

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **KATALA FOUNDATION CONVENES CITES WORKSHOP** *Strengthening our grip against illegal wildlife trade*

***Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, Philippines - More keen eyes and committed groups and individuals in Palawan will soon be watching over our dwindling wildlife and illegal traders!*** Katala Foundation (KFI) convenes relevant agencies and organizations all over Palawan to attend the CITES Enforcement Training Workshop on November 7-9, 2007 at the Legend Hotel, Puerto Princesa City. The training-workshop aims to further train, educate and build partnerships among all enforcement agencies and organizations for more effective local implementation of the Wildlife Act or RA 9147 and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Appropriately, Palawan is the perfect venue for the said workshop. Palawan is the cradle and hotspot for illegal trade of wildlife in the Philippines. Strategically located within the region, Palawan has potential capacities to help combat the alarming cases of wildlife trafficking through strict enforcement of laws and better informed and equipped personnel. In recent operations, NGOs like KFI had been active in gathering sufficient information and initiating confiscation operations particularly in southern Palawan.

Specifically, the 3 day workshop will (1) equip the participants with knowledge on basic species identification; (2) provide an opportunity for different agencies at the airport and seaports to interact and build contacts for effective collaboration; and (3) build partnership between the TRAFFIC Southeast Asia and the different local agencies and organizations. Twelve interesting modules will be undertaken which includes case studies and activities for practical application.

Dr. Chris R. Shepherd, Senior Programme Officer of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia (SEA) will head the conduct of the said workshop to approximately 80 participants representing all municipalities and relevant government and non-government organizations in Palawan. TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, works to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature. TRAFFIC is a joint programme of [WWF](#) and [IUCN](#) - The World Conservation Union. Its Southeast Asian office is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Dr. Shepherd will be joined by Dr. Mundita Lim, Director of Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau of

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DENR along with other local speakers from the Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine National Police, KFI and PCSDS. The latter is a co-sponsor of the workshop.

This effort strengthens the Philippines' commitment to combat illegal wildlife trade in the region through the ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), an intergovernmental initiative against the crime. ASEAN-WEN has created a mechanism by which countries can share information and learn from each other examples of best practices in combating illegal trade in wild fauna and flora (including marine species). TRAFFIC is currently working in partnership with the Wildlife Alliance under the ASEAN-WEN Support Program to facilitate the development of the network. (IDLW)

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Editor's Notes:

- Enclosed is the program for reference

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