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ForCLIM joins Freedom Climb 2012 at Mt. Nangtud



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“Malinis na Hangin, Itanim Mo, Malinis na Tubig, Itanim Mo, Malinis na Kinabukasan, Itanim Mo,” was the clear message of Noel Resurreccion, Haribon’s Project Coordinator for the German International Development (GIZ)–Forest and Climate Protection Panay (ForCLIM) Project, when he delivered his message during the Araw ng Kalayaan or Freedom Climb 2012 at Mt. Nangtud, Barbaza, Antique.

Freedom Climb is an annual event organized by the local government unit of Barbaza in partnership with various stakeholders in Central Panay Mountain Ranges (CPMR). CPMR is one of the 117 Key Important Bird Areas (IBAs) according to Birdlife International and Haribon Foundation, and a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) in the country due to its biodiversity richness, both flora and fauna. Mt. Nangtud, with a highest peak of around 2,117 meters, forms part of the spine of Central Panay mountain ranges, a favorite hiking destination of mountaineers, particularly in the Visayan region.

The annual event focuses on raising the awareness of the local communities of Barbaza, and the whole Antique province, on the importance and benefits of forest ecosystem to the lives and survival of the local people. Around 400 trekkers and visitors participated in this annual event. Key participants for this annual event were representatives from the faculty and students of University of Antique (Tibiao Campus), Barangay local government units, Barbaza Cooperative, Boy Scout of the Philippines (Antique), Philippine National Police (PNP), SARA, Antique Trekkers Incorporated (ATI), DYKA and GIZ-ForCLIM Project, among others.

The activity was not only limited to trekking and scaling the rugged terrains of Mt. Nangtud and reaching its summit, but also restoring the mountain’s environs by planting indigenous forest trees species and fruit trees particularly at Camp Eupre. Camp Eupre is a mountain resort along the slopes of Mt. Nangtud and an eco-friendly tourist destination co-managed by LGU Barbaza and the local community of Cadiao.

Barbaza Municipal Mayor Faith Francisco, in her message, emphasized the importance of Public-Private-Partnership on forest governance. More so, “forest conservation is inclusive, not exclusive.

It is a concern of everybody regardless of any status in the society either you are rich or poor”.

Victor Condez, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) Chairman on Environment in the province of Antique, further adds that “environmental conservation has no established boundaries.” Indeed, protection and conservation of the environment should start from the heart of individual person, which needs to be nurtured and shared to the rest of the members of his immediate family, community, and the society. In his closing statement, Resurreccion in his closing statement “we do not only plant trees, we plant a forest, and we plant the future of our children’s children”.

The GIZ-ForCLIM Project joined and participated in the event by setting-up an exhibit on biodiversity conservation, the interdependence of various ecosystems including the ecological benefits and services provided by forest ecosystem to local communities. It also highlights the importance of the Big Five threatened species in Panay Island, namely: Visayan Hornbill (Dulangan), Visayan Spotted Deer (Usa), Visayan Warty Pig (Baboy Talunon), Rafflesia and Panay Monitor Lizard (Butaan). They also participated in the tree planting activities.

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This year's Freedom Climb in Mt. Nagtud is co-organized by Antique Trekkers Incorporated (ATI) and SARA in cooperation of Boy Scout of the Philippines (Antique) and Barbaza Cooperative.

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