



WFD 2019 celebration: attendees raise lit candles as collective symbol of hope for a better and #ZeroHunger future for all.

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## Our actions are our future: Healthy diets for a #ZeroHunger world

*On World Food Day, the Philippines joins other nations in calling for actions to ensure a world where nutritious food is available and affordable for everyone, everywhere.*

FAO Philippines, together with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the World Food Programme (WFP), led the commemoration of this year's World Food Day (WFD2019), which had the theme "Our Actions Are our Future. Healthy Diets for a #ZeroHunger World."

The three-day celebration of WFD2019 kicked off with a festive opening program held at the DA's premises in Quezon City on 14 October, during which a WFD exhibition and a mini-market selling local produce were inaugurated.

This was followed by an on-the-spot poster-making contest, which was held on 15 October and participated in by students representing all of the regions of the country. Winners were Ma. Grace Sta. Elena from Region 10 (1st place), Ozzane Ono Ocampo-Allas from Region 3 (2nd place), Edgard Allan Pasaol from Region 12 (3rd place), Emilia Bordado

from Region 2 (4th place), and Yvette Avellaneda from Region 9 (5th place).

The WFD2019 celebrations came to a head with a grand culminating event held on 16 October at the Liwasang Aurora, Quezon Memorial Circle, Quezon City. More than a thousand people attended the activity from government, NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, private sector, and the media.

Participants and winners of the WFD2019 on-the-spot poster-making contest, as well as the finalists and winners of the DA Search for Outstanding Rural Women 2019, were recognized and honored during the event.

In his address during the WFD2019 culminating event, Agriculture Undersecretary for Operations Ariel Cayanan called for a "stronger global, national, and multi-sectoral effort to fight hunger and malnutrition, and to feed the planet in a sustainable way."



He also highlighted the critical role of agriculture and fisheries in improving the nutritional status and quality of life of every Filipino. He then encouraged DA bureaus and attached agencies to strengthen their respective safety protocols and undertake studies to ensure that nutritious food is available, accessible, and affordable to all.

Then FAO Representative *ad interim* in the Philippines and concurrent Deputy Country Director of WFP Philippines Mr Mats Persson highlighted the importance of nutrition and food security. He called the attention of the government to address the gap that hinders Filipinos from eating safe and nutritious food. He also stated that the country should stimulate its local production, reintroduce iron-fortified rice, and reduce food waste.

Ms Tamara Duran, Assistant FAO Representative for Programme, said, "This year's World Food Day theme is timely as it addresses not only achieving Zero Hunger but also the equally important issue of healthy diets while nurturing the planet."

"We call on all concerned sectors to make healthy and sustainable diets affordable and accessible to everyone. We also appeal to everyone to start consciously thinking about what we eat".

Agriculture Undersecretary for Special Concerns Waldo Carpio said that much remains to be done as hunger and malnutrition are sophisticated problems.

"Let us be continuously aggressive in our efforts to build a global movement to end hunger and fulfill our moral obligation to provide available and affordable food for the Filipino people," he emphasized.

The WFD2019 culminating celebration ended with an enthralling Candle Lighting Ceremony and the reading of the Pledge of Commitment with which all participants gathered, illuminated, and lifted up their candles to signify their unity and commitment in bringing a brighter and a #ZeroHunger future for all Filipinos.

## Images of WFD 2019



(Top to bottom, left to right) Attendees to the opening program of WFD2019; ribbon cutting ceremony of the WFD2019 exhibition at the DA; mini-market of local produce also inaugurated during opening of WFD2019; student-contestants of the WFD2019 on-the-spot poster-making contest doing their art; Ms Tamara Duran of FAO Philippines addressing attendees to the culminating program of WFD2019 at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City; snapshot of the some of the crowd gathered during during the WFD2019 culminating program; winning entries of the WFD2019 poster-making contest on display; and attendees raising their lit candles in solidarity to the theme and aspirations of WFD2019.



