffic-free roads as spaces dedicated for physical activities, I believe that ASEAN Car-Free Day will contribute in decreasing air pollution in the participating ASEAN countries, which will also contribute to the overall health and wellness of the communities. We, at ACB are excited to regularly conduct this activity in all AMS," she ended.

A new Guinness World Record set on ASEAN CFD

With more than 65,000 participants dancing on a 15-kilometer car-free tract, Indonesia's largest *Poco-Poco* performance achieved a new Guinness World Record. The performance

was led by no less than Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

The *Poco-Poco* line dance coincides with the launch of ASEAN's CFD in Jakarta, Indonesia on 5 August 2018. The said native dance originated from North Sulawesi province of Indonesia. This activity also aimed to promote the Asian Games that was hosted by Indonesia from 18 August to 2 September 2018.

A large chunk of the participants are students, inmates, and military staff, among other volunteers. Indonesia outnumbered the last Guinness record set by Beijing in 2016 with 50,085 line dancers.



Photo from Antara Foto, Akbar NugrohoGumay via Reuters

ASEAN, India see importance of protected areas...

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GmbH; Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center; Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau; Fauna and Flora International; Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources; and Rare Philippines.

Dr. B. Meenakumari, Chairperson of the NBA India shared their country's efforts in achieving Target 11. The sixth National Biodiversity Target (NBT 6) of India on Protected Areas states that: "Ecologically representative areas under terrestrial and inland water, and also coastal and marine zones, especially those of particular importance for species, biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved effectively and equitably, based on protected area designation and management and other area-based conservation measures and are integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes, covering over 20 percent of the geographic area of the country, by 2020." "India has already surpassed the quantitative element of Aichi target 11 as well as the NBT since it already has declared protected areas that comprise 27 percent of its total geographical area," she shared.

Mr. Sarat Babu Gidda, Senior Programme Management Officer of the SCBD emphasized the importance of working together towards the achievement of conservation targets. "We cannot move forward if we pull our carts in different directions. Through this workshop, let us pinpoint the specific actions being implemented

by each country geared towards the achievement of Target 11. Let us also identify gaps to see if all of us can come together to address these gaps," he said.

Why increase the number of protected areas?

Protected areas provide a wide range of social, environmental, and economic benefits to people and communities worldwide. Establishment of protected areas is a tried and tested approach, which has been particularly applied by indigenous peoples and local communities for centuries, to conserve nature and associated cultural resources. More than instruments for conserving nature, protected areas are vital for responding to some of the world's most pressing challenges, including food and water security, human health and well-being, disaster risk reduction, and climate change.

Despite the ecological, cultural, and economic importance of services provided by protected areas, ecosystems and the biodiversity that underpins them are still being degraded and lost at an unprecedented scale. The total economic value of ecosystem services is estimated at tens of trillions of dollars every year, far larger than the global gross domestic product. However, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment estimates that 60 percent of these services are being degraded or used unsustainably with up to 70 percent of global ecosystems'

regulating services (affecting floods, climate, water quality, and others) and cultural services (including recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits) currently in decline.

There are approximately 200,000 protected areas in the world. However, these protected areas do not adequately cover all ecosystems, habitats, and species important for conservation. While 14.6 percent of the Earth's land surface are declared protected areas, only less than one percent of the world's marine ecosystems are protected. Other biomes, including major freshwater ecosystems and grasslands, are poorly represented since these ecosystem types are usually accounted as part of terrestrial protected areas. This highlights the urgent need to improve coverage and representativeness of protected areas nationally, regionally, and globally.



Dr. B. Meenakumari, Chairperson of the NBA India, shares their country's progress in achieving global target on protected areas

EU, ACB launch ASEAN Youth Biodiversity Programme



H.E. Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee, Deputy Secretary-General for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community; Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity; and Mr. Xavier Canton-Lamousse from the European Union Delegation to the Philippines and BCAMP Project Manager moments before unlocking the ASEAN Youth Biodiversity Programme.

capacity and relationships for young ASEAN leaders in biodiversity conservation to enhance youth-led implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and mainstream youth considerations to national biodiversity agendas. Each year, two Youth Biodiversity Leaders (YBLs) aged 18 to 35 will be selected from each ASEAN Member State to form a YBL Cohort. YBLs are provided at least one year of online and in-person training and guidance, including participation in public webinars and a one-week capacity building workshop. The inaugural YBL Workshop is slated to be held in the first quarter of 2019.

Youth Internships in ASEAN Heritage Parks

With the aim of empowering the youth to contribute to the formulation and implementation of biodiversity policies, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity launched the ASEAN Youth Biodiversity Programme (AYBP) at the sides of the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Regional Forum held on 4 September 2018 at Dusit Thani Hotel, Makati City, Philippines. Developed in collaboration with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, the official youth constituency to the Convention on Biological Diversity, AYBP aims to have youth be recognized and involved in biodiversity strategies and action plans at the local, national, and regional levels. The Programme is generously funded by the European Union through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP) Project.

