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Open sea fishing in the southern Philippines.

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Ensuring enforcement of sustainable fishing in the Philippines

In 2015, over a third of all fish stocks worldwide were overfished. This is part of a global trend where illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is contributing to a jeopardized future of fisheries (FAO State of Fisheries and Agriculture).

This is no less of a problem in the Philippines; data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) indicates that the volume of production from commercial fisheries fell by 6.69 thousand metric tons (0.71% of total production) between 2017 and 2018, notably in part due to IUU fishing. This comes at great cost to the contribution and sustainable use of Philippine marine resources and ecosystems, as well as food security and the economy.

The Philippines is one among 62 countries that have agreed to the 2016 Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) in effort to combat IUU fishing. This is the first binding international agreement that specifically combats IUU fishing by preventing ships and vessels engaged in IUU from using ports and

landing their catches. For signatory countries like the Philippines, this agreement is instrumental as a cost-effect means to curb IUU fishing. With FAO's support, the PSMA is encouraging developing countries like the Philippines to develop port state measures and complementary monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) operations.

As a part of FAO's support to the Philippines in implementing the PSMA, three experts from FAO in Rome, Italy (Ms. Adela Rey Aneiros, International Fisheries Policy and Legal Expert, and Mr. Martin Cauchi Inglott and Mr. Peter Flewelling, international MCS experts) conducted a three-day seminar in April. The experts, with the participation of top management from from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the



Selling the catch of the day.

Bureau of Customs (BoC), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (PFDA) identified legal, institutional and operational challenges and drew up a work plan for future implementation of the PSMA.

While the Philippine government is allocating resources to the best of its capacity and has provided a national legal framework for PSMA, there are still notable areas for potential improvement. Throughout the course of the seminar, participants noted that the main challenge for national enforcement of port state measures is limited human resource capacity. Fishery law enforcement personnel are occupied with measures to deter IUU fishing at sea, so there is too little labor and equipment to fully implement port state measures at this time.

The PSMA, with its requisite evaluation of the current state and mechanisms of fishing and fish sales, offers an opportunity for the Philippines to have enhanced and more cost-efficient MCS mechanisms for a more sustainable future for Philippine

fisheries and marine resources. Collective efforts are critical, said Tamara Palis-Duran, Assistant FAO Representative – Programme, to “contribute in strengthening international interventions... [and] enhancing fisheries management and governance at all levels to contribute to protecting marine resources for the next generations”. Seminars, like the one held in April, represent the first steps on that path.

Going forward, FAO will be conducting a desk review of fisheries laws in the Philippines in the context of PSMA and training needs assessments in coordination with BFAR. Following this will be trainings for BFAR staff, both in Manila and in Davao and General Santos City.

FAO's response to El Niño

What is El Niño?

El Niño, a routine climate pattern causing a rise in sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, has had very tangible and drastic impacts on Philippine agriculture in the past year.

As per monitoring of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), El Niño conditions started to develop in the Philippines since the last quarter of 2018 and has been anticipated to persist until the third quarter of 2019.

Since then, the El Niño-induced drought and dry spell events have damaged close to P10.1 billion worth of crops and fisheries yields, affecting 362,000 farmers across Regions CAR, I, II, III, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, V, VI, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII, CARAGA and BARRM. The devastation to the corn and rice industries

especially has forced 49 LGUs to declare a State of Calamity.

El Niño Response

The government, as led by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) has been coordinating with its pertinent agencies – including PAGASA, NEDA, the DA and PCIC, to provide financial assistance and technical advice to affected farmers and LGUs regarding impact-based forecasting and preparedness measures.

To supplement the government's measures, FAO implemented its pilot Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) project supporting 1500 vulnerable rice farmers in selected municipalities in North Cotabato and Maguindanao through provision of



FAO adopts a multi-sectoral and multi-level approach to addressing the effects of EL Niño in the country.



An FAO project beneficiary.

irrigation systems and inputs and by offering alternative livelihoods such as livestock farming and high-value commercial crops, various capacity building training on drought related agricultural technologies and management, Early Warning System (EWS) and launching of the Provincial El Niño information caravan to 15 provinces in the country. All of these activities were intended to safeguard asset livelihoods and increase resilience of the affected communities under the project. The findings of the EWEA project were used to inform the national government's initiatives toward increasing the resilience and preparedness of farmers and their communities in the event of an El Niño phenomenon.

Other actors like World Food Programme (WFP) also co-implemented the EWEA project through cash-for-work and capacity building activities in Maguindanao.

After-Action Review

In September, FAO and WFP organized the El Niño After Action Review (AAR) which serves as a platform for the government and non-state actors to discuss the successes, challenges, and plans to effectively and proactively respond to El Niño occurrence in the future. The AAR aimed to deliver the following objectives:

- Share El Niño actions initiated by various agencies and actors;

- Identify key lessons, challenges and gaps in the El Niño actions implemented;
- Define and agree on an integrated El Niño action plan.

