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Asean member-states to nominate 10 biodiversity heroes

By [BusinessMirror](#)

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The search is on for the 10 Asean Biodiversity Heroes to represent Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The Asean Biodiversity Heroes is a program designed to recognize outstanding individuals from the Asean region who have contributed significantly to biodiversity conservation and advocacy efforts in their respective countries.

One of the commemorative activities for the 50th anniversary of the Asean on August 8, the Heroes project is supported by the Asean Secretariat; the Philippines's Department of Foreign Affairs; the European Union through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean Project; and Hari Foundation Inc. (HFI), the corporate social responsibility arm of Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. The Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) serves as awards secretariat.

Each Asean member-state will select a Biodiversity Hero to represent their country. Members of the ACB Governing Board and the Asean Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity) for each country will work together in selecting a biodiversity hero.

“In nominating an individual, they will consider the relevance of the nominee's contributions to biodiversity conservation, the impact of these contributions to biodiversity conservation efforts in their respective countries and the region, the replicability of their actions, and the recognition they received in communities where they belong,” explained Atty. Roberto V. Oliva, executive director of ACB.

Each Asean Biodiversity Hero shall receive a cash prize worth \$5,000, a special heroes' medal and a certificate. They will also receive special prizes from HFI.

The heroes from the 10 Asean member-states will be known as the faces of biodiversity conservation in the Asean region. They will be invited to speak in forums, workshops, press conferences and other relevant events to share their

experiences in conserving biodiversity with the aim of inspiring others to do the same.

“Despite biodiversity’s crucial role in providing food, medicine, shelter, livelihood and other ecosystem services, only a small fraction of the population in the Asean region and elsewhere in the world understands biodiversity’s meaning and significance.

It is often seen as too abstract for the man on the street. With people having little or no awareness of biodiversity, there is insignificant public support for efforts to conserve plants, animals and other species. The Asean Biodiversity Heroes will help bridge the communication gap between the biodiversity experts and the general public,” Oliva said.

He added, “The Asean Biodiversity Heroes will drum up interest for biodiversity advocacy by showing people that heroes can come from various walks of life—from the scientific community, government, business sector, media, youth and even the general public. Each of us can play a key part in safeguarding our natural resources.”

The Asean Biodiversity Heroes is one of the Asean region’s contributions to the celebration of the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020—an excellent opportunity to increase public awareness of the values of biodiversity and promote actions at the national, regional and local levels to conserve and sustainably manage the world’s rich natural heritage.

For more information on Asean Biodiversity Heroes, log on to heroes.aseanbiodiversity.org. For questions, send an e-mail to heroes@aseanbiodiversity.org.

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