

Philippines embarks 3 new agri-fishery projects boosting farmers and fisherfolk

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Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. led the kick-off of three core projects of the DA, in partnership with the World Bank (WB), namely the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) Scale-Up, the Mindanao Inclusive Agriculture Development Project (MIADP), and the Philippine Fisheries and Coastal Resiliency (FishCoRe) Project.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., whose message was delivered by Sec. Laurel, emphasized that the three major projects lodged under DA will pave the way for a more prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive future in the country's agricultural sector.

"These are part of our strategy to maximize our farmers' and fisherfolk's income, improve their productivity, and ensure food for all," he said.

The President thanked the World Bank, as well as other development partners, not only for funding the projects but for continuously supporting the programs of the government that address the concerns of the food sector.

Furthermore, Pres. Marcos guaranteed to attain and sustain the objectives of the projects through a monitoring system that will be created, installed and effectively enforced under his administration.

Newly-appointed Agriculture chief Sec. Laurel vowed to work hard, and carry out the directives of the President to address the needs of the crucial sector through the implementation of strategic projects such as the PRDP, FishCore and MIADP.

WB Country Director Dr. Ndiame Diop stressed that the projects support the DA's national priorities to improve national food security through investment in critical infrastructure and postharvest facilities to improve productivity and integrate farmers and fisherfolk into value chain and markets.

According to PRDP Scale Up National Project Director and DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa, the DA will implement a strict monitoring of the projects to strengthen the trust and partnership with the local government units, and the private sector.

FishCore on the other hand will strengthen fishery management and law enforcement to recover the fish stocks and reduce over fishing, while MIADP seeks to improve Indigenous Peoples' living conditions, through sustainable agri-fishery based economic activities.

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Launched on November 6, 2023, the projects will prioritize the organization and clustering of associations of farmers and fisherfolk and indigenous peoples engaged in food production and agri-fishery activities.

Furthermore, the new undertakings will consolidate produce of the clustered groups, while reinvigorating the collaboration with the private sector to attain better markets and provide access to technologies and innovations.