# FAO and BARMM: Working together to promote livelihoods and agribusiness in Mindanao

*FAO and the newly formed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has formalized their alliance with the signing of landmark partnership agreements that will see the implementation of agribusiness-based livelihoods development projects in post-conflict areas in the Bangsamoro Region.*

Three initiatives are included in the agreement. These are: (1) “Agricultural Training for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao” – a project funded by the Government of Japan which aims to enhance the agricultural vocational skills of farmers and fisherfolk in the Bangsamoro areas and other post-conflict areas in Mindanao; (2) the “Support the new Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) in establishing BARMM in the Philippines” – a project funded by the Government of New Zealand that would establish close collaboration and coordination mechanisms with BTA and assist in capacitating the new relevant Ministries particularly on promoting food security, nutrition, and resilient livelihoods in BARMM; and (3) the “Support Agriculture and Agribusiness Enterprises in Mindanao for Sustainable Development – a project funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) that aims to sustain livelihood and increase income of farming and fishing households by enhancing agribusiness value chains of key commodities.

The agreements – some of the first ever between FAO and BARMM – were officially signed by Mr Jose Luis Fernandez, FAO Representative in the Philippines, and BARMM Acting Chief Minister Abdulraof Macacua on behalf of BARMM Chief Minister Ahod B. Ebrahim.

In his address at the ceremonial signing of the partnership agreements, Acting Chief Minister Macacua said that “the Bangsamoro Government is truly appreciative with our joint efforts with FAO in making sure that the lives of our people are



FAOR Jose Luis Fernandez and Acting Chief Minister Macacua signing the FAO-BARMM Partnership Agreement, witnessed by Assistant FAOR for Programme Tamara Palis-Duran and BARMM Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR) Director for Operations Keise Usman

lifted and prioritized. After all, their general welfare is the heart of the newly ratified Bangsamoro Organic Law.”

Mr. Fernandez also lauded this new partnership with BARMM, remarking “these FAO projects in BARMM are a testament to our commitment to helping eliminate poverty and hunger and improving the lives of the people of the Bangsamoro Region – a vision shared by our new partner.”

The agreement signing was followed by the official inauguration of FAO Philippines’ new Cotabato sub-Office located at Delcano Street, Rosary Heights 10, in Cotabato City. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was officiated by Mr. Fernandez and Minister Macacua.

Mr. Fernandez said that the new Cotabato sub-office, along with another sub-office being constructed in Zamboanga City, will mainly support FAO’s new projects in BARMM as well as its longer-term commitment to helping the people of Mindanao.



Acting BARMM Chief Minister Macacua and FAOR Jose Luis Fernandez inaugurate Cotabato sub-office.

# Thanking our development partners

FAO Philippines held its 2019 Development Partners' Forum (DPF) on 26 September at the Makati Diamond Residences in Makati City. This event is the Country Office's centerpiece activity to promote visibility and deeper partner engagement. This edition of the DPF is significant as it is the last one organized under Mr Jose Luis Fernandez in his capacity as FAO Representative in the Philippines.

The Forum highlighted FAO's key milestones and accomplishments in the Philippines from December 2018 to September 2019. Included were updates from the Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2018 – 2024, which is FAO's reference document launched in 2018 and aligned with the Philippine Development Plan and UN's Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development.

Two presentations were made during the Forum: updates on the FAO Philippines CPF 2018 – 2024, which was delivered by Ms Tamara Palis-Duran, Assistant FAO Representative for Programme, and a success story testimonial by Chita Sulan of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, an FAO project beneficiary under the Green Environment Facility (GEF)-supported project on agrobiodiversity, value-addition, and agribusiness.

UN and Philippine Government partners also delivered messages of support, which included Mr. Ola Almgren, UN Resident Coordinator, and Undersecretary Rodolfo Vicerra of the Department of Agriculture (DA) representing Secretary William Dar. Both reiterated their respective agencies' continued partnership and support to initiatives of FAO in the Philippines.

