



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# FAO Philippines Newsletter 2015 Issue 2

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**Sustainable agriculture: key to lasting peace in Mindanao**

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FAO Representative, José Luis Fernández plants mangroves with members of the Barangay Agustin Navarra Environment Conservation Association (BANECA) in the province of Capiz. FAO supports community-based organizations such as BANECA in the rehabilitation of mangrove sites.

**W**elcome to the second issue of our newsletter. It has been a busy start to the year for FAO as we continue to vigorously pursue projects in support of the Government.

During the first quarter of the year we have launched the web-based Food Security Information System, completed the chronic analysis of food insecurity in 18 provinces in Mindanao under the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), and scaled up the Early Warning System for Food and Nutrition Security (EWS-FSN) in ten more municipalities.

Meanwhile the recovery interventions have been accelerated in our Haiyan response programme. FAO, in close consultation with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and its Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) and local government units, is finalizing its Post-Haiyan Strategic Plan for the medium term with the aim of building the resilience of affected farming and fishing communities to climate-induced disasters and the impact of climate change.

In response to a request by the Government early this year, FAO is also assisting in the formulation of the national disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategic framework for agriculture and fisheries. The Philippines is one of the first countries in implementing the shift from reactive emergency response to a proactive risk reduction approach, and while consultations with partners and stakeholders at all levels are presently ongoing, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the Government for taking the first steps toward this direction.

The DRR strategy is timely with the Philippines currently facing a weak El Niño, as confirmed recently by the state weather bureau - Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA). With some parts of the country

experiencing reduced rainfall and higher temperatures, FAO is working with the DA on preparing an El Niño damage assessment and needs analysis report on agricultural crops affected in 28 municipalities in Maguindanao.

FAO and the DA have also been collaborating to enhance climate risk management and disaster preparedness in Bicol - one of the most disaster-prone regions in the Philippines. And today, we're proud to say that this is now a model for DRR initiatives.

With the ongoing conflict across some areas of Mindanao continuing to cause mass displacement, the restoration of agriculture and fisheries remains a challenge since the majority of those affected are smallholder farmers and marginal fishers, and women. We are now currently assessing the impact of this displacement in terms of lost livelihoods.

Relatedly, FAO has been actively engaged in the Mindanao peace process and has assisted the Bangsamoro Development Agency in formulating the Bangsamoro Development Plan, particularly on challenges and development prospects in the agriculture and fisheries sector. Among which are the development of strategies that would help link many farmer rebel returnees and decommissioned combatants to opportunities that would provide better levels of farm incomes.

Of course, we continue to support the Government in addressing other equally important challenges facing the agriculture sector. These include issues on food and nutrition security, rural poverty, agrarian reform, agriculture competitiveness and market access of small farmers, climate change impact on agriculture, fisheries resource management and climate smart aquaculture, and restoring agriculture and fisheries livelihoods in farming and fishing communities affected by conflicts and natural disasters, among others.

We would like to encourage further support in these areas, which are also considered a priority by the Government. After all, agriculture is one of the fundamental building blocks for reducing poverty, particularly in the farming and fishing communities and also in the attainment of food and nutrition security.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the donor agencies and partners that took time out of their busy schedules to attend our Haiyan briefing in January. The accomplishments and milestones presented at the briefing was a testament to the saying that truly, there is success in working together.

On behalf of FAO, I look forward to future collaborations as we continue to work towards raising the quality of life of the Filipino farmers and fisher folks.

**José Luis Fernández**  
FAO Representative in the Philippines



A climate-smart farmer field school in Mindanao is combining DRR knowledge with innovations in climate change adaptation.

## Philippines takes first steps towards a national DRR strategy for agriculture

**W**hile the Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, it is also one of the most advanced countries in implementing the shift from a reactive emergency response to a proactive risk reduction approach. Now, through the leadership of the Department of Agriculture (DA), together with the technical assistance of FAO and financial support from the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Philippines will soon have a national disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy for agriculture and fisheries.

A national planning workshop for the development of strategies for DRR in agriculture and fisheries was held on 26 March 2015 at Subic Bay Freeport, with activities led by the Field Programs Operation Division of the DA. The workshop was attended by technical staff from various DA central office units as well as senior technical officers, DRR focal points and rice and corn coordinators from all DA regional field offices.

