



For more than 25 years, Conservation International (CI) has been working to protect nature. We involve communities, civil society, policy makers, business organizations in these efforts. Our mission is to improve human well-being, particularly in ways that are most dependent on the essential services that nature provides: fresh water, food, health, livelihoods, and climate resilience.

Our mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, and tropical coral reefs are among the richest marine habitats in the world. These habitats provide livelihoods and bolster food security. They also help protect coastlines from typhoons and other natural disasters. These natural buffers are even more important now considering how the super typhoon Haiyan wreaked havoc, claiming over 6,000 lives in the Philippines. Haiyan will always serve important lessons on our climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. We need to protect and rehabilitate our mangrove ecosystems. We need to share lessons, knowledge, and practices related to these.

We at CI-Philippines believe that the 2nd State of the Mangroves Summit is an important gathering among partners. As the threats of climate change increases, so does the recognition of the value of mangrove greenbelts. Mangroves sequester and store large amounts of carbon and can contribute to climate change mitigation. However, these ecosystems and the livelihoods they support are under intense pressure from rapid population growth, detrimental development, and the increasing threats associated with the impacts of climate change.

For several years now, CI-Philippines has been supporting ecosystems-based adaptation (EbA) to climate change alongside its biodiversity conservation initiatives. We support EbA initiatives in vulnerable coastal areas in the Verde Island Passage (VIP). These, in turn, support fisheries management, MPAs, and MPA networks in the VIP. Together with the Turing Foundation and other partner organizations, we also support the mangrove rehabilitation and conservation initiatives of our local partners in the provinces of Oriental Mindoro and Marinduque.

We all know that the VIP is an important area for biodiversity in the world. However, from our vulnerability assessment studies, we also know that it is highly vulnerable to climate change. Thus, we continue to research on new approaches to promote nature-based adaptation measures. With our experience in implementing coastal conservation in key biodiversity areas, we have identified a suite of options that include innovative adaptation solutions which will strengthen coastal resilience and reduce disaster risks. Mangrove conservation and rehabilitation remain to be a key piece of this work.

CI-Philippines and the Turing Foundation support the *State of the Mangrove Summit series*. The Summit gathers experts, community leaders, and representatives from the civil society and government agencies. The present and future summits (culminating to a nationwide conference) will produce a comprehensive action plan to protect our coastal ecosystem and communities in response to the growing threat of climate change. The current status of mangroves is impressive in some areas in the country while depressing in many others. We have a little over 250,000 hectares of mangrove areas remaining. The Summit is an opportunity to clear the way forward for the conservation and rehabilitation of our mangrove areas.

CI-Philippines and the Turing Foundation would like to recognize the valuable role of the Ateneo de Manila University in organizing this Summit. We are pleased that one of the outputs is the publication of the proceedings. The proceedings will help communities and partners in Southern Luzon and MIMAROPA develop long-term plans and projects on mangrove conservation. These, in turn, will improve community and ecosystem resilience to climate change. The information in the proceedings will also help policy makers, civil society, and community workers in promoting mangrove conservation in the country.



ENRIQUE A. NUÑEZ JR.

Country Executive Director

Conservation International Philippines Foundation