

One MERALCO Foundation and Butuan City WD seal partnership



One MERALCO Foundation, Inc. (OMF), the social development arm and corporate foundation of the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO), and Butuan City Water District (BCWD), the sole provider of potable water in Butuan City, sealed their partnership for the implementation of the 80-Hectare reforestation project in the Taguibo River Watershed Forest Reserve (TRWFR) and CADT-135 area dubbed as the “Adopt-A-Forest Program: The One for Trees (OFT) Project in the Taguibo Watershed.”

The partnership was formalized in the OFT Partners’ Gathering and MOA Signing held on September 29, 2022 at the MERALCO Powertech Auditorium in Quezon City.

In the MOA, OMF donates Php4,000,000.00 while BCWD’s counterpart is Php1,051,000.00. This total amount of Php5,051,000.00 will reforest 80 hectares in TRWFR within three years. BCWD will plant 48,000 trees in the Taguibo Watershed to sustain the forest reserve in the watershed enabling quality water supply to the people of Butuan City.

The Community Kick-off and Ceremonial Tree Planting was held on October 7, 2022 at Mahayahay Elementary School in Sitio Mahayahay, Anticala, Butuan City. The invited guests of the said activity were OMF Representatives, DENR Representatives, BCWD Representatives, Partner-People’s Organizations, LGU and Barangay Anticala Officials. CENRO Joseph E. Oconer welcomed the guests and participants of said event.

OMF president Jeffrey Tarayao said that he was happy that Butuan warmly welcomes One Meralco Foundation. He was also amazed with the unity of the people of Butuan in protecting the natural resources because he believes that the major ingredient for survival is environment protection. “No matter how advanced the world today if we don’t care for our environment, we won’t be able to sustain developments,” he said.

Tarayao further said that “Today we are delighted to start our One for Trees journey with Butuan City Water District. Through BCWD’s Adopt-A-Forest program, One for Trees aims to reforest the Taguibo River Watershed as the main source of potable water in Butuan City. Together with people’s organizations, we hope to rehabilitate this important natural resource that will benefit the community and the environment they live in.”

BCWD was chosen by OMF as it was able to meet all the criteria that focused on evidence-based, scientific reforestation management approach, community inclusion and the network to reach other audience through information and education. BCWD is committed to a long-term partnership with One Meralco that will ensure not just planting but nurturing trees for their growth and survival.

BCWD general manager Anselmo L. Sang Tian thanked OMF for trusting BCWD for this project. “We were not aware that there was One For Trees program of Meralco that existed. What we knew about Meralco was all about electrification in Metro Manila and some parts of Luzon,” he said.

Sang Tian was grateful that OMF has recognized BCWD and offered the One For Trees project, the only Meralco project in Mindanao. He urged the communities that will benefit this project to do their best to make this project a huge success so that OMF will add more projects in the near future.

Forester Achilles Anthony C. Ebron, PENRO Agusan del Norte, also expressed gratitude to OMF for allocating funds for the reforestation of the Taguibo Watershed. He said a resolution was passed last August allowing BCWD to undertake this project. “I hope that through this preservation of the Taguibo Watershed, there will be enough water supply for Butuan,” he said.

Representative Jose Aquino II and Mayor Ronnie Vicente Lagnada sent their respective messages.

Representative Aquino assured that his office is 100% supportive of programs for the care of the environment like Adopt-A-Forest Program: The One for Trees Project in the Taguibo Watershed. He thanked the “lumads” for helping protect the Taguibo Watershed and OMF for choosing Butuan as its partner.

Mayor Lagnada, on one hand, said that today’s reforestation project is a calling. “This time around, we are reminded of the decreasing quality of our air and all endangered lives. Today, we are gathered to join an activity that showcases a very simple and effective intervention in saving the environment, we plant and grow trees! I am glad that we are taking the initiative to put action to this. You have my full support,” he said.