

DOLE and DENR pact taps TUPAD beneficiaries for forest protection

By: Jovee Marie De La Cruz | Business Mirror

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/11/01/dole-and-denr-pact-taps-tupad-beneficiaries-for-forest-protection/>

The chairman of the House Committee on Labor and Employment revealed over the weekend that the government is set to tap beneficiaries of the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers program (TUPAD) as forest rangers to implement the country's national greening program.

In a news statement, Rizal 4th District Rep. Fidel Nograles said the Departments of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) recently signed a memorandum of agreement to mobilize TUPAD beneficiaries as forest rangers.

“This is an excellent program that not only helps address our shortage of forest workers, but also provides our TUPAD beneficiaries with meaningful and noble work that will directly benefit their communities and the whole country,” Nograles said.

“The MOA is a creative solution to our need for more forest workers, and hopefully with this we can better monitor and protect these areas, especially in the face of continued [forest] encroachment,” Nograles added.

Under the DOLE-DENR accord, TUPAD beneficiaries will serve as forest patrollers. They are also tasked with seedling production, establishing plantations and assist on forest protection activities in support of the greening program.

According to DOLE, it would set aside funds for payment of the prevailing daily minimum wage in the region where the TUPAD workers are assigned, and to cover the administrative cost for personal protective equipment and group personal accident insurance of workers who will be hired.

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority or its accredited training institutions will provide appropriate skills training and education on environment-related laws, rules, and regulations.

Nograles acknowledged the potential impact of the training that TUPAD workers will undergo in “instilling a green consciousness” among the people.

“Hindi ito dead-end job, hindi boring, at maraming matututunan. This is an opportunity to empower our TUPAD workers, and to instill in them a green consciousness that they can pass on to their families and friends,” the lawmaker said.

Nograles also expressed hope that the MOA would be “only the first step in our efforts to revitalize our forests and mitigate the effects of the climate crisis.”