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ECONOMIC GROWTH

(Energy and Environment)

World Earth Day: Sulu Joins Coastal Clean-Up Campaign

(Source: Mindanao Examiner News Online, 4/21/08)





Sulu Gov. Sakur Tan, 2nd from left, and US military commander Col. Bill Coultrup, left, pick up pieces of garbage in the coastal village of Mauboh in Sulu province in southern Philippines, Monday, April 21, 2008.

Elzadia Washington, of the United States Agency for International Development, accompanied by US Embassy staff, arrived in Sulu to join more than a hundred Muslim villagers and soldiers in the clean-up campaign during the World Earth Day celebration. Elzadia Washington picks up pieces of garbage in the coastal village of Mauboh. And Sulu Gov. Sakur Tan gestures as he shows to Elzadia Washington the beautiful beaches in the town of Patikul. (Sulu Media Desk Photo)

SULU, Philippines (Mindanao Examiner / April 1, 008) – Muslim villagers joined US and Filipino troops in a coastal clean-up campaign during the World Earth Day celebration Monday in the southern province of Sulu.

Elzadia Washington, of the United States Agency for International Development, who visited Sulu province, also joined the clean-up drive in the village of Mauboh in Patikul town. Sulu Gov. Sakur Tan led the locals in the campaign.

“We are happy that people are active in caring for their environment and we will sustain this effort to ensure Sulu remains a beautiful place in this part of the

country,” Tan told reporters.

Filipino marines and US troops headed by Col. Bill Coultrup joined in picking up pieces of garbage left by tides on the beach. “Along this, we are all reminded of our responsibilities, which extend beyond our own backyards. This clean-up campaign demonstrates oneness among stakeholders in caring for the waters not just in Sulu, but in fact everywhere in the world,” Marine commander Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban said.

“Every day should be coastal clean-up. And cleaning the coast through picking up garbage is the least that we can do. By giving Mother Earth a totally healthy environment, we are also acting upon our moral duty for the people we both serve and hold dear,” he said.

Washington said she is happy by the active participation of the province in the World Earth Day celebration. “Protecting the environment is important and crucial towards the progress of the nation. If environment is not protected, concerns in security may arise,” she said.

She also toured different places in Sulu and went with Tan to the Mount Datu where Washington viewed the whole of Jolo and nearby towns. Washington was all praised to the beauty of Sulu, from its pristine beaches to unspoiled jungle and friendly people. “The people are great and friendly and the place is magnificent,” she said.

Tan said the Mount Datu one of many eco-tourism sites in Sulu and a favourite among nature lovers and trekkers. While the Sulu Sea is one of the richest fishing grounds in the Philippines. “We have very beautiful places in Sulu and we are working hard to promote these places,” he said.

The Tubbataha Reef is the best known site in the Sulu Sea for its 81,000 acres of corals. It is also considered the world's best dive spot for underwater adventure.

The pearls from the Sulu Archipelago are among the finest in the world, Tan said.
(With reports from Nickee Butlangan and Arthur Abasalo)



(Source: <http://flickr.com/photos/csxmit/2430581024/>)
CS_042108_8///Children collect garbage along the mangroove area in Barangay Umangas during an Earth Day celebration activity organized by the USAID-funded Amore program in Patikul, Sulu province. PHOTO BY CHARLIE SACEDA