

Ligwasan Marsh threatened by climate change, pollution

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Davao City – An environmental advocate, has revealed that Ligwasan Marsh in Central Mindanao is facing enormous threats from flooding, drought, siltation and chemical pollution due to the growing number of pineapple, banana, and even oil palm plantations.

On the first day of the “Climate Resilience and Green Growth in Mindanao: A Roadmap for Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Development” at the Grand Regal here Tuesday, Climate Smart Network convenor retired Gen. Victor Corpus warned that if these threats are not addressed immediately, the rich biodiversity, and communities which depend on the marsh for livelihood, will be adversely affected.

Corpus said he believed the marsh can potentially address the social and economic woes of the people by providing them opportunities and livelihood when the right development programs are put in place in the area.

There are nine watersheds with 16 rivers flowing through the marsh.

“There are almost no forests left in the nine watersheds. When it rains, all top soil in the uplands are washed away to different 16 rivers, causing heavy siltation of the rivers. When rivers are silted, they easily overflow, flooding the nearby communities and causing misery to the people living in the marsh land,” he said.

These threats, Corpus said, will drive away even the migratory birds that use the marshland as a habitat.

“Some plantations even use planes to spray chemical pesticides on crops that end in the river,” he said.

To address the social and economic needs of the people, Corpus said the marsh can be developed into an eco-tourism destination.

“The marshland itself will be good for bird watching while manufacturing can be done elsewhere so we can protect the marshland proper, and give additional livelihood for the people,” he said.