The DPF featured a special panel discussion on the topic "Strengthening prospects for economic growth in Mindanao through inclusive agriculture value chains". Panelists included



(Right) Panel members fielding questions during the panel discussions at the 2019 FAO Philippines DPF.

Minister Mohammad Yacob, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform of BARMM; DA Undersecretary Rodolfo Vicerra; Director Wendell P. Orbeso, Head of the Joint Normalization Committee Secretariat, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP); and Executive Director Rolando Torres, Mindanao Business Council (MBC). The panelists discussed issues, challenges, and opportunities in the agricultural value chains in BARMM, particularly in areas where FAO and partners could effectively work together to help bring about peace and prosperity in the region. Atty. Patrick Velez, FAO Parliamentary Alliance Specialist, moderated the panel discussion.

A product exhibit by the GEF-supported project on agrobiodiversity was also held during the forum. The exhibit showcased products that have been produced by beneficiaries in the project's Ifugao and Lake Sebu sites through skills training and agricultural value chain-based sustainable agribusiness provided by FAO.

Fifty-seven high-level and senior representatives attended the event, comprised of 36 dignitaries from embassies and international development organizations and 21 from government national and line agencies, NGOs, and the private sector. About 40 staff members of the FAO Country Office also attended the event.



(Left) FAOR Jose Luis Fernandez addressing delegates to the 2019 FAO Philippines Development Partners' Forum.

# Stop soil erosion now before it's too late, experts warn

## DA, DENR, FAO appeal for solidarity against soil erosion during Philippine celebration of World Soil Day

"Stop soil erosion, save our future."

This was the universal message imparted by the key officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and FAO during the 2019 World Soil Day celebration held on December 5 at the DA's Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) compound in Quezon City.

According to DA-BSWM OIC Director Sonia Salguero, it is not yet too late for more people to get involved in the global effort to stop soil erosion.

"We encourage everyone to do their part in soil conservation," she said as she explained the importance of the annual global event to celebrate soil.

Speaking on behalf of Agriculture Secretary William Dar, DA Undersecretary and Chief-of-Staff Cheryl Marie Natividad-Caballero talked about the need for sustainable soil and water management and how it can be attained through the department's new thinking in Philippine agriculture.

"We will vigorously develop and implement soil and water resources programs and technologies that will ensure the sustainability and viability of our resources," Caballero said.

Undersecretary for Environment and International Environment Affairs Jonas Leones, representing Secretary Roy Cimatu, expressed the DENR's support to the campaign for soil conservation. He pledged the DENR's commitment to continue working with the DA and other relevant agencies for sustainable land management initiatives.

Assistant FAO Representative for Programme, Ms Tamara Duran, stressed that soil erosion can decrease soil health and productivity affecting the number and quality of crops that can be produced.

"Everyone should help raise awareness on the importance of soil health, because it will have an effect on human health since 95 percent of the food comes from the soil," she emphasized.

Soil erosion, or the removal of the most fertile top layer of soil from the land surface, occurs naturally, but it is accelerated up to 1 000 times by unsustainable human activities particularly the removal of vegetative cover, down-slope tillage, overgrazing, deforestation, land leveling, and improper land-use changes.

It can take up to 1 000 years to produce two to three centimeters of soil. If nothing is done, soil erosion could lead up to 10 percent loss in crop production by 2050.



Representatives of DA, DENR, and FAO signing Declaration of Solidarity against Soil Erosion signifying their respective organization's support to efforts to curb soil erosion in the country for sustainable development.



# Enhancing resilience of communities to disasters through forecast-based financing

*The Philippines is one of the most at-risk countries that continue to experience extreme and slow onset events due to its geographical location and other related factors that contribute to the vulnerability of communities. Various approaches such as Forecast-based Financing (FbF) and Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) helps promote disaster resilience and reducing risks.*

FbF is an institutional mechanism that enhances EWEA and sets up an automatic system that triggers and funds preparedness actions before a disaster strikes. EWEA is an approach that translates warnings into anticipatory actions to reduce the impact of specific disaster events. It focuses on consolidating available forecasting information and putting plans in place to make sure FAO acts when a warning is at hand.

