

Norway leads tree planting to fight climate change

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MANILA—Showing its commitment to battle climate change within the Asean member-states, particularly the Philippines, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway recently led a tree-planting ceremony at the La Mesa Watershed in Quezon City.



Ambassador of Norway to the Philippines Bjørn Jahnsen, together with the Scandinavian country's Ambassador to the Asean Morten Høglund, attended the activity. "By planting 500 seedlings this year, we are offsetting roughly 74 tons of carbon footprint—equivalent to the projected carbon footprint that the embassy is producing per annum," Jahnsen said.

At the event, the embassy has committed to plant 500 indigenous seedlings in La Mesa Nature Reserve covering 1 hectare of land in the watershed, in partnership with the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation.

'CO2 sink'

THE La Mesa Watershed was chosen as the project site, as it serves as the "carbon-dioxide sink" of Metro

Manila. It is also a major source of water for some 12 million residents of the Philippine capital.

"With land conversion and degradation rapidly gobbling up forests and other vital ecosystems, any effort to conserve the last standing forests that we have deserves praise. I am glad that we are not alone in protecting and preserving the remaining biodiversity in the region," Lim said.

"The Royal Norwegian Embassy's commitment to support our fight against climate change, specifically [our] pledge to plant an estimate of 500 trees, could not have come at a better time. This supports the [region's] latest undertaking: the Asean Green Initiative, which was introduced during the 15th Asean Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Siem Reap, Cambodia, [in October 2019]" the ACB executive director added.

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila continues to look for possibilities to reduce carbon footprint in the Philippines, and the tree planting is part of the said cause.

Asean partner

SINCE 2015, Norway was invited as a sectoral-dialogue partner of Asean, promoting cooperation in many areas, such as peace and reconciliation, energy, trade and private-sector development, as well as climate change and biodiversity.

For Høglund, the tree-planting activity is a way to reaffirm Norway's commitments to strengthen cooperation in the conservation of biodiversity in the Asean region.

"We urge countries to act together to tackle the global challenge of climate change, and focus on the impact of these changing conditions in Asean and its international relations," he added.

This year, Norway signed an agreement with the Asean to protect the environment and human well-being from plastic pollution. It also hosted the 2019 "Our Ocean" conference in Oslo, where \$64 billion was pledged to protect the oceans. Joyce Ann L. Rocamora/PNA