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Updated March 9, 2020, 2:59 PM

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu on Monday reiterated calls for Filipinos to consider planting and using bamboo as wood alternative in increasing the country's forest cover.



(PIXABAY / MANILA BULLETIN)

The government, he pointed out, has already started a shift to bamboo plantation under its flagship reforestation initiative, the Expanded National Greening Program (ENGP).

“Our effort now is to plant bamboo and probably in five to six years, we can harvest it to make it a wood substitute,” Cimatu said.

“Instead of cutting the trees in the forest, we will use bamboo. So, this is really a shifting strategy,” he added.

Around 20 percent of the ENGP plantation sites are currently set aside for bamboo, but Cimatu wants to increase this to at least 40 percent.

“We are slowly shifting to bamboo plantations,” Cimatu said to aggressively improve the country's forest cover.

“We want to double it so we will accelerate bamboo plantation,” he added.

Cimatu said that “engineered” bamboo can be used as a substitute to traditional hardwood building materials, thus eliminating the need to cut trees in the forest.

The DENR has earlier signed a memorandum of agreement with Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. and SteelAsia Foundation Inc. in connection with their participation in the ENGP.

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/03/09/denr-eyes-bamboo-as-replacement-for-wood/>