

DENR pushes mini bamboo forests

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THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is pushing for the creation of mini "bamboo forests" in more than 1,500 cities and municipalities across the country in an effort to create a nature-friendly, export-oriented bamboo lumber industry.

In a courtesy meeting made by Selva Ramachandran, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country representative, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the Philippines and the UNDP can have a collaboration in the establishment of "community-based mini forest, bamboo plantation, urban forestry" project.

Cimatu specifically requested UNDP if it can possibly design assistance for localities, not within DENR areas, to put up bamboo nurseries. All municipalities can have their "mini-forests."

Ramachandran made the courtesy call to the DENR secretary together with Edwine Carrie, UNDP's deputy resident representative, and Floradema Eleazar, UNDP team leader.

The UNDP official said his agency has received the same request for support for the bamboo plantation establishment during his visits to Albay and Cagayan provinces.

Philippine bamboo has the potential to create a profitable industry, considering a humongous \$14- to \$15-billion bamboo trade globally.

Moreover, bamboo, *kawayan* in Filipino, can be a tool for controlling soil erosion and sequestering pollutant carbon dioxide (CO₂). It prevents soil erosion to which riverbank communities have been predisposed to danger.

A hectare of bamboo retains 30,000 liters of water during the rainy season. Bamboo absorbs huge amounts of pollutant CO₂. A hectare of bamboo sequesters 12 tons of CO₂.

Bamboo plants are excellent cover for vegetating riverbanks to protect them from erosion. These have a root system called "rhizomatous" and come in clumps. This rooting system helps keep soil together.

Another species used in riverbanks is the iron bamboo or *Guadua angustifolia*. It also grows on hilly grounds.

The National Greening Program listed bamboo as among the preferred species for reforestation. Bamboo will help boost supply for food, products (timber, fiber, non-timber forest products), services and provide aesthetic value to the environment.

In the Philippines, bamboo has been considered an excellent substitute for many raw materials in different industries. Its charcoal is used as organic fertilizer. Its tall, erect stems and petiolate leaf blades make for good ornamental plants. The specific specie is *Arundia pygmae*. It decors the environment well with bonsai.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/10/23/business/green-industries/denr-pushes-mini-bamboo-forests/1819385?fbclid=IwAR2Xww4ZEfmZPJjQnrxeoOR0aFS-aCdOwHqjiloLtWAOdCh93bXlqZk1qnY>