The AYBP will provide ASEAN youth with capacity building, mentorship and resources through two signature activities: Youth Biodiversity Leaders, and Youth Internships in ASEAN Heritage Parks.

Biodiversity, the variety of all life on Earth, underpins good environmental health, food security, climate resilience, and the sustainable development and well-being of mankind. ASEAN is only 3 percent of the world's land surface area, but is home to 18 percent of the world's known species. It has 3 of the world's 17 megadiverse countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines), and contains about 35 percent of

the world's mangrove forests and 30 percent of all coral reefs. Over 630 million people in the region depend on biodiversity for food and livelihoods. The sound management and protection of biodiversity is hence crucial to safeguard a sustainable, healthy and resilient ASEAN for future generations.

The youth of ASEAN, defined as persons aged 15 to 35, represent over 33 percent of the ASEAN population and are a key stakeholder in contributing to this future dependent on biodiversity.

Youth Biodiversity Leaders (YBL)

YBL is a training program that builds

ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) are protected areas of high conservation importance, and together the network of AHPs preserve a complete spectrum of representative ecosystems of the ASEAN region. Participating AHPs in each ASEAN country will provide Youth Internships for students and young professionals aged 18 to 35 to gain on-the-job training and exposure to biodiversity conservation, as well as protected area management and operations. Internship details including job scope, duration, and stipend allowance are designed specifically for each participating AHP. AHP Youth Internships are not limited to students/graduates of biodiversity-related disciplines, and are open to students and young professionals from all fields.



ASEAN Biodiversity Hero from Cambodia Mr. Sophea Chhin (second from left) poses with participants of the ASEAN Youth Biodiversity Programme held on 4 September 2018 in Makati City, Philippines.

ASEAN intensifies conservation of protected areas

On the second day of the 22nd Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 22) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on 3 July 2018 in Montreal, Canada, the ASEAN Member States (AMS), through Myanmar, joined other Parties in recognizing the importance of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in sustaining protected areas, particularly in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Target 11.

“The identification of OECMs in the ASEAN region is timely as the region assesses its progress towards the achievement of Aichi Target 11 and quantifying areas covered by OECMs will help AMS close that gap”, said Dr. Naing Zaw Htun of Myanmar’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, as he read out on the floor ASEAN’s group statement on the agenda item 10 on protected areas.

At the recent Target Setting meeting on the ASEAN Strategic Plan on Environment, the AMS identified a gap of 180,000 square kilometers to enable compliance with the 17 percent target for terrestrial and inland waters from a baseline of 13 percent.

The Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 aims that, “by 2020 at least 17 percent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascape.”

The Aichi Biodiversity Targets are 20 global targets under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 of the CBD.

Strengthening protected area conservation: E-NIPAS

One AMS that has enacted a new law to expand its protected areas is the Philippines through its Republic Act No. 11038, also known as “Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas



Dr. Naing Zaw Htun, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Myanmar
Photo by: IISD/ENB, Franz Dejon

System Act of 2018” or E-NIPAS which mobilizes government resources to conserve and protect ecologically-rich and unique areas within the classification of a national park. The said law was signed on 22 June 2018.

Through the law, 94 more protected areas are identified for conservation, which expanded the coverage of protected areas in the Philippines and is thus a direct contribution to the achievement of Aichi Target 11.

“The approval of this law resulted to 94 (3,096,410.01 hectares) new legislated protected areas in the Philippines; a dramatic increase from the 13 (894,262.16 hectares) existing legislated protected areas,” said Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim, the current CBD SBSTTA Chair.

Dr. Lim is currently the Executive Director of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the former Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines.

“This represents a giant leap. These new protected areas not only contribute to improving the quantitative elements of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, but they also improve the qualitative aspects of this target, other Aichi Targets, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and other globally agreed goals,” complimented Cristiana Paşca Palmer, the Executive Secretary

of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Increasing the network of protected areas

The AMS are implementing various measures to protect its uniquely representative habitats and ecosystems through its ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP) Programme. Protected areas benefit from being declared as an AHP through capacity building activities for park managers and stakeholders in the form of various learning events, such as trainings and workshops. AHPs also receive technical assistance from the AHP Secretariat and its network of partners. Being an AHP also increases the park’s visibility as a prime ecotourism destination and model for effective protected area management. Participation of and collaboration among AHP stakeholders in the implementation of research and development programs and projects are also maximized and strengthened when a protected area is declared as an AHP. The AHP Programme also 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 the Secretariat’s programs and projects. The ACB serves as the Secretariat of the AHP Programme. To date, there are 40 declared AHPs, and this network of biologically rich protected areas continue to increase through the collective efforts of the AMS.

ACB and PEMSEA tie up for conservation...