To assess the status and gaps in the overall implementation of FbF in the Philippines, WFP, FAO, the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), and START Network partnered to conduct the 5th National Dialogue Platform on Forecast-based Financing, which was held from 6 to 7 November in Tagaytay City, Cavite.

The forum also featured the latest developments in FbF and how these contributed to the further testing and scaling of FbF, and defined the way forward for all stakeholders and initiated development of a roadmap for FbF in the country.

At the opening of the event, Ms Isabelle Lacson, Programme Manager of WFP Philippines, recognized the importance of FbF as a tool for SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and that “FbF in the Philippine context contributes and promotes community resiliency and strengthening anticipatory action.”

Ms. Maria Ruzzella Quilla, National Project Development and Coordination Specialist of FAO Philippines, said “FbF is especially useful for a country such as the Philippines where 8 out of every 10 people who are considered food insecure are from disaster-vulnerable communities that rely on crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry assets.”

“FAO supports changing the way disasters are managed. We strongly believe that approaches such as FbF and EWEA will be crucial in mitigating risks and in preparing Filipinos for disasters. They can protect and empower the most vulnerable and give them the capacity and flexibility to keep going and to resume their livelihoods shortly after a disaster,” she added.

At the end of the 2-day event, participants and representatives of the various partner organizations agreed to the following

actions: (1) FAO will continue to support FbF initiatives and proactively participate in the Technical Working Group of the FbF; (2) the Philippine Red Cross will open an FbF online repository and make it accessible to all FbF practitioners for information sharing; (3) the German Red Cross will continue to collaborate in FbF initiatives; (4) the Climate Change Commission assures that when funding from the Green Climate Fund for FbF is approved, collaboration among government agencies on FbF will be initiated; and (5) the DILG, through Director Allan Tabell, that all recommendations gathered during the workshop will be brought to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) for integration into its national disaster resilience plan.



**(Top)** FbF resource speakers fielding questions from the audience during the Q&A session of the dialogue. **(Bottom)** Community mapping exercise, one of the practical sessions during the FbF Dialogue event.

# Family farming pushed to help ensure food security in the Philippines

*Sectoral leaders push for promotion of family farming to help the country achieve food security and self-sufficiency at the 2019 Knowledge Learning Market and Policy Engagement forum. UN Decade for Family Farming in the Philippines launched at event.*

Experts at the 2019 edition of the annual “Knowledge Learning Market and Policy Engagement” (KLMPE) forum agree that Filipinos could weather the increasing cost of food in the market and save if they grow their own food.

“Simply put, learning how to plant and grow our own food is a good thing as we will never go hungry,” explains Venarica Papa, Assistant Professor of the College of Social Work and Community Development at the University of the Philippines-Diliman, and one of the resource speakers at the event.

The KLMPE forum was held from 13 to 14 November at the Bahay ng Alumni in UP Diliman in Quezon City with the theme “Celebrating the International Decade of Family Farming: Strengthening the Role of Youth in Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development”.

The event also marked the launch of the UN’s Decade of Family Farming (UNDF) in the country.

Representatives of family farming organizations, academic and research institutions, government agencies, CSOs, NGOs, and international development organizations attended the forum.

The conference also featured sharing of innovations and good practices in the sub-themes of agri-enterprise, agri-governance, asset reforms, climate resilience, and gender and age-sensitive family farming. Participants also discussed lessons learned and related policy issues and put forward recommendations for action.

Additionally, attendees validated and enriched the results of the preliminary consultations for the National Action Plan for the UNDF, which was initiated through the multi-stakeholder Agriculture and Rural Development Knowledge and Policy Platform (ARDKPP).

Ms Tamara Duran, Assistant FAO Representative for Programme, highlighted the importance of the National Action Plan, saying “this is a roadmap that we believe will have a positive and lasting impact on the country’s agriculture, fisheries, forestry, environment, and natural resources sectors,



“As long as Filipino families, particularly those in the rural areas, know how to plant and grow their own food, they will never go hungry, and have something saved, too” says experts at the 2019 KLMPE.

as well as on disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation, and peace and development.”

