

DENR, USAID to partner for environment, climate change

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DENR, USAID to boost partnership on environmental protection and climate change mitigation.

TO PROTECT the environment and prepare the country for a deteriorating climate, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are exploring ways to further enhance the partnership of the Philippines and the US in environmental protection and climate change mitigation.

US Charge d’Affaires Heather Variava, USAID Mission Director to the Philippines Ryan Washburn, and USAID Philippines Environment Office Chief John Edgar on March 3, paid a courtesy visit on DENR Acting Secretary Jim O. Sampulna in acknowledgement of the longtime partnership between USAID and DENR.

“It is our great pleasure to meet you today and have the opportunity to personally thank the US government for always being supporting in our efforts of meeting our agenda in the environment and natural resources,” Sampulna told the US officials.

In a press release the new DENR chief, who had been a regional director from 2009 to 2018, cited that several USAID projects were implemented during his time on the field and hoped to continue doing so under his leadership.

“I came from the field, from the region, and I have implemented many USAID projects. We have the Safe Water project and SIBOL (Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes), which we are implementing right now,” Sampulna said.

National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Seville D. David Jr. said the Safe Water project is currently being implemented by NWRB as DENR's focal agency, among three regional offices in Palawan, Negros Occidental, and Mindanao.

Meanwhile, DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) OIC Director Natividad Y. Bernardino shared that the SIBOL project team has recently worked on the Siargao seascape, which was badly hit by Typhoon Odette in December 2021.

“The work that USAID does to the country's resources is so important to the whole world, and the Philippines is one of our priorities for safe and resilient water,” Variava said.

USAID provides technical assistance to the projects, with the Safe Water initiative aiming to improve the sustainable management of the country's water resources, and SIBOL on reducing environmental crimes, and improving water security.

It was former DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu who signed the five-year partnership with USAID for SIBOL and Safe Water programs on May 27, 2021.

These projects are under the P7.25 billion USAID-Philippines agreement on enhanced and community resilience signed by the National Economic and Development Authority and USAID in February 2021.

Tags: #DENR, #USAID, #boostingpartnership, #environmentalprotection, #climatechangemitigation, #environment

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