



## InangLupa fully supports Pres. Duterte's 10-pt agenda

InangLupa Movement, Inc. will strongly support the attainment of the 10-point economic agenda of the incoming Duterte administration.

"In particular, InangLupa will extend its full support to successfully achieve the Duterte administration's fifth agenda on promoting rural and value chain development toward increasing agricultural and rural enterprise productivity and rural tourism," said InangLupa founding president and Prasad Seeds strategic adviser Dr. William D. Dar, who was among the 400 privileged delegates invited to attend the "Sulong Pilipinas: Hakbang Tunga sa Kaunlaran" (Philippines onwards: A step towards progress), on June 20-21, 2016, in Davao City.

"It is an honor to be part of the workshop group that discussed 'Agenda No. 5,' where I took the opportunity to share with fellow delegates our InangLupa framework for modernizing and industrializing Philippine agriculture," added Dar, who met on the sidelines of the 'Davao Business

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*InangLupa president Dr. William Dar with incoming finance secretary and former DA secretary Carlos "Sonny" Dominguez III, at the Davao Business Summit.*

## Piñol bares plan to boost farm output

The next chief of the Department of Agriculture (DA) enumerated various measures which he plans to implement in his first 100 days in office to increase farm output and farmers' income.

Incoming Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol said on his Facebook account that he has crafted a road map following his "Biyaheng Bukid" initiative, which helped him identify factors that hindered the growth of the farm sector.

"There is an urgent need for life-saving efforts to lift up farmers and fishermen and those who depend on agriculture for their livelihood and business," Piñol said.

To help increase their production, Piñol added that the government will provide farmers with seeds, fertilizer and other farm inputs, while fishermen

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## Agri revival will trim poverty

Reviving the country's agricultural sector should be the main strategy of President-elect Rodrigo R. Duterte in reducing poverty in the rural areas.

"[His] record on agricultural development and rural-poverty reduction can make or unmake Digong's legacy," Dr. Rolando Dy, executive director of the University of Asia and the Pacific's Center for Food and Agribusiness, told the *BusinessMirror*.

According to the economist, about 26 percent of Filipinos are poor, most of them from the rural areas and heavily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood.

"If Duterte wants to have a dramatic impact on reducing poverty, then focus on agricultural productivity and diversification," he asserted. Uplifting the lives of farmers, he added, can be achieved by increasing farmers' income and promoting balanced and inclusive agriculture development in the country.

The expert said the country needs to develop road maps for various commodities, establish value-chain corridors all over the country and create agriculture infrastructure in the local government. He said the Philippines should learn from its Asean counter-

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*Incoming president Rodrigo Duterte talks to the country's business leaders during the Sulong Pilipinas consultative workshop, in Davao City.*

## Duterte welcomes business leaders' recommendations

President-elect Rodrigo R. Duterte vowed that they will study the 10 recommendations of business leaders to his socio-economic agenda during the two-day consultative workshop held in the city.

"I assure you. We will study and review it and for now I would say I see nothing wrong with this. This is doable. It's a matter of just doing it and implementing it right away," he said during the last day of the "Sulong Pilipinas: Hakbang Tunga sa Kaunlaran" at the SMX Convention Center on Tuesday.

Duterte, a lawyer, said he is banking on the experts in the government to study the country's economy in order to

come up with actionable plans on economic matters while each of his cabinet members review other recommendations "to where the subject matter belongs."

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (PCCII) president George Barcelon presented the first part of the recommendations, while the other half was delivered by Mindanao Business Council (MBC) chairman Vicente Lao.

Barcelon said the "best of minds" in the country's business community were able to give their suggestions on

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# 'Equitable economic growth for all Pinoys'

Sustained economic growth and ensure that its impact is equitable to all Filipinos.

This is the goal of the incoming Duterte administration through its 10-point economic agenda presented during the business consultation, dubbed as *"Sulong Pilipinas: Hakbang Tungo sa Kaunlaran,"* June 20-21, 2016, in Davao City.