The first part of the workshop involved a brainstorming session on ways to integrate DRR in agriculture from both national and regional perspectives. The second part focused on the identification of DRR management-related priority actions, gaps and capacity development needs at different levels. Other points discussed in the workshop included proposed approaches to address mainstreaming

in existing structures as well as climate change adaptation (CCA) and DRR complementarities. A planning workshop involving senior DA officials was then proposed to elicit high-level inputs that will guide the strategy design.

The workshop was supported by the FAO regional ECHO-funded DRR project supporting agriculture in southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Philippines and Democratic People's Republic of Korea). With the overall leadership of the DA, the project is assisting select local government units (LGUs) and farming and fishing communities in identifying and

establishing good practice options. It also trains DA regional staff and LGU extension workers on disaster risk management systems, community-based DRR and CCA planning, climate risk management and early warning, and information and communications technology-assisted post-disaster needs assessments in agriculture.

In the Philippines, the DA and FAO continue to work in close partnership to support ongoing efforts at all levels to integrate and mainstream the government's DRR and climate change adaptation agendas in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.



Community-based DRR management training participants plot the disaster-prone areas in their municipality



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## Green Super Rice gives Bicol farmers higher yield

A demonstration farm in Camarines Norte that showcases a saltwater-resistant Green Super Rice line

**F**ronting the Pacific Ocean, Bicol is one of the Philippines' most disaster-prone regions, but farmers here now have a reason to expect higher productivity in spite of more challenging weather conditions. This is thanks to Green Super Rice (GSR) lines and other stress-tolerant rice varieties that are being introduced and replicated by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and FAO.

In the Bicol Region, demonstration farms that feature GSR lines have been established in cooperation with local government units to

allow farmers to observe and compare stress-tolerant lines from varieties that they traditionally use. The sites for these demonstration farms have been specifically chosen because they are located in communities where flood, drought and/or saltwater intrusion are prevalent. In these areas, farmers often have to live with reduced yield because of these hazards.

For Efren Dayaon, a rice farmer from Mercedes in Camarines Norte, flooding is an accepted occurrence in his community. During severe flooding, they are forced to save

what they can by harvesting their crops earlier than they should.

"Because of the saltwater intrusion and drought and with no irrigation to wash out the salt particles from my farm, my harvest had gone down to as low as 14 bags." Efren said. "Now, you can see how the seeds [GSR lines] are performing in spite of the condition of my farm. I think I can harvest more than 100 bags by the end of this cropping period."

Conditions can be equally challenging for farms in drought-prone areas without irrigation facilities. Many farmers in these areas only have one cropping period for rice in one year and would have to wait several weeks or months before being able to plant again. With the changing climate patterns, however, predicting the best time to plant is becoming more difficult for farmers like Frank Piquit, who has been farming rice for more than 30 years.

"We now experience the extremes here: flooding during occasional rains, and drought at the height of the summer season," he said. "I plant short-term crops like melon



In spite of saline intrusion, GSR lines are in good condition.

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and watermelon to help us get by, because I do not have the resources to risk planting rice when the weather gets so unpredictable.”

While farmers acknowledge that extreme weather conditions will continue to be a challenge, Efren Dayaon is now more hopeful about the future as he stands proudly over his rice field. “Neighbours who pass by my farm often ask about the GSR lines. They are impressed that the rice plants are still in good condition in spite of the saltwater intrusion.”

The introduction of GSR lines as a good practice option for disaster

risk reduction (DRR) is part of FAO’s regional DRR project, funded by the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), supporting agriculture in southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Philippines and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea). Aside from the GSR lines, the project is also showcasing other good practice options including vegetable gardening, more efficient use of fertilizer and improved soil and water management practices. These practices can make a big difference for smallholder farmers in terms of increasing their agricultural productivity and improving farm-level resilience.

Since 2009, FAO and the DA have been collaborating to enhance climate risk management and disaster preparedness in Bicol and today is a model for DRR initiatives. The DA Regional Field Office in Bicol established a Technical Unit for DRR and management, and produced a regional plan of action, along with 15 community development plans with local counterparts and communities. Along with Bicol, the ECHO-funded project is also present in the Caraga and Davao Regions in Mindanao.



Efren Dayaon, a farmer-beneficiary of drought-resistant GSR lines answers questions from ECHO donor representative Devriq Velly and FAO field officer Isagani Pineda.

