

Reforestation campaign in Seychelles on target to plant 250,000 trees

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A campaign aimed at reforesting some of the most eroded mountainous areas of Seychelles' second-most populated island is on target to plant 250,000 trees in the next five years.

The campaign 'Rebwaz mwan,' meaning reforest me, involves widespread planting of 50,000 seedlings annually over the next five years on Praslin Island. The tree planting is seen as the biggest such campaign ever undertaken in Seychelles – 115 islands in the western Indian Ocean.

The seedlings are being planted on degraded land in select areas on Praslin for environmental protection and conservation of important ecosystems.

A conservation biologist working with the project, Elvina Henriette, told SNA that the initiative has come at an opportune time.

"Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has made humanity realise the importance of nurturing our relationship with nature, in many countries around the world, nature or wildlife has made a comeback. Let us as a nation take this opportunity to pave a new way forward in this national initiative to make Praslin a greener tropical island," explained Henriette.

The tree planting launched in July is an initiative of Terrestrial Restoration Society of Seychelles (TRASS) and the Seychelles Employee Transition Scheme (SETS).

TRASS is based on Praslin and is the only environmental nonprofit organization committed to the rehabilitation of degraded forests in Seychelles. Over the past decades, several bush fires occurred on Praslin causing loss of habitats and biodiversity.

At a tree planting at the end of November, 1,000 seedlings were planted at Pasquiere by a group of volunteers from Raffles Hotel, SETS, Seychelles Island Foundation, as well as by students from Vijay International, Baie Ste. Anne and Grand Anse schools.

Henriette added that with the campaign TRASS had to expand its facilities to cater to more plants and to purchase more tools and materials for massive plant production.

"In just under a few months, TRASS has produced 10,000 seedlings in its nursery and has planted 8,000 native plants with the participation of volunteer groups from the community," explained Henriette.

"I am planting to make mountains greener after forest fires destroyed all the trees and hoping to see my plant grow in the next 10 years," said Julianna, who is 8 years old.

Julianna was amongst a group of students who participated in the latest tree planting. Another student, Navie, aged 6, said that he is planting to build a new forest where trees were lost in fires.

Vanesia Dodin, Project Management Officer for the tree planting activities, said "it is a great privilege to witness the devotion and perseverance from these young ones. We should keep teaching our children at a young age the importance of our ecosystems and they shall carry on the hard work for generations to come."

Source: <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/14046/Reforestation+campaign+in+Seychelles+on+target+to+plant+%2C+trees>