The incoming administration earlier proposed an 8-point agenda, but realized the need to focus also on the Reproductive Health Law, or RH Law, and on science, technology and the arts.

President-elect Rodrigo Duterte earlier vowed to sustain the current Aquino government's economic policies to ensure the continued expansion of the economy, which in the first quarter of 2016 posted the highest growth in Asia at 6.9%.

Another focus is to "institute progressive tax reform and more effective tax collection, indexing taxes to inflation."

Incoming economic managers said a review of the country's tax system was needed to ensure a rightful level for all.

"We wish to see our workers having more disposable income to do as they wish," incoming Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said in his speech during the event.

He said corporate tax rates "will be adjusted to be competitive with the rest of the region to make our economy more competitive for investments. We hope to broaden the tax base even more to compensate for lower rates."

"This effort will draw upon successful models used to attract business to local cities and pursue the relaxation of Constitutional restrictions on foreign ownership, except as regards land ownership, in order to attract foreign direct investment (FDI)," a statement by the economic managers said.

Investment on infrastructure is also targeted to remain strong at the current 5% of gross domestic product (GDP) or higher at around 6% of total domestic output, with the help of public-private partnership (PPP).

"We will invest in building the infrastructure necessary to make us a 21<sup>st</sup>

century economy: from modernizing our ports to improving our logistical spine to ensuring reliable and cheap power for all the islands," Dominguez said.

The incoming government eyes to implement not just major PPP projects, but more small and medium-sized projects, particularly in the countryside to ensure a more inclusive growth, citing that this will provide more job opportunities for more people.

The focus on the provinces is among the 10-point economic agenda to "promote rural and value chain development towards increasing agricultural and rural enterprises productivity and rural tourism."

Another goal is to "ensure security of land tenure to encourage investments, and address bottlenecks in land management and titling agencies."

Investment in human capital is another aim to further ensure that the businesses' demand for skilled individuals are met, which will also ensure that people will have work to sustain them and in turn boost economic growth.

Promotion of science, technology and creative arts will also be pursued "to enhance innovation and creative capacity towards self-sustaining inclusive development."

Social protection programs, including the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, will be strengthened to address poverty and "protect the poor against instability and economic shock."

The Reproductive Health Law (RH Law) will also be vigorously implemented to help couples from poor families to have informed choices to plan their families.

Incoming Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and Economic and Development Authority Director General Ernesto Pernia said proper implementation of the RH Law would be a big help in poverty reduction.

He explained that he has conducted a simulated study on this by dividing women into quintiles, wherein those belonging to the poorest quintile are given the opportunity to achieve their target family size, such as having maximum of three children instead of five to six children.

"If they are able to achieve family size

then poverty rate would go down from 26% to 23%.

This is a pure demographic effect from the implementation of family planning or RH law as it is called now," he said.

Pernia said allowing women to be liberated from their child-bearing and child-caring duties provides them the opportunity to enhance their education or join the labor force, which has economic effect not just to the family but the country as well.

Incoming Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said that although the economy grew under the administration of President Benigno Aquino III, the policies of the previous administration failed to address poverty in the country.

"High GDP growth rate, which was achieved and talked about by the previous administration, did not get them reelected. Did it? Obviously, that's not what the people want. The people want something else, and that something else they did not do," Dominguez said.

For incoming Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno, it was about time to discuss at length the economic plans of the next administration, which will take office beginning July 1.

"*Mabilis din naman kasi iyong kampanya eh 'di ba? I guess there was little time to discuss what's in the mind of the President-elect. So maganda rin siguro na malalaman nila ang mga programa. At saka, during the campaign, halos hindi naman masyadong nardiscuss ang economy, 'di ba,*" Diokno explained.

GMA Network chairman and CEO Atty. Felipe L. Gozon was among those who attended the forum, and after the presentations he said that the plans were good but he would keep a "wait and see" attitude.