The AAR was able to identify next steps to prepare for another El Niño, which include:

- Crafting of an El Niño Action Plan consisting of triggers, early actions and coordination across government and partners (where leadership is defined for each phase);
- Rapid activation of an El Niño Task Force as soon as PAGASA announces an El Niño;
- Pre-disaster budget review and development of dedicated standby funds specifically for El Niño response;
- Production of Guidance Notes for master listing of farmers/fisher folks/laborers, short and long-term interventions for El Niño for national and local government, and impact-based forecasting on drought to guide early-action implementation;
- Watershed management and solar power irrigation.

Partners in the After-Action Review

- FAO and WFP (co-organizers)
- PAGASA
- National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)
- Office of Civil Defense (OCD)
- Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)
- Department of Agriculture (DA)
- National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
- Provincial Local Government Unit (PLGU) of Iloilo,
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- Philippine Red Cross (PRC)
- **Christian Aid (CA)**
- **Rice Watch Action Network (RWAN)**

Early action helps women in drought-vulnerable communities

As early as January 2019, farming communities in the municipalities of Pigkawayan in North Cotabato and Datu Saudi Ampatuan in Maguindanao, both located on the southern island of Mindanao in the Philippines, have started early action planning to prepare for dry conditions brought on by El Niño. This El Niño affected the country since between March and August 2019.

FAO, with support from the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium, has been implementing an Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) project to protect the livelihoods of rice farmers in selected vulnerable areas in Mindanao against the potential for extremely dry conditions (as mentioned in the preceding article "FAO's response to El Niño). These conditions are linked with the El Niño phenomenon which began developing in 2018, meaning dramatic alternation of intense droughts and typhoons. "Such changes are testing the resilience of traditional methods of the country and being able to protect the population, especially their livelihoods, from these shocks is becoming increasingly challenging," FAO Representative in the Philippines Jose Luis Fernandez said.



A woman farmer in Mindanao.

To address these challenges, FAO conducted preparedness planning workshops and activities with farmers, including women, in Pigkawayan and Datu Saudi Ampatuan, which are among the areas most vulnerable to the impacts of El Niño.

Early action for farming communities

The EWEA project aimed to safeguard the livelihoods of rice farmers by providing them with irrigation systems and climate-resilient farm inputs. The project also supported rice farmers by promoting the diversification of their livelihoods, encouraging livestock farming and production of high-value commercial crops to safeguard livelihoods and increase resilience.

The project has provided 1 500 farmers, including women, with drought-resistant rice and corn seed varieties, garden tools, fertilizer and plastic drums for water storage. Women's cooperatives have also been trained on enhanced farming systems for vegetable production, basic livestock production for goats and mallard ducks, preparedness planning in relation to drought as well as management and handling. This has helped women gain

additional sources of food and income.

According to Badria Alon, President of Datu Saudi Ampatuan Women's Cooperative, FAO's EWEA project has helped them a great deal in terms of gaining knowledge and skills from different capacity building activities related to agriculture, such as the mallard duck and vegetable garden production trainings. The mallard duck eggs and the vegetables that the women in the cooperative have produced and are now selling has generated income that has helped the women support their children's school-related costs. The vegetables have also been used in feeding programmes at four elementary schools in Datu Saudi Ampatuan.

This EWEA project builds on the piloting of a drought EWEA system in the Philippines that was established in February 2018 by FAO using triangulation of various early warning indicators. FAO utilizes the EWEA system to generate and disseminate timely information on El Niño as part of its disaster risk reduction and management and climate change adaptation initiatives. This helps ensure that enough lead time is provided to implement early actions on



(Top) A Mindanaoan women farmer tending to her seedlings; (bottom) FAOR Jose Luis Fernandez and Belgian Ambassador to the Philippines HE Michel Goffin at an FAO project site.

the ground to protect vulnerable farmers and their livelihoods against the extreme weather conditions brought by El Niño.

This article was previously published on the [FAO in Emergencies](#) website.

Adaptation of the Philippine fisheries sector

The Philippines is one of the world's most important fishing countries, ranking 10th in the world as producer of marine capture. The country's already fragile fisheries resources and marine ecosystems face even greater decline in a warmer world. To tackle this challenge, the Philippines is taking action through various means to increase the resilience of this sector.

A recent report by FAO indicates that climate change will lead to significant changes in the availability and trade of fish products, with potentially important geopolitical and economic consequences. One study suggests that a two degree warming will result in an average decline of almost 24 percent of the maximum catch potential of all species combined of the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) by 2050.