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Representatives from ECHO visited the project sites in Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte on 16-18 February 2015 to interview key stakeholders on the implementation of the project, including local government units and farming communities. They also met with project partners including the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture and the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration to discuss project activities/outputs as well

as general DRR strategies and mechanisms in the region.

In the recently published EU Resilience Compendium, ECHO acknowledged the significant contribution FAO is playing in strengthening capacities for proactive DRR management integration with development policy and planning, and further praised the project as being “a strong example of a community-based resilience project designed to have a larger strategic impact.”

The document can be downloaded from [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/eu\\_resilience\\_compendium\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/eu_resilience_compendium_en.pdf)





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## Sustainable agriculture: key to lasting peace in Mindanao

Farmers walk their carabaos past military armoured personnel carriers as they evacuate Mamasapano town, Maguindanao province, in central Mindanao.

In 2014, ten of the 16 poorest provinces in the Philippines were in Mindanao. Poor access to basic services and limited economic opportunities are results of disruptions and uncertainties caused by conflict and natural disasters in the region.

More than half of the population in Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) live in poverty, while 46 percent of the households in five of the provinces in the region are food insecure. This is largely attributed to poverty and low agricultural productivity. When families are displaced by armed conflict, communities become resource-poor, and livelihood opportunities and food sources become very limited.

Ironically, most combatants from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) belong to farming and fishing households and are predominantly farmers and fisher folks. Those wanting to return to a life of peace cannot do so owing to lack of access to land and the capital asset to regain their livelihoods.

Despite its rich natural resources, Mindanao is not faring well in terms of harnessing its agricultural potential. While more than 60 percent of the ARMM's economic outputs are comprised of agriculture, fisheries and forestry products, these are of low value. There are virtually limited market opportunities for farmers; and agricultural labour productivity is significantly lower than the other provinces in the country. When roads are blocked and some areas become off-limits because of armed conflict, it becomes increasingly difficult and sometimes impossible to bring the produce to the markets to allow farmers to earn sufficient income and afford the purchase of inputs to sustain farming.

"A weak agriculture sector holds severe implications for sustainable development and peace," FAO Representative in the Philippines, José Luis Fernández said. "Successful reintegration of former MILF combatants and displaced households will only happen if they have the means to return to farming or fishing."

"By assisting them in regaining their productive assets and helping them make informed decisions about their livelihoods, they will have a better chance at securing more stable sources of income and have access to more nutritious food sources," Mr. Fernández added.



A climate-smart farmer field school in Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao Province.

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## Promoting agricultural development as a means for peace

Food secure households, lower malnutrition rates and a lower poverty incidence in Mindanao is a vision that is shared by FAO, together with the Bangsamoro Development Agency and the Government of the Philippines.

Since 2005, FAO has been actively engaged in the rehabilitation of agriculture- and fisheries-based livelihoods in conflict-affected and disaster-affected areas in Mindanao, including the ARMM, Central Mindanao, Davao Oriental and Zamboanga City. For almost a decade, FAO has been providing agricultural and fisheries inputs, training farmers and fishers on improved technologies, practices and livelihood options, and strengthening their resilience to disasters. Through the UN Peacebuilding Fund, FAO along with other UN agencies and national counterparts is preparing to assist families who were affected by the siege in Zamboanga City in September 2013. FAO support will specifically address fisher families to increase

their incomes by introducing a more profitable and sustainable approach to fishing and seaweed farming. Following the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, FAO has become active in the formulation of the Bangsamoro Development Plan (BDP) along with other development partners.

One of the flagship programmes of BDP is the Bangsamoro Sustainable Agriculture Programme. This programme aims to increase farm productivity, income and food security, with greater focus to vulnerable groups. For the transition period, FAO intends to support smallholder farmers and fishers by enhancing their capacities to jumpstart the restoration and rehabilitation of their livelihoods, engage in microenterprises especially for women, get access to markets and sustain their gains by integrating climate-resilient agriculture principles in their production and processing.

“The focus of FAO’s work is to restore livelihoods to facilitate the return

to normalcy of farming and fishing households that have been affected by the conflict in Mindanao,” Mr. Fernández explained. “Replacing lost productive assets is not enough. We need to transition from subsistence farming to more sustainable livelihoods. This will be achieved by providing the farmers with an understanding of how the market works, facilitating their access to improved production systems and making their farms climate-resilient.”

