



# Palawan Set to Launch TREES Program

Responding to President Aquino’s National Greening Program, the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development under the leadership of Governor Abraham Khalil B. Mitra is set to implement this year a province-wide environmental enhancement program dubbed as the PalTREES (Palawan Trees for the Restoration of Ecology, Economy and Society) project.

For launching in June 19, 2011, PCSD’s anniversary, the program aims to further increase Palawan’s forest cover, now the biggest in the country at 49% of its land area. It calls for the planting province-wide of some 10 million trees over its six-year implementation period or until June 2016.

Pursuing further its direct environmental enhancement mandate under Republic Act No. 7611 otherwise known as the Strategic Environmental Program for the sustainable development of Palawan, PCSD is partnering with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Provincial Government of Palawan in carrying out this greening activity in the province. PCSD as the lead implementor of the program, with DENR and the Provincial Government will lead government agencies and non government organizations in the massive tree-planting program.

On its adoption by the PCSD during its 175th council meeting, Gov. Mitra who is also PCSD’s Chairperson described the PalTrees program as being in four-square with President Aquino’s National Greening Program and the United Nations declaration of 2011 as the International Year of the Forest. “The PalTREES program aims to be a model public-partnership environmental protection undertaking – the Palaweño people’s very positive response for the need for environmental enhancement of their beloved “Palawan.” Mitra said.

Called to be at the frontline of this 6-year, 10 million trees program are the local government units through their respective leagues such as the Mayors and Vice-mayors’ leagues, the provincial councilors’ league and the association of Palawan barangay councils.

Observers noted the “great enthusiasm and support” of the participating organizations who attended PCSD’s 175th meeting and who signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the program’s implementation. Over thirty public and private entities signed up to join PalTrees including the Departments of Interior and Local Government, Education, Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, the Western Command and Naval Forces West, Palawan PNP, among others. Non-government organizations led by the Palawan Chamber of Commerce, the Palawan NGO Network Inc. (PNNI) and the academe such as the Palawan State University, Western Philippines University and the Holy Trinity University. Also present to lend their support were the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, the Palawan banking sector, the Palawan Electric Cooperative which have municipal stations province-wide. Notable also were the presence of mining firms such as the Rio Tuba Nickel Corporation, Coral Bay Nickel Corporation, Berong Nickel Corporation, Macro Asia Corporation and Ipilan Nickel Corporation.

The PalTREES program will be done year-round, in 6 years, as it integrates a scientific approach of preserving endemism, where native and endangered species will be planted to enhance existing natural forests and biodiversity and rehabilitate degraded areas to further ensure the integrity of Palawan’s environment.

Even such municipalities as Cuyo, Agutaya, Magsaysay, Araceli and Cagayancillo whose forest were a thing of the past would be planted with fruit trees, and mangroves.

The DENR in Palawan is already gearing up for the seedling propagation in time for the program’s launching on June 19th, already within the onset of the rainy season. The mining firms in Palawan have also committed to beef up DENR’s seedling inventories.



The signing of the PalTREES Program Memorandum of Understanding by the agencies involved was one of the highlights during the 175th PCSD Regular Meeting held at the Palawan Sustainable Development Training Institute in Irawan, Puerto Princesa City



PalTREES Program calls all participants and the Palaweños to join hands in restoring forest ecosystem.