The Philippines Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) recognizes this threat and strives to increase its capacities to uphold the resilience of the fisheries sector. With support from the FAO and UNDP led programme "Integrating Agriculture

in National Adaptation Plans (NAP-Ag)", and with the technical support of experts from the FAO the fisheries and aquaculture department, BFAR convened a national workshop on 17-18 September 2019. The workshop gathered representatives of fishing communities and cooperatives, as well as government, academy, private sector, and civil society partners, to present and discuss projected climate change impacts and associated risks and vulnerabilities on sardine fisheries and dependent livelihoods.

While sardine fisheries were highlighted because of their relevance to the Philippine economy and nutritional needs of the population, the workshop related the

findings to possible impacts on other ecologically- and economically-important fish species. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants had identified potential adaptation mechanisms to respond to crises in the fisheries sector including intensified storms, sea level rise and rising temperature (e.g. coral bleaching and acidification).

FAO introduced its adaptation toolbox that provide guidance on possible adaptation responses in the context of Philippine fisheries. Case studies on addressing sardine catch wastage and on gender-sensitive analysis for seaweed were presented to illustrate different ways of addressing adaptation recommended in the toolbox.

Encouraged by the positive reception to the workshop, BFAR has been spurred to



Young Filipino fishers tending to their net.

review and incorporate lessons learned into its recent Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (CC-DRRM) Framework and Plan. The agency has committed to consider the range of adaptation approaches and tools such as institutional changes, livelihood options, and risk reduction and management measures, not only to protect the fisheries production

systems but also to enhance the resilience of the country's fishing communities in the wake of climate change.

This article was previously published in the IKI Philippines newsletter.

The life and times of ginger

While just another ingredient for most Filipinos, ginger is the lifeblood of communities in Lanao del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya and Quezon. One of the most important cash crops in these regions, ginger's falling yield in past years has been a major cause for concern. In Nueva Vizcaya especially, smallholder farmers in upland areas like Kasibu and Aritao are struggling to combat increased incidences of pests and diseases like soft rot and bacterial wilt that largely contribute to lower productivity.

Trainings conducted by FAO with the Department of Agriculture (DA) aimed to

provide practical knowledge regarding good ginger farming and harvesting practices, including production of organic fertilizers, and good manufacturing practices for product development. This was part of FAO's effort to analyze and improve efficiency of the ginger value chain by way of inclusive interventions at the primary phase.

Good farming practices

One of the key issues that ginger farmers face is a lack of understanding on how to prevent diseases such as soft rot and bacterial wilt and proper soil and plant nutrition management, which is necessary to build resilience against pests and diseases and increase productivity. In this regard, the trainings focused on both identifying malnutrition and underproduction in ginger plants and remedying it via application of indigenous micro-organisms that speed up composting, prevent plant diseases, and

revive soil nutrients, fermented plant/fruit juices, fish amino acids, lactic acid bacteria and herbal nutrients – all readily available in their farms and communities. Notable among these inputs is *Trichoderma*, a DA-provided fungus that enhances yield and quality along with long-term immunity to disease.

Trainings also shared best practices regarding fertilizer proportions, planting and harvesting to ensure maximum productivity while assuring hygiene and sustainability.

Product development

Ginger is a high-value crop, fetching high sales in the market even when unprocessed. However, supply is also significant, and farmers also seasonally process ginger into ginger tea and ginger powder. For the greater ginger value chain in Nueva Vizcaya, FAO is encouraging development of novel



FAO's ginger value chain project helped improve ginger farmers' economic opportunities.

ginger-based products to add value to the industry; farmers and processors have already expressed excitement about the recently conducted ginger product development competition.

Prior to the competition, a training on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) was held to sensitize the processors about the major aspects of food safety and contamination risks. Additionally, it sought to provide understanding about product quality and positioning in the market and share ideas about ginger-based products in the world market. The activities included cooking demonstrations of new recipes and break-out discussions about flavor compatibility, preservation of nutritional and health properties and commercial viability.

Initiatives to improve the ginger industry will open a new frontier in innovation and provide livelihood opportunities for the farmers and processors in Nueva Vizcaya. In this way, even a humble crop like ginger can be instrumental in contributing to the prosperity of a community.

Stories of inspiration from Marawi

As FAO's Marawi Recovery Project comes to a close, participants in its activities share their stories and experiences.

Ali Mori Tangcolo, pictured to the right, is a 44 year-old farmer based in Barangay Pindolonan, Piagapo, Lanao del Sur. In the past, he would sell his yield of mainly coconuts and bananas in the Marawi City markets. With the onset of the Marawi siege, he lost Marawi City as a market; he was only able to sell in his own town, making less than half of what he would have made per kilogram in Marawi. In addition to the loss of profit, his family took in relatives that had evacuated Marawi. In order to survive, he and his family had to consume all they had saved, including what they would have sold in their sari-sari (sundry) store.



Ali Mori Tangcolo.

