



News Release

International Day for Biological Diversity

Tree growing highlights ASEAN, Germany and business sector cooperation in biodiversity conservation

One thousand nine hundred trees will be planted at the sprawling Tagaytay Highlands in Cavite, Philippines this year in an effort to promote a greener environment. The tree growing activity, dubbed “One Tree at a Time”, was launched on May 25 to observe the International Day for Biodiversity (IDB). The multi-sector event is part of the global Green Wave, a worldwide tree growing and biodiversity campaign that educates people about the importance of biodiversity conservation. The event is organized by the Tagaytay Highlands International Golf Club, Inc. and developers Belle Corporation and Highlands Prime, Inc. and supported by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and GIZ, the development cooperation agency of Germany.

As a kick-off to the goal of planting 1,900 trees in 2013, over 150 officers and employees of Belle Corporation, Highlands Prime, Inc., Tagaytay Highlands, ACB, and GIZ, as well as representatives from the diplomatic corps, planted 190 fruit-bearing trees such as aratilis, atis, chesa, duhat, guava, lanzones, malunggay, santol, and star apple.

For Tagaytay Highlands, what started as a way of giving back to Mother Nature has become a special form of advocacy.

“Tagaytay Highlands’ tree growing activities is our contribution to global efforts to curb the impacts of climate change. Trees take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store the carbon in the wood. When we plant trees we help ensure that carbon is taken out of the air. We are able to help to combat climate change in our own little way,” Mr. Willy Ocier, founder of Tagaytay Highlands and Vice Chairman of Belle Corporation, said. He added that by growing trees, the company provides shelter to various animals.

The annual “One Tree at a Time” tree growing activity of Tagaytay Highlands started in 2010 when ACB partnered with the leisure destination for its first tree growing event, together with representatives from the business sector. In 2012, the leisure complex planted 1,800 trees as its commitment to the environment. To date, more than 400,000 trees have been planted under the initiative. “Each tree planted brings us closer to our vision of growing one million trees in 50 years inside the Tagaytay Highlands,” Mr. Ocier said.

Atty. Roberto V. Oliva, executive director of ACB, said the Centre is delighted to have found a biodiversity champion in the business sector. “Tagaytay Highlands’ efforts are in line with ACB’s goal of mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the various sectors. The business sector has relevant biodiversity-related knowledge, expertise, and resources needed to conserve biological resources. It is, in fact, an integral part of the solution to biodiversity loss.”

In the ASEAN region, ACB is encouraging the business sector to invest in programmes that will promote the links of business and biodiversity through corporate social responsibility initiatives; direct investments to specific biodiversity programmes; and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in company policies, operations, products and services.

The tree growing activity was highlighted by the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation among ACB, Highlands Prime, Inc. and Belle Corporation for joint activities during the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity. The collaboration will also be part of efforts to promote the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity, a worldwide campaign spearheaded by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to engage the private sector in implementing the objectives of the CBD and preserving the natural foundations of life for future generations.

Atty. Oliva lauded Tagaytay Highlands for its simple acts of green, saying “the leisure complex’s efforts to help save the world by planting one tree at a time will go a long way in conserving our environment.” He also urged other corporations to invest in conservation initiatives. #

Photos

Photo Number	Caption	Photo by
1	Mr. Willy Ocier, founder of Tagaytay Highlands and Vice Chairman of Belle Corporation, led the tree growing activity	Pamela Reblora
2	The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Tagaytay Highlands International Golf Club, Inc, Highlands Prime, Inc., and Belle Corporation for joint activities during the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity.	Angela Metin
3	Planting one tree at a time	Re Ranada
4	ACB Executive Director Roberto V. Oliva lauds Tagaytay Highlands for investing in biodiversity conservation.	Angela Metin
5	Mr. Shahrul Anaz Ismail, First Secretary of the Embassy of Brunei in the Philippines, gets his hands dirty and supports the tree growing activity	Pamela Reblora

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