

## Philippines to formulate new national strategy and efficient mechanisms to combat zoonotic disease

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Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) vows to implement proactive and effective zoonotic disease prevention and control as it assumes chairmanship of the Philippine Inter-agency Committee on Zoonoses (PhilCZ) during the ceremonial turnover of chairmanship from the Department of Health (DOH) to the DA for the years 2024 to 2025.

“This transition underscores the importance of strong collaboration in our efforts to combat zoonotic diseases, echoing the principle of the One Health approach. Under the provisional guidance of PhilCZ, we are committed to ensuring a nation that is responsive in detecting, preventing, educating, and eliminating zoonotic diseases, thereby promoting the health and wellbeing of both the animal and human population,” emphasized DA Undersecretary for Livestock, Deogracias Victor Savellano, during the turnover ceremony held at Salvador H. Escudero III Hall, National Meat Inspection Service.

In 2011, Presidential Administrative Order (AO) No. 10 established the PhilCZ, comprising the DA, DOH, and DENR, along with their respective agencies as members.

PhilCZ aims to formulate a national strategy and implement efficient mechanisms to prevent, control, and eradicate diseases transmissible between animals and humans such as Avian Influenza, Rabies, and Leptospirosis, among other infections.

Dr. Constante Palabrica, DA Assistant Secretary for Swine and Poultry and OIC director of the Bureau of Animal Industry, said that cases of zoonotic diseases such as Avian Influenza (AI) and rabies are still continuously reported in the country.

Despite some provinces having AI cases, Asec. Palabrica added that ten provinces in the country were declared free of the disease, including Camarines Sur, Davao del Sur, Rizal, South Cotabato, Ilocos Sur, Batangas, Capiz, Quezon, Aurora, and Ilocos Norte. He assured that the DA is vigilant in monitoring AI and other zoonotic diseases through its Bureau of Animal Industry.

Joining the turnover ceremony were DOH Undersecretary Dr. Glenn Mathew Baggao; Director of DOH Epidemiology Bureau Dr. Alethea De Guzman; DENR Assistant Secretary for International Affairs and concurrent OIC-Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau Marcial Amaro, Jr., together with officials and representatives from the Bureau of Animal Industry, National Meat Inspection Service, Food and Agriculture Organization, and United States Agency for International Development.