As a part of FAO's Marawi recovery efforts, Ali and his family were provided farming inputs and taught more efficient ways to produce and sell their crops, enhancing their household income and facilitating their bounce-back from the Marawi crisis.



Marawi poultry farmers.



Sohra Panarangin.

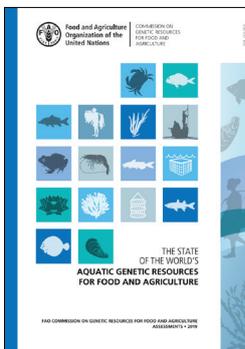
Sohra Panarangin (left), a 43-year-old widow with 5 children, is pictured to the left. Prior to the Marawi siege, she would deliver products and sell peanut butter and smoked fish in the city. Following the siege, the stores she used to deliver to were gone, as was her only source of livelihood.

She then turned to farming, planting sweet potatoes and other vegetable crops. FAO provided farming inputs, including cuttings and tools, and trained

her and others about how to process harvests to increase value on the market.

“FAO helped us a lot. What they have given us is the start of a new beginning, a point of entry for us to improve our socio-economic condition.”

Publications



The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture 2019

This report annually evaluates the use of aquatic genetic resources in capture fisheries and in agriculture in areas under national jurisdiction. Pulling from data provided by 92 countries representing 96% of global aquaculture production and over 80 percent of capture fisheries production, the report emphasizes the need for more sustainable production through strategic management and genetic improvement of existing resources.



The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019

The annual report, published by FAO in collaboration with IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, was launched on July 15. This year's issue, like last year's, brings attention to the worrying trend of hunger being on the rise. While the percent of undernourished has remained the same at slightly below 11%, the total number of undernourished has increased; meaning that today, over 820 million people suffer from hunger - one in every nine people in the world.



Corporate Outcome Statement 2019

At the end of each biennium, FAO conducts a Corporate Outcome Assessment (COA) to measure progress in achieving its strategic objectives. The COA monitors the impact of FAO's work around the world, identifies good practices and ensures that strategic objectives are being achieved. By gathering data and feedback from government and other partners in each of the countries in which it operates, FAO can identify gaps and areas for improvement in supporting the agriculture sector and food and nutrition security. The COA 2019 will be published in the coming months.

Upcoming events

SOFA REPORT LAUNCH

OCT 14 | FAO HQ

Launch of FAO's annual "State of Food and Agriculture" report, this year focusing on moving forward on food loss and waste reduction.

WORLD FOOD DAY

16 Oct. | Department of Agriculture | Quezon Memorial Circle

Annual celebration held by the DA in honor of the theme "Our Actions Are Our Future: Healthy Diets for a #ZeroHunger World".

UN DAY

24 Oct. | UNCT/DFA | SM Aura, Taguig

Celebration under the theme "Ushering in the Decade of Action to Achieve the SDGs". The event will feature official statements and a Repertory Philippines Broadway show tailored to highlight the SDGs.

5TH NATIONAL DIALOGUE PLATFORM ON FORECAST-BASED FINANCING

6-7 Nov. | FAO/WFP | Tagaytay City

Gathering of key stakeholders including FAO, WFP, GIZ, Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and the START Network to discuss ways forward on developing and integrating global and local financing mechanisms in policy and planning.

ZAMBOANGA SUB-OFFICE LAUNCH & INCEPTION MEETING OF JAPAN-FUNDED "AGRICULTURAL TRAINING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE IN MINDANAO"

18 Nov. | FAO | Zamboanga City

Launch of FAO's newest sub-office in the Philippines which will support projects in Mindanao, primarily in Zamboanga-Sibugay, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

From the FAOR

Farewell, but not goodbye.

A popular saying goes: "All good things must come to end". Sadly, it is in this light that I am addressing you in this combined Q2 and Q3 2019 edition of the FAO-Philippines Newsletter as my last in my capacity as FAO Representative in the Philippines.



The last 5 years of working in this beautiful country has been some of the most challenging – but also the most inspiring – of my personal and professional life. During these years, it has been both a privilege and a great pleasure to work side-by-side with you, our partners, on our common goal of supporting the sustainable development of the country and its humanitarian needs related to disasters and conflict.

As I bid farewell, I also thank our partners – the Philippine Government, national counterpart agencies and institutions, donors, development partners, and our sister UN agencies for the wholehearted support. I trust that this valuable partnership will continue to flourish and make a positive difference in the lives of Filipinos.

I especially thank my FAO-Philippines staff for the support and excellent work that you have extended to me and creating such a satisfying, pleasant, and productive work environment during my journey in this country. I am extremely confident that the Representation Office is in good hands as I leave.

I wish everyone success in your professional and personal lives and I do sincerely hope that our paths will cross again in the near future.

Muchas gracias y buena suerte a todos.

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