"*Importante itong economic policies ng bagong administration, eh. That will determine where our country will go in the next six years. Economically, parang maganda. Lahat ng ginagawa nila ngayon, parang tama eh. But let us see. Wait and see,*" Gozon added. (By Trisha Macas/DVM, GMA News)



On behalf of InangLupa, Dr. Dar (2nd from right) presented a project proposal — entitled "Creating a Healthy Agriculture for a Resilient Mindanao or CHARM" — to the Board of Trustees of Carlos P. Romulo Foundation, led by Ambassador Roberto Romulo (6th from left). Among those shown are InangLupa consultant Dr. Rosana Mula (2nd from left), former defense secretary Gilberto Teodoro (3rd from left) and former foreign affairs secretary Albert del Rosario (5th from left).

# Produce food, attack poverty

By Incoming DA Secretary Manny Piñol

The country's 10 Poorest Provinces identified by the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) will be the focus of the Food Production and Poverty Alleviation strategy of incoming President Rody Duterte which would include livelihood programs for the poorest of the poor.

When incoming Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez, a close friend and grade school classmate of the President-elect, declared last Monday that the new administration will dramatically reduce poverty, I immediately designed a comprehensive program which would look at the weaknesses of an area and its potentials in food production.

The strategy is called Special Area for Agricultural Development or SAAD, which means "Promise" in Cebuano, was successfully implemented in many depressed areas of North Cotabato when I was Governor from 1998 to 2007.

This was one of the programs which reduced North Cotabato's Poverty Incidence Per Family (PIPF) from 52.6% in 1998 to only 29% in 2007, pushing up the province to the Top 30 Best Performing Provinces before I left office.

Sadly, today North Cotabato has rejoined the list of the 10 Poorest Provinces in the country with a PIPF of 44.8%.

It is ranked No. 7 among the poorest with Lanao del Sur No. 1 with 67.3% PIPF, Eastern Samar No. 2 with 55.4%, Apayao No. 3 with 54.7%, Maguindanao No. 4 with 54.5%, Zamboanga del



Dr. Dar is shown with incoming agriculture secretary Emmanuel "Manny" Piñol (middle), and PhilMaize officials Rod Bioco (left, seated) and Roger Navarro (right), at the Davao Business summit.

Norte No. 5 with 48%; Sarangani No. 6 with 46%; North Cotabato No. 7 with 44.8%; Negros Oriental No. 8 with 43.9%, and Northern and Western Samar tied for No. 9 and 10 with identical 43.5%.

While this could be considered as a contentious political issue because the incumbent administrators of the province dealt me my two electoral losses, I will try to objectively discuss why and how North Cotabato fell back to the ignominious club of the country's poorest provinces in future posts.

So, how will SAAD support President Duterte's target to reduce poverty while at the same time making food Available

and Affordable for the Filipinos?

I have already talked to the Governors of two of the 10 Poorest Provinces - Maguindanao's Esmel Mangudadatu and Sarangani's Steve Solon - and both agreed to work closely with the DA in addressing Poverty by improving Food Productivity.

In the two provinces and in the eight others included in the group of the Poorest Provinces, a SAAD Project Management Team will be established to be composed both of technical people from the DA and the province.

Together, they will identify the problems confronting the area and find solutions to address these.

When these are identified, the DA and other agencies, who may be involved, will come in and provide funding support for the programs.

The focus would be on livelihood programs which are proven to be sure-fire formula in addressing poverty.

Will the strategy work?

Well, it all depends on how mature the political leaders of these areas are.

The reality is that most of these areas are actually under leaders who belong to political parties which did not support President Duterte.

Will these leaders be politically mature enough to understand that for their province to rise up and out of poverty is for them to set aside political differences and cooperate with this administration?

I hope they do because if they will not cooperate, President Duterte will always find a way to reach out to the poorest Filipinos to lift them out of the sad state they are in right now.

President Duterte has promises to keep, including Available and Affordable Food for the Filipinos, and local officials have two choices - join and support the effort or stay by the sidelines.