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capacity to support livelihoods and food for a growing population; access to and availability of fresh water; carbon sequestration and storage; climate regulation; soil protection; and cultural services. “ASEAN also hosts a third of the world’s coastal and marine habitats including coral reefs, mangroves, estuaries, sandy and rocky beaches, seagrass and seaweed beds, and other soft bottom communities,” added Dr. Lim.

Meanwhile, PEMSEA Executive Director Ms. Aimee Gonzales said in her message that the two organizations have been ardent proponents of integrated management as a vehicle to achieve sustainable development. She said that through the partnership,

both can secure resources to continue to promote and implement integrated planning and effective management in key marine biodiversity areas in the Seas of East Asia, and that the activity will be “catalytic in delivering joint commitments under the Aichi Biodiversity targets and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

The LoC states that the two organizations will collaborate on national and local capacity building for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the SDGs; information exchange and knowledge transfer among partners and other collaborating organizations; and new projects for the conservation and management of key coastal marine

habitats and ecosystems. Specifically, ACB and PEMSEA will work on the following activities: an exhibition and workshop or workshops under the theme of coastal resilience and implementing Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and SDG 14 at the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2018; knowledge sharing through PEMSEA’s Seas of East Sea Knowledge Bank (SeaKB); and a joint project on marine litter, among others. The LoC shall remain in effect for three years.

PEMSEA is a partnership-based organization comprising of 11 countries in East and Southeast Asia, and 20 non-country partners including ACB. It was created to foster healthy and resilient coasts, people and economies.

Biodiversity-based Products in the limelight... continued from page 12

11,000 references in a wide range of conservation and biodiversity-related topics, while the latter displays live and interactive maps of the AHPs.

Ms. Cabebe also underscored the importance of the ASEAN Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), which serves as gateway to available biodiversity information in Southeast Asia. As the national clearing-house mechanisms of each of the AMS show the progress in biodiversity conservation efforts in the respective countries, the ASEAN CHM is the single entry point of all these

national databases.

After sharing to the conference the background and the project structure of the BBP Project, Mr. Peria, in his presentation, *Value Chain Approach in Biodiversity-based Products (BBP) as a Means to Improve Livelihoods and Conserve Biodiversity* focused on the importance of the value chain approach, as well as how this approach helped in the progress of the BBP project in the pilot sites in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam.



Ms. Lilibeth Cabebe, Clearing-house and Knowledge Management Officer, during her presentation about Biodiversity Information Management



Biodiversity-based Products in the limelight at Exhibition and Conference in Thailand

With both local and international participants, the Biodiversity-Based Economy Development (BEDO) Exhibition and Conference, or BEDO EXPO 2018, was held from 10 to 14 September 2018, at the Government Complex in Bangkok, Thailand. Carrying the theme, “Biodiversity-Based Economy for Future”, the first part of the week-long event was a three-day exhibition which highlighted the local products sourced and developed in the various communities in Thailand along with several products from other ASEAN Member States (AMS).

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) was one of the exhibitors in the event. The ACB booth featured the products from the communities in the project sites of the *Biodiversity-Based Products (BBP) as an Economic Source for the Improvement of Livelihoods and Biodiversity Protection*, a project funded by the Federal Republic of Germany in coordination with the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH* through the GFA Consulting Group with ACB. Bamboo handicrafts from the villages in the Nam Ha National Protected Area in Lao PDR; medicinal bath herbs and tea made from dried *Giao Co Lam* from the communities in the buffer zones of the Hoang Lien National Park in Viet Nam; and honey from the beekeepers in Ba Be National Park in Viet Nam were the main pieces in the exhibit.

According to Ms. Chularat Niratisayakul, Director General of BEDO, “We believe that the participants from Thailand can gain knowledge and experience from the ASEAN viewpoint and expect to create opportunities to exchange valuable knowledge on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, enhance the long-term well-being



Mr. Norman Eric Lopez, Regional Coordinator for the BBP Project, showcases the products from the project pilot sites to high-ranking guests during the opening of the BEDO EXPO 2018.

of the local communities including expanding to regional activities and strengthening the network of the region in the future.”

The second part of BEDO EXPO 2018 was The Fourth Thailand Biodiversity BioBank Conference: 2018 International Forum on Community BioBank: Thailand Initiatives, which took place from 12 to 15 September 2018. Among the invited speakers were representatives from the ACB: Ms. Lilibeth Cabebe, Clearing-House and Knowledge Management Officer; and Mr. Elpidio Peria, Programme Specialist and Task Enforcer of the BBP Project. Ms. Cabebe presented on *Biodiversity Information Management: Cultivating a culture of information sharing in the ASEAN region*. Apart from sharing the role of the Centre in biodiversity conservation, she discussed the challenges to biodiversity information management, and the activities that the



Mr. Elpidio Peria highlights the accomplishments of the BBP Project, as well as the effectiveness of the Value Chain Approach

ACB has undertaken to solve the said challenges such as the development of two mobile applications—the e-library and the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP) Explorer Application. The former is an application that holds over

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