In facilitating these interventions, FAO will be focusing on smallholder farmers and marginal fishers, including decommissioned MILF combatants and women, as they constitute the largest segments of the Bangsamoro workforce.

*FAO’s projects in Mindanao have been funded through the UN Peacebuilding Fund, UN Central Emergency Response Fund, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and the Governments of Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and Spain.*

FAO introduced ‘floating fish cages’ to teach farmers to farm fish and not just rely on catching fish in the wild.





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## Seaweed farmers regain livelihoods after Typhoon Haiyan

Jessica Paguia, a seaweed farmer from Coron

**W**hen Typhoon Haiyan struck in November 2013, it severely damaged and destroyed many seaweed facilities and production, crippling the income of Filipino coastal farmers who relied on this as their main source of livelihood.

The Philippines is one of the world's largest producers of seaweed and initial assessments after the typhoon showed that USD 12.2 million was lost in the aquaculture and seaweed production alone.

As part of its recovery and rehabilitation response for the fisheries sector, FAO worked together with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to provide livelihood and rehabilitation assistance to 2 000 seaweed farming beneficiaries, including 1 000 households in the four municipalities of the islands of Palawan: Coron, Busuanga, Culion and Linapacan.

For 31-year-old Jessica Paguia, from the Tagbanua indigenous group on the island of Coron, farming seaweed is a family affair and has been their main source of income for the small coastal community for the past 20 years.

"When Yolanda came, our house and all our farming materials were washed out by the typhoon," said Jessica, looking out at the water that houses their livelihood. "We didn't know where to start, because we lost everything and have relied on seaweed farming for so many years. Everyone was affected – not only our family."

"With so many seaweed farmers affected, it was critical to re-establish their assets in order for them to recommence their seaweed culture operations," says Godardo Juanich, FAO Senior Aquaculture and Mariculture Consultant.

The assistance provided by FAO included seaweed farming packages consisting of nylon lines, floats and planting materials, along with home-based seaweed drying facilities, and establishing seaweed nurseries to enable diversification and culturing of seaweed species.



FAO Senior Aquaculture and Mariculture Consultant, Godardo Juanich inspects the nylon lines used for seaweed farming.

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While the damage to seaweed farming was extensive, it also presented an opportunity during the recovery and rehabilitation to introduce better farming practices. Trainings were provided on how to select more suitable farming sites, the preparation of seedlings, seaweed farm maintenance and how to gain access to markets.

"We learnt things like proper cutting, transferring to nursery grounds, and the period it takes for seaweed to reproduce," Jessica says. "Prior to this, we were just harvesting the seaweed and drying them which caused the seaweed to shrink. We didn't know that we had to transfer them before drying, so the training helped us to cut our losses."

In the aftermath of the typhoon, many of the farmers were falling victims to loan sharks in order to buy seedlings and inputs to re-

establish their farms, setting up a vicious cycle of paying high interest rates and being obliged to sell back their seaweed products at below market value.

"The inputs and training that we have provided means they will no longer need to get loans from these middlemen, Mr. Juanich explains. "We're showing farmers how to directly access the markets, and they now know how to produce their own seedlings, thereby allowing them to not be too dependent on other sources for inputs."

With the kits, materials and training they've received, seaweed farmers like Jessica and her family are slowly recovering and re-establishing more productive and resilient seaweed farms.

"Without this support we wouldn't have a source of livelihood," she

says. "We can now expand our seaweed farms through the variety of techniques that we've learnt and adapt our strategies according to climate conditions."

Jessica doesn't know what the future holds, but she is sure about one thing: "We are now able to meet our basic needs every day and the materials are also sufficient capital for us to be able to recover from what we lost."

*Support to seaweed farming is part of FAO's USD 39.7 million Haiyan Recovery and Rehabilitation Programme, of which USD 8.2 million is providing support to the fisheries sector and assisting around 19 000 fishing families across three regions of the Philippines: Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas and MIMAROPA. The fisheries programme is funded by:*



Nora Avicio, a beneficiary of the post-harvest fisheries training and recipient of a drying rack.

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## Women benefit from post-harvest training and drying racks

After Typhoon Haiyan, women in fisheries, especially wives of fishers, had become particularly vulnerable, not only because their husbands were unable to fish but also due to the extensive damage to the fish markets. Women are an integral part of the value chain of the fisheries sector and play an important role in the post-harvest salting, drying and marketing of fish.

