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Alarmed that about one million species of plants and animals will be at risk of extinction, Deputy Speaker and Antique lone district Rep. Loren Legarda has sought the strict and full implementation of the country's laws on wildlife protection and conservation.

Antique Rep. Loren Legarda

(FACEBOOK / MANILA BULLETIN)

She said law enforcement units and local government units (LGUs) should step up in strictly implementing such laws in the wake of increasing threats of biodiversity loss and the global pandemic due to zoonotic diseases and climate change.

“Let us be reminded that every species has a role to play in the web of life. If we do not protect biodiversity, the web will soon disintegrate and we will never be spared from the effects of it,” Legarda said in a statement.

She said among the key laws that should be fully implemented are Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001; Republic Act No. 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018; and Republic Act No. 9729 or the Climate Change Act of 2009, which she principally authored and sponsored.

Under RA 9147, the collection and trade of wildlife is regulated, especially protecting threatened or exotic species under domestic law pursuant to international conventions.

While RA 11038 establishes a legal basis for local communities and other stakeholders to participate in the management and protection of protected areas.

RA 9729, meanwhile, created the Climate Change Commission. The law seeks to promote key development investments in climate-sensitive sectors such as water resources, agriculture, forestry, coastal and marine resources, health and infrastructure to ensure the achievement of national sustainable development goals.

Legarda, a former senator, cited the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services released by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES), calling on the governments all over the world to stop wildlife trade.

According to the report, about one million species of plants and animals will be at risk of extinction if global efforts on wildlife protection and conservation are not strengthened.

Based on the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2028, among the country's endangered and threatened species are tamaraw, tarsier, and Philippine eagle, and almaciga and waling-waling plants, Legarda noted.

“Addressing the threat of species extinction, habitat loss, and climate change requires decisive leadership alongside bold and far-reaching initiatives from all of us. While there is still time, we need to strictly implement these environmental laws to sustain our remaining species from extinction and let them prosper for our future generations,” she said. (Charissa M. Luci-Atienza) #

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