There will be no political niceties or accommodation.

Anybody who stands in the way will be answerable to this President whose loyalty is to his country and the Filipino people.

## Piñol bares... (from p1)

will be given fishing boats and nets.

To achieve rice self-sufficiency, Piñol said he plans to conduct a nationwide inspection of irrigation services, dredging of silted dams, and provision of shallow tubewells.

Piñol said he will direct the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. to insure farmers in "high-risk" areas in preparation for La Niña by November, and the National Food Authority (NFA) to preposition sufficient rice in areas expected to be affected by La Niña.

He said the DA will immediately craft a "color-coded agricultural map" to guide farmers on which crop or farming practices are suitable based on geographic, climatic and soil conditions.

Apart from this, Piñol said a National Food Consumption Quantification Survey will be conducted to determine the kind and volume of food consumed by Filipinos to forecast food consumption in relation to population growth.

To eliminate malnutrition, the DA will launch "Pagkain Para sa Masa" project, which will establish *arroz caldo* feeding stations for street dwellers in Metro Manila. It will be the first step to ensure that street dwellers, urban poor and the homeless will be identified and later trained for vegetable growing using the Israel greenhouse technology,"

Piñol added.

It will be implemented with the departments of health (DOH), social welfare and development (DSWD), and local government units (LGUs).

The DA, together with the DOH, the DSWD and the DepEd, will also roll out a milk-feeding program, particularly in dairy production areas.

Piñol said farmers affected by El Niño will be enlisted in the government's cash-for-work program.

"Work includes manual repair and rehabilitation of irrigation facilities for farmers, and cleaning of coastal waters of garbage and planting of mangrove trees for fisherfolk," he said.

Piñol assured farmers, fishermen and other stakeholders that he will engage them in "face-to-face consultations" to address their concerns.

"Project-management teams will also be organized in coordination with the LGU of the country's 10 poorest provinces to ensure that the DA's food-production program would also result in poverty alleviation," he added.

He said a nationwide orientation and "mind-setting" for all officials and employees of the DA will be conducted to ensure they are guided on the priorities and the road map of the Duterte administration in agriculture and fisheries. (By Mary Grace Padin, BusinessMirror)

## Business groups warm up to Duterte's 10-pt agenda

So far, so good.

That is the business community's verdict to what the incoming administration has in store for the private sector days before president-elect Rodrigo Duterte assumes his post.

The incoming administration is fresh from conducting a two-day workshop with the business community early this week in Davao, where Duterte's economic programs for the country were detailed.

"The meeting in Davao sends a very good signal that the president and his team are willing to listen to the business community," Makati Business Club (MBC) chairman Ramon del Rosario Jr. said.

During the Davao workshop, the incoming Duterte administration presented its 10-point socioeconomic agenda, an expanded agenda from previously announced eight-point economic plan.

"Those are all welcomed by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP). Most of them in fact, if not perhaps aside from two, were all our suggestions which we course through Sonny Dominguez, and we're very happy with it. We never thought that he will waver on those things because those are really fantastic economic agenda," MAP president Perry Pe said.

## DA-BSWM delivers P50-M worth of composting equipment

The Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Soils and Water Management has delivered 166 small scale composting facilities (SSCF) worth P50 million (M) to all regions of the country, as of May 2016, to hundreds of farmers' groups through the National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP).

BSWM Director and NOAP coordinator Dr. Silvino Q. Tejada said the SSCF will help rejuvenate farm soils for increased crop productivity and incomes for the benefit of farmers' groups, state universities and colleges, and local government units—as we continue to promote organic agriculture.

Organic agriculture as a tool to combat land degradation, boosts the resilience of soil to water stress and nutrient loss, Tejada said. In addition, increase in soil organic matter content improves soil structure, reduces soil erosion, provides microbial habitats, and serves as a source of long-term solutions to the health of the soils, he added.