The post-harvest component of FAO's Fisheries Rehabilitation programme after Typhoon Haiyan aimed to reactivate and strengthen systems of fish trading, processing

and value-adding through the provision of post-harvest and processing kits that were damaged and lost during the typhoon and are valuable tools in fish vending, trading and processing.

To-date, FAO has provided 2 000 fishers with post-harvest training, with 80 percent of those trained being women. FAO also recently completed its distribution of 2 700 drying racks in support of women working in the cottage industry of dried fish processing. This is in addition to previous inputs provided such as fish tubs, salt, drain baskets, plastic basins,

weighing scales, chopping boards and butchering knives.

The project partnered with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to contribute towards the shared and common goal of providing meaningful and resilient livelihoods to Haiyan-affected fisher folks and fishing communities. The drying racks component of the project (in Region IV-B only) was in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, the Technical Skills and Development Authority and the Western Philippines University.



©FAO/Willafranca

## Contour farming puts farmers back on the path to recovery

Coconut farmers are being trained on contour farming, which is not only building resilience to weather-related disasters but also introducing innovative changes in the way farming is done to increase productivity in a sustainable manner.

**B**uilding the resilience of farmers is a key priority of FAO's recovery and rehabilitation efforts in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan. For farmers whose coconut stands were destroyed by the typhoon, this means being provided with a stable source of alternative livelihood that can be sustained even with limited land resources and capital.

In response to this challenge, FAO established Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) sites in Haiyan-affected areas to allow coconut-based farming communities to plant short-term and annual crops to provide alternative livelihood sources and make use of idle land under coconut plantations. SALT (also known as contour farming) was adopted in these areas because it is an ecologically-sound method of upland and contour farming that is specifically developed for smallholder farmers with few tools, little capital and limited farming grounds.

Lalane Perucho, a coconut farmer from Balete, Aklan is one of the

beneficiaries of FAO's recovery and rehabilitation response programme. Lalane and her husband have a small farm and lost several of their coconut stands and smaller crops after the typhoon. But like most women-headed households, she was unable to benefit from emergency employment and agricultural inputs provided by the Government and other agencies

during the initial phases of the emergency. This forced her to look for other means of income. "Without the expected harvest, I do laundry work to support our family," she said. "When my children leave for school, I used to plant vegetables and attend to other chores. But because my children are still young, I can only plant near our house."



Lalane Perucho, a coconut farmer and beneficiary from Balete, Aklan Province.

©FAO/S. Miskelly

The SALT training provided Lalane with an opportunity to resume her farming activities within the vicinity of her community. "Before, we do not know that you can plant crops on a steep place like this. We learned a lot when we attended the SALT training," she said. "We learned that we can plant in hilly areas and prevent erosion. Because of that we won't run out of land where we can plant."

Through the training, farmers were provided with additional skills and techniques for intercropping. "We planted pineapple, but because it takes a year to harvest, we also planted eggplant, tomato and chilli, which we can harvest in three months," Lalane explained.

SALT farming is also offering better prospects for farmers to grow high-value crops like ginger and earn more income while they wait for their coconut stands to become productive again. "We now want to plant more crops like ginger because we can sell it at a higher price (per kilo)," Lalane added. "I have four children to support in their schooling. This additional source of income will help a lot."

According to Peter Agnew, FAO Haiyan Programme Coordinator, the Haiyan Recovery and Rehabilitation programme for farmers was designed to not only link emergency to recovery but take it to the next step in terms of diversifying their farming. "Some coconut farmers were already diversifying their farms with rice and corn, but this is not suitable for every location which is why introducing SALT farming and bringing in other value-added options and high-value crops like ginger has been so important."

To-date, FAO has established 92 SALT sites in Region VIII and 28 SALT sites in Region VI – benefitting around 35 500 households that rely on coconut-based farming systems for their livelihood. These SALT sites are located within the communities of the beneficiaries and therefore allow women to participate and learn from community farming activities and contribute to the income of the household.

## FAO-ILO-Save the Children Haiyan project closes with ceremony in Ormoc

FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Save the Children recently marked the closure of the UK-funded project supporting small-scale rice and corn farming communities that were severely affected by Typhoon Haiyan in Leyte province. The project focused on the synergies between the three agencies: restoration of livelihoods, income generation, food self-sufficiency and building the resilience of small-scale farmers.

