

MESSAGE OF SECRETARY EMMANUEL F. PIÑOL
Philippine Department of Agriculture

Delivered by: Assistant Secretary Andrew B. Villacorta
to the

Asian Soil Partnership (ASP)

Editorial Board Kick-off Meeting for the Development of the Soil Atlas of Asia

9:30 A.M., March 13, 2018

Sequoia Hotel, Mother Ignacia St. corner Timog Ave., Quezon City Philippines

Dr. Arwyn Jones of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC-EC); Ms. Tamara Palis-Duran, Assistant FAO Representative to the Philippines; Ms. Lucrezia Caon of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), FAO Rome; Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome on behalf of Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol of the Department of Agriculture, and to say, how delighted we are to host the first ever Editorial Board Meeting for the Development of the Soil Atlas of Asia, here in the Philippines.

Soil is a vital resource, from which, our food and other productive, socio-cultural and ecological needs are produced and provided. Despite its importance, soil has not received due attention and support in terms of its protection and conservation.

Hence, it is gratifying to note of the renewed recognition of the critical role of soil resources in food security, and climate change adaptation and mitigation at global, regional, and national levels.

In the Philippines, no less than his Excellency, President Rodrigo R. Duterte, in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) in 2016, underscored the need to conduct a nationwide soil analysis and soil rehabilitation.

Correspondingly, Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol, in his *10 Basic Foundations of a Sound Agriculture and Fisheries Program*, placed on top of the list, the necessity for an updated, harmonized and accessible soil data and maps to aid the agriculture sector towards a science-based, climate-adapted, and eco-friendly food production system.

At the global and regional levels, we commend the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for taking the lead in establishing the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), and its regional counterpart, the Asian Soil Partnership (ASP) to which the Philippines is an active partner.

The development of the Soil Atlas of Asia is one of the core activities in the ASP Implementation Plan as highlighted during the Third ASP Workshop in December 2016 held at Bangkok, Thailand.



The Atlas, which would be jointly produced by the JRC – EC is envisage to provide a better understanding and appreciation of the importance of soils in the Region. Specifically, it intends to: 1) Raise the awareness of the general public, land managers/owners, policy makers, politicians, NGOs and other scientific communities on the importance of soil; 2. Support policies and instruments for investment, agriculture, environmental issues, climate change, development and aid assistance, urban planning and others; 3. Provide educational material to schools and universities to support learning; and 4) Provide baseline information for further assessments.

This Meeting therefore, is an opportune time to discuss the scope, structure and content of this very important book, as well as the contribution and responsibilities of each country to further solidify our partnership for this significant endeavor.

We thank the JRC-EC and the GSP-FAO for extending the invitation to the Philippines to host the kick-off meeting of the Editorial Board. It is indeed an honor and privilege.

At this juncture, The Philippine - Department of Agriculture through the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), reiterates our commitment to the ASP. We share your vision; we share your purpose; we share your action.

We wish you a successful meeting and a very pleasant stay here in the Philippines.

Mabuhay!

