

September 4, 2012
AEON Environmental Foundation

The final year of the tree-planting project to restore clean water and beautiful scenery
Hue Tree-Planting to Be Held in Vietnam on Sunday, September 16

The Aeon Environmental Foundation (Takuya Okada, Chairman of the Foundation and Honorary Chairman and Advisor of Aeon Co., Ltd.; hereinafter, the “Foundation”) will conduct a tree-planting in the Lang Co area in Hue city, Vietnam on Sunday, September 16, 2012.

Hue city is a scenic area that boasts a beautiful beach and bay and also possesses a complex of monuments that make up Vietnam’s first UNESCO World Heritage site. However, the forest in the Lang Co area in Hue has been damaged by excessive logging, resulting in a decrease in the water-retaining capacity of the soil. This has caused red colored soil to flow into the bay, thus contaminating the water.

At the request of the local government of Hue, who became concerned about this environmental problem, the Foundation launched a three-year tree-planting project in 2010, which it has steadily been implementing to rejuvenate the forest in the Lang Co area. Thus far, together with a total of 1,032 volunteers from Japan and local communities, the Foundation has planted 64,000 acacia saplings, which are considered to be effective in improving the quality of the soil.

In the Hue tree-planting activity, a planned total of 400 Japanese and local volunteers will plant 2,000 acacia saplings and other native broad-leaved trees. In 2012, the final year of the project, the Foundation is planning to plant 6,000 trees in total, including the 2,000 planned for this event. Over the three year period of this project, the number of planted trees will total 70,000.

This year, as part of its efforts to protect water and greenery, the Foundation also conducted tree-planting activities outside of Vietnam, including in Indonesia and Japan (Mukawa-cho in Hokkaido and Nanyo city in Yamagata). Going forward, the Foundation will plant trees in additional areas within Japan, including Cita city in Aichi, Minamishimabara city in Nagasaki and Kihoku-cho in Mie. In addition, the Foundation will carry out activities to care for one million trees it previously planted on the Great Wall of China in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties between China and Japan.

In total, 9,760,000 trees have been planted by the Foundation, including those to be planted in Hue, as well as those planted through the Aeon Hometown Forests Program, in which trees are planted on-site at Aeon’s stores in cooperation with local customers.

Aeon will continue its efforts to promote tree-planting in Japan and overseas in support of conserving biodiversity hand-in-hand with local residents.

Outline of the tree-planting event

1. Date and time: Sunday, September 16, 2012, 8:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m.
2. Place: Lang Co area, Hue, Vietnam
3. No. of trees to be planted: 2,000 (6,000 in 2012; 70,000 in total by the end of the project)
4. Tree species: Acacia, Merawan and Dipterocarpus alatus
5. Tree-planting area: 2 ha (34 ha in total by the end of the project)
6. No. of participants: Approx. 100 volunteers from Japan and approx. 300 local residents (400 in total)
7. Organizer: AEON Environmental Foundation and Hue municipal government

[Reference]

AEON Environmental Foundation

The Aeon Environmental Foundation was established in 1990 based on Aeon's Basic Principles of "pursuit of peace, respect for humanity, and contribution to local communities." Since its establishment, the Foundation has made diverse efforts in planting trees, recycling resources, supporting environmental NGOs and NPOs, and organizing international congresses. In order to sustain our green planet for future generations, the Aeon Environmental Foundation will continue these activities, working towards supporting biodiversity.

AEON Environmental Foundation's website: <http://www.aeon.info/ef/en/index.html>

Environmental and social contribution activities in Vietnam:

Apart from tree-planting, Aeon is conducting various activities in Vietnam, including the following:

(1) School construction support project

Since 2000, Aeon has been supporting education in other countries by helping to construct schools, providing educational materials, and organizing teacher training programs. These activities were made possible by donations from our customers and employees as well as matched contributions from Aeon set up as an additional fund. In Vietnam, educational assistance has been provided since 2010 in the form of a three-year plan. Utilizing the funds generated through the project, fifteen schools have already been built in Hue city. To add 15 more schools, Aeon is planning to provide Hue city with a total of US\$ 150,000, with 5.57 million yen of that total coming from customer and employee contributions and an equal amount donated by Aeon.

(2) PET bottle cap collection campaign

For this campaign, PET bottle caps are being collected and sold as a recyclable resource, with the proceeds donated to international organizations that support children in developing Asian countries. Using the fund provided by this campaign, Aeon has supported the Save the Children Japan project since 2009 in its efforts to provide nutritious food to children in Vietnam.

(3) ASEAN environmental forum for university students

In 2010, 25 Japanese university students visited Vietnam. In the following year, three groups of university students, each comprising 30 students from Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam, respectively, gathered in Ho Chi Minh City to engage in discussions on the theme of "the environment." In 2012, approximately 100 students in total from Japan, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia will meet in Japan to participate in exchange programs.

(4) Aeon Scholarship

In 2011, Aeon concluded a partnership agreement with Vietnam National University—Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities (HCMUSSH). This partnership covers a range of fields, including exchange of personnel, joint research on the development of retail business, and acceptance of interns. In the same year, the Aeon Scholarship began supporting 60 students from HCMUSSH and the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education.

Business activities in Vietnam:

The Aeon Group has been working in unison to promote its business in Vietnam. In 2008, Aeon Credit Service Co., Ltd. began operations in Vietnam, while Ministop Co., Ltd. established its first franchise store in December 2011. In October 2011, Aeon Vietnam Co., Ltd. was established and is currently preparing for the opening of its first store, Aeon Shopping Center—Tan Phu Celadon, in 2014.