Attended by officials and representatives from regional and local governments, along with members of farmers associations from four municipalities, the closing event was marked by the ceremonial planting of a hardwood tree in one of the Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) sites in Barangay Lake Danao.

During the ceremony, the farmers associations were able to present

their accomplishments and plans for maintenance and production of the SALT sites and also received asset transfer certificates from FAO and the local government. The assets' handover follows the individual trainings provided to farmers on maintenance and repair for the various farm implements distributed, including rice threshers, rice reapers, shredders and cultivators.

Speaking at the event, the Mayor of San Isidro, the Hon. Susan Yap-Ang noted how, thanks to the project, the people of Ormoc have started to stabilize their livelihood and food security. "We have risen from the debris and we stood up," Ms. Yap-Ang said.

The joint project supported short-term employment opportunities, developed alternative agricultural practices, and provided capacity building to 6 800 rice and corn farming households.



FAO's Emergency Response Manager, Alessia Anibaldi together with Haiyan Programme Coordinator, Peter Agnew and Field Operations Officer, Retchel Sasing plant a hardwood tree.

*FAO's Coconut-Based Farming Systems (CBFS) programme is part of FAO's USD 39.7 million Typhoon Haiyan Strategic Response Plan to address the early recovery needs of affected farming families. The CBFS programme is assisting some 35 500 coconut farming families across three regions of the Philippines (Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas and MIMAROPA) and is funded by the Governments of:*





## FAO Haiyan Donor Briefing

FAO's Haiyan donor briefing was held on Tuesday 27 January at the Intercontinental Hotel in Makati, to update the donor community of the substantive accomplishments of FAO's Haiyan projects and highlight the benefits and impact that the projects have so far generated.

The event was attended by 18 representatives of the donor community, along with 20 representatives from government departments and institutions, providing an opportunity to thank the donors for their various contributions as well as government partners for their effective collaboration.

"Our work, however, does not end there," said José Luis Fernández, FAO-Philippines Country Representative in his closing remarks. "Everyone will agree that the next crucial step that must be undertaken is towards disaster risk reduction and management as well as building resilience of concerned offices and communities against future similar extreme events."

In closing, Mr. Fernández outlined FAO's key priority areas for the next four years, which involves promoting sustainable peace and development through support to agriculture in Mindanao, interventions on risk and crisis governance; and supporting DRR measures through early warning systems and building resilience to help minimize losses and facilitate immediate recovery.



## UN Special Rapporteur on right to food visits Philippines

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Hilal Elver, undertook an official visit to the Philippines from 20 to 27 February 2015 to gather first-hand information on the realization of the right to food in the country.

Ms. Elver, visited the country at the invitation of the Government, and engaged with the authorities to identify the main obstacles hindering the full realization of the right to food and propose strategies for tackling these obstacles and improving the enjoyment of rights by the most vulnerable in society.

The Government has declared its commitment to developing a national framework for ensuring the right to adequate food and Ms. Elver commended the efforts made to date to develop policies to ensure food security, however she warned that access to sufficient and nutritious food is still limited in the Philippines despite recent progress.

During her seven-day mission, Ms. Elver met with senior Government officials and representatives of Parliamentary committees, international organizations, development agencies, academia and a range of civil society and grass root organizations.

This was the first visit to the country by an independent expert on the right to food assigned by the UN Human Rights Council to report on initiatives to ensure the full realization of the right to food.



## 151st FAO Executive Council - Philippines presents resilience case studies

A side event featuring FAO's work on increasing resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises was held in Rome during the 151st session of FAO's Executive Council meeting in March. The side event showcased achievements on risk reduction and management in the contexts of Guatemala, the Niger, the Philippines and Yemen.

Segfredo Serrano, Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, Research and Development, and Regulations of the Philippines' Department of Agriculture (DA) was a panellist in the side event and illustrated how, long-term strategy and risk-sensitive development was prioritized in response to Typhoon Haiyan to build back better and improve disaster preparedness.

Mr. Serrano also highlighted the effective collaboration and joint efforts between FAO and the DA on climate risk management and disaster preparedness of local governments and communities in the Bicol Region.

The DA and FAO work in close partnership to mainstream DRR in agriculture across government levels, with the local government units providing support in the preparation of community-based disaster risk reduction and management plans. Both the DA and FAO support ongoing efforts to integrate the government's DRR and climate change adaptation agendas in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.



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