"The real challenge is the ability of our country to produce a healthier and nutritious food and to increase agricultural production by 100 percent to sustain the growing demand of our people," Tejada said.

Aside from the promotion of organic agriculture, SSCF also encourages farmers to produce their own organic fertilizers, ranging from 60 to 80 bags of compost every 45 days. They can also their excess vermi-compost organic fertilizer to fellow farmers outside of



**Dr. Dar inducts the new set of officers of the Crops Science Society of the Philippines, led by Arthur Baria (2nd from left) of Nestle Philippines, during their 46th annual conference in General Santos City, on June 16, 2016.**

Both MBC and MAP are hoping that the government's interaction and partnership with the business sector would be sustained throughout the six-year term of Duterte.

"The reason for the success of the Aquino administration is the very close collaboration with the business community. We have had access to at least the economic ministers on a regular basis and we have formed ourselves into both the Philippine business groups and joint foreign chambers where we come together and meet regularly," Del Rosario said.

In response with the business community's call for a continued close interaction and partnership, a member of the incoming administration assured the private sector that they will be heard

and will be well taken care of in the next six years.

"Incoming finance secretary Sonny Dominguez is a businessman himself so he knows the importance of business and he is friendly and very understanding to the business sector," incoming socioeconomic planning secretary and National Economic and Development Authority director general Ernesto Pernia said.

"I'm not a businessman nor is (incoming budget secretary) Benjamin Diokno but as economists, we know that the business sector would be a major player in the economy, not the government. The government is just an enabler and a conducive environment provider. It should not be in business," Pernia added. (By Richmond Mercurio, *The Philippine Star*)

## InangLupa fully... (from p1)

Summit' incoming finance secretary and former agriculture secretary Carlos "Sonny" G. Dominguez III, and incoming agriculture secretary Emmanuel "Manny" Piñol.

In particular, Dr. Dar said InangLupa will vigorously support three major proposed policies or agenda, as these will greatly contribute to modernizing the country's agriculture, fishery and agri-business sectors, namely:

Agenda No. 5 — Pursue agricultural development, focusing on farm-level productivity, via support services to small farmers, improving market access, and fostering agricultural value chain through partnerships with agri-business firms. This is part of a broader rural and regional development strategy that includes promoting tourism.

Agenda No. 3 — Accelerate infrastructure spending, with at least 5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spending target; and address bottlenecks in the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) program; and

Agenda No. 4 — Strongly attract foreign, besides local, direct investments by: easing constitutional economic restrictions and other Philippine laws; enhance ease of doing business (cut 'red tape'); and enforce law and order.

The other seven socio-economic agenda that the incoming Duterte administration will pursue are:

- Continue and maintain current macroeconomic policies, including fiscal,

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their 100-hectare cluster farms.

Each SSCF beneficiary is provided with 15 kilograms of earthworms (or African Night Crawlers), a 7-horsepower shredding machine, and a unit of vermi-tea brewer.

SSCFs and Composting Facilities for Biodegradable Wastes (CFBW) are among the initiatives of the DA-BSWM, Tejada said.

To date, the agency has distributed 172 CFBWs worth P100M, based on the list identified by Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson of Senate committee on food and agriculture.

Last year, Tejada said the BSWM has delivered 160 SSCFs all over the country and conducted several on-site demonstrations and trainings prior to the awarding of the composting facilities to ensure proper management of the facilities. The BSWM through its Soil and Water Area Coordinators (SWAC) regularly monitor the operation of the composting facilities.

(By Loraine D. Cerillo, DA-BSWM)

## Phl, FAO prepare La Niña action plan

As the country braces for the onset of La Niña by October, experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) convened a National La Niña Action Planning Workshop to cushion the agriculture sector from potentially devastating impacts.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) activated La Niña Watch in May and has warned of possible flooding in low lying agricultural lands, extensive damage to standing crops, increase in pest and disease and coastal erosion due to strong waves and coastal flooding.