At the end of the forum, the farmer-participants appealed to the public to support them by buying local rice and urged the government to provide concrete solutions to the challenges they currently face, particularly in light of the recent liberalization of the rice market trade.

In support of the UNDF, the KLMPE is a venue for various stakeholders in agriculture and fisheries to share and discuss issues, success stories, good practices, initiatives, innovations, and policies and programs that promote family farming and inclusive rural transformation.

The KLMPE is managed by ARDKPP, which is composed of representatives from the DA, FAO, DAR, BFAR, IFAD, Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA), ASEAN Farmers’ Organisations’ Support Programme (AFOSP) - Medium Term Cooperation Programme Phase II (MTCP2), Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA), Asian Farmers’ Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA), Trias, and We Effect.

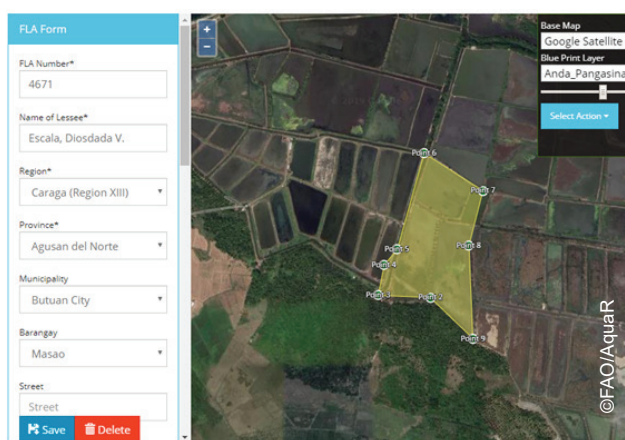
# Supporting informed decision-making in agriculture and fisheries through ICT-based solutions

FAO Philippines has completed strategic initiatives that leverages on ICT to support informed decision-making and policy-making in agriculture and fisheries with the aim of accelerating the sectors' development.

In December, FAO Philippines completed the project, "Development of an Enhanced Production and Risk Management in Agriculture Integrated Decision Support System (EPRiMA)", which was implemented in collaboration with the DA. The project empowered key actors to make more effective and timely decisions by providing them comprehensive and near real-time access to ICT-driven crop production and risk and damage assessment information and tools.

These ICT-based tools included dynamic cropping calendar for rice and corn directly linked to seasonal and short-range forecasts at provincial and municipal scale, a national agricultural drought monitoring system, use of unmanned aerial surveillance system (drones), protocol for rapid production and damage assessment using satellite and drone imagery, and an online platform for EPRiMA Integrated Decision Support System. For the latter, FAO facilitated the establishment of an EPRiMA data server and workstation housed at the DA.

For the fisheries sector, through its project, "Support to Aquaculture Resources Mapping and Development Planning through ICT-based Solutions" which it also completed in December, FAO Philippines, in partnership with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), developed and



Screenshot of one of the digital mapping functionalities of AquaR.

piloted an ICT-based aquaculture resources data inventory and mapping system called Aquaculture Resources System (AquaR) that helped enhanced BFAR's aquafarm data collection system.

AquaR produces digital visuals of the aquaculture resources in a region through interactives charts and figures. FAO also assisted BFAR in developing business plans for aquaculture zonal development of selected high potential areas as well as for the mangrove crab industry in Catanduanes.

FAO also helped BFAR develop and implement an investment assessment approach for FLAs and Mariculture Parks, and formulate implementation mechanisms and guidelines to ensure efficient and transparent management and inclusive access to Special Fisheries Science and Approfish Tech Fund (SPS-ATF) and Aquaculture Investment Fund (AIF), which are meant to stimulate private investments in the aquaculture sector.



ICT-driven decision support tools could lead to better and more effective crop production and risk and damage assessment in agriculture.

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