

# Haribon showcases PH rainforests in summit

By HARIBON FOUNDATION on Manila Times, March 23, 2017 Green Business

Forests are the people's defense against the impacts of climate change, said Philippine conservation group Haribon Foundation at a summit on rainforest protection in Malaysia.

Haribon presented a paper showcasing the rainforests in the neighboring mountains of Irid and Angelo, located in the provinces of Bulacan, Rizal, and Quezon, as crucial agents to the country's climate change adaptation efforts at the Belum Rainforest Summit (BRains), an international conference on conservation and the sustainable use of tropical rainforests held in Malaysia.

The condition of the Philippine forests is "extremely degraded," according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), having reached a precarious level with only 6.84 million hectares of forests or 22.8 percent of the country's total land area compared to the ideal 54 percent forest cover to maintain natural ecological processes.

The paper exhibited the different restoration initiatives of the organization in General Nakar, Quezon and its neighboring municipalities, including land-use planning and the protection of the country's flagship bird species, the Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*).

"Our work in these important sites revolves around participatory decision-making in communities, the recognition of indigenous rights and domains, biodiversity-friendly livelihood programs and reforestation," said Haribon's Rainforest Organizations and Advocates (ROAD) to 2020 program coordinator Thaddeus Martinez, during the paper presentation.

According to Haribon, reforestation is a technology that involves the use of native trees in forest restoration that helps in building greater stability and resilience to withstand disturbances associated with climate change. Hailed as one of the IBAs or Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas in the Philippines, Mts. Irid-Angelo is the country's Forest of Hope (FOH) site under the BirdLife International Partnership.

## Global movement for a greener world

Over the recent years, different sectors working for the environment including government agencies, scientists, academic institutions, non-government organizations, private groups and individuals have increasingly participated in conservation efforts geared towards the protection, restoration and promotion of the sustainable use of forest resources.

These joint movements and outputs are captured in the various global commitments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Haribon Foundation, together with its BirdLife International partners around the globe, work side by side in advocating for the role of forests in the lives of people and in improving collaborations to provide sustainable solutions to forest degradation.

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership, with 120 partners worldwide. Through its Global and Regional Conservation Programmes, BirdLife provides the framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of conservation initiatives, such as the Forests of Hope (FOH) programme, which is an international forest conservation movement that aims to ensure sustainable forest management among 19 sites covering over 7 million hectares of forest land in Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific.

“BirdLife partners believe that the global linkages among local people working for nature in their own places are the key to sustaining life resources in this planet,” shared Martinez.

Haribon’s participation in BRains was sponsored by the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), a BirdLife International partner in Malaysia.

*Haribon Foundation is the BirdLife International partner for the Philippines.*