

# Combining trees, crops in farms mitigates risks

*Malaya, March 29, 2017*



Farmers in the Philippines are being urged to start using the World Agroforestry Centre's conservation agriculture with trees (CAT) program to secure their livelihood amid climate change.

A published report by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture said farmers who are now using CAT that combine planting of trees with food crops and agricultural landscapes in upland slopes allowed them to be more flexible and guarded with risks of typhoon damages.

CAT, first introduced in Claveria, Misamis Oriental also benefited farmers through nitrogen fixation and nutrient cycling; insect pests and weeds control; soil structure improvement and water retention; carbon storage above and below ground; organic matter formation in soil, and biodiversity conservation.

Its benefits are said to be in the form of improved production on food, fodder, fuel, fiber as well as well as income from intercropping and livestock and fishery income.

An example of CAT's annual system is the growing of banana between rows of trees planted along the contour of sloping lands as well as the growing of corn with cowpea intercropped with rubber and banana trees and forages.

It was also claimed that the combination of rubber trees, bananas and forages as contour hedgerows provide soil binding and anchorage that reduces soil erosion and landslides during extreme rainfall events.

The Department of Agriculture is encouraging farmers to maximize yields through various approaches including intercropping to grow two or more crops in proximity even on a limited piece of land.