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Rain welcomed me when I landed in Taoyuan Airport in Taiwan and the cool Baguio-like weather was a far cry from Manila's scorching heat. I am attending the BirdLife Asia Partnership meeting where, together with our NGO partners from Southeast and South Asia will be sharing lessons and discussing strategies that will help us make our conservation work more effective. I think "Taiwan" and I think "industrialization." But that is not entirely so. Taiwan's climates range from tropical, subtropical, warm temperate and cold temperate to arctic tundra in the high mountain regions. With the exception of deserts, terrestrial ecosystems present a little of everything including coniferous forests, broad-leaved forests, high mountain vegetation groups and grassy plains. In some areas there are also aquatic vegetation and wetlands. Along the coastal areas surrounding the island, the coral reef ecosystems teem with biodiversity. Like any country in the world, Taiwan's population increased and development happened at the expense of its environment. Although it still has 70% forest cover, Taiwan continuously works to set aside protected areas and carry out scientific research.

One of the major discussions in our meeting was about the very important role of ecosystems in climate change adaptation particularly for communities residing in them. BirdLife recently published experiences from various countries on how communities are working to be able to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Some of these impacts are more frequent and severe floods and droughts; disruption to food and water supplies; increasing frequency of natural disasters; changes in the range of disease vectors; reduction in ecosystem services; changes in species ranges; and extinction of many species including those critical for ecosystems to function and essential for supporting human well-being. Healthy bio-diverse environments play a vital role in maintaining and increasing resilience to climate change and reducing climate-related risk and vulnerability. Species loss can increase the vulnerability of ecosystems to further impacts of climate change with significant impacts on people and livelihoods. Climate change adds a further pressure on many natural systems and people already negatively impacted by unsustainable practices such as deforestation and land degradation.

Adaptation responses that are environmentally-sound and which recognize the value and importance of healthy ecosystems will help protect the natural resource base, provide alternative livelihood options and maintain resilience to future climate change. Adopting an ecosystem approach to adaptation which considers whole ecosystems, ecosystem functions and services in all adaptation planning, processes and decision-making should help prevent "mal-adaptation" and support "no regret" and "multiple benefit" measures. Ecosystem-based adaptation includes the sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems to provide key services that enable people to adapt to climate change impacts. It will often be the first line of defense against the impacts of climate change for the most vulnerable people.

Haribon is implementing an ecosystem-based adaptation project in Mt. Siburan in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro. It is implemented by the community-based forest management association of Sitio Palbong and aims to restore denuded forests using native tree species, introduce environment-friendly agricultural practices such as organic farming in place of kaingin and pilot sustainable livelihood options using non-timber forest products such as mat weaving, broom-making and small-scale vegetable production. Through this partnership with the community, logging activities have dropped by 50% in the last two years and no new clearing of forest for

agriculture and homesteads has been recorded. This work has improved ecological and social resilience to climate change. By involving local stakeholders from the project's inception, acceptance and ownership of proposed sustainable livelihood options has been achieved. Protection of the Mt. Siburan Important Biodiversity Area represents the best opportunity to prevent the extinction of the critically endangered Mindoro Bleeding-heart Pigeon (*Gallicolumba platenae*) and the Black-hooded Coucal (*Centropus steerii*) and the endangered Mindoro Hornbill (*Penelopides mindorensis*.)

The seed sowing prayer of the Tsou tribe of Taiwan goes "Spirit of the earth, on this hillside we scatter the seed you have given us. We pray for you to open the sky and bestow rainfall to moisten this crop so that our tribe may reap a harvest."

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