"We have just experienced one of the strongest El Niño episodes in history and hopefully learned important lessons on preparedness and response. Supporting the government in reducing risks to agricultural livelihoods and food security, and planning for immediate recovery as these relate to La Niña is a priority for FAO," said FAO Representative in the Philippines José Luis Fernández.

"We hope that this collaborative exercise will result in an effective National La Niña Action Plan for the agriculture sector and promote even stronger efforts to mobilize early warning, early action, early recovery and rehabilitation resources," he added.

In a statement on Thursday, the FAO said over 60 DA technical experts, representing nine regions of the country, participated in the action planning from 8 to 9 June 2016. FAO provided technical support in the conduct of



*Dr. Dar is shown with former prime minister Cesar Virata (2nd from left), Dr. Aristotle Alip, founder and managing director of CARD micro finance, and R Umali, private sector, at the "Forum on Creative Ideas," sponsored by the Makati Business Club, Carlos P. Romulo Foundation, and Phl-US Society.*

vulnerability assessments, identification of priority interventions and financial planning.

"We were able to identify the specific municipalities that are most at-risk in each region based on historical data, as well as the types of interventions to put on the ground, across the entire Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) chain. This includes preparedness, response, immediate recovery and rehabilitation," said Engineer Christopher Morales of the DA-Field Operations Service.

PAGASA also emphasized that more rainfall is to be expected in the eastern side of the Philippines as an effect of La Niña. Current forecasts indicate that this may affect Quezon Province and Bicol Region in Luzon; Samar and Leyte provinces in the Visayas; Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley provinces and the CARAGA Region in Mindanao.

"In some areas, we are looking into early planting or focusing on promoting other crop varieties that can withstand

unfavorable weather conditions or those that can be harvested more quickly to provide farming communities with income and food even before Niña hits. We are also studying the associated funding requirements to support as many communities as early as possible," Morales added.

The first draft of the National La Niña Action Plan for the Agriculture Sector will be completed by the end of June.

"We hope that this effort would result in timely and appropriate interventions that will continue to increase the resilience of farmers and fisherfolk in the Philippines," Fernández said.

In 2015, FAO assisted DA in the formulation of a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan for Agriculture and Fisheries. The final report, which is due to be published this year, will help guide the mainstreaming of DRRM and Climate Change Adaptation into national and local policies and plans. *(By VDS, GMA News)*

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- monetary and trade policies;
- Institute progressive tax reform and more effective tax collection, while indexing taxes to inflation, in line with the plan to submit to Congress a tax reform package by September 2016;
- Ensure security of land tenure to encourage investments and address bottlenecks in land management and titling agencies;
- Invest in human capital development, including health and education systems, as well as matching skills and training to meet the demands of businesses and the private sector;
- Promote science, technology and the creative arts to enhance innovation and creative capacity towards self-sustaining and inclusive development;
- Improve social protection programs, including the government's conditional cash transfer program, in order to protect the poor against instability and economic shocks; and
- Strengthen implementation of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law to enable, especially, poor couples to make informed choices on financial and family planning. *(By Noel O. Reyes, with reports from PNA)*

## Phl hosts 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN meet on halal food

The Philippines hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of ASEAN Working Group on Halal food (AWGHF), on May 12-14, at Manila Hotel, where delegates discussed the progress and other projects related to the region's halal food industry.

The three-day meeting was attended by halal food experts from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. It was facilitated and organized by the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS).

DA assistant secretary for livestock Dr. Davino P. Catbagan, focal person of the Halal Food Industry Development Program in Philippines, chaired the meeting.

He said the Philippines is committed to develop its halal sector, as the country has very recently adopted four Philippines National Standards (PNS) for Halal, namely: Halal Agriculture and Fishery Products; Code of Halal Slaughtering Practices for Ruminants; Code of Halal Slaughtering Practices for Poultry; and Halal Animal and Aqua Feeds.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala was represented by Undersecretary Den-

nis M. Guerrero.

Alcala said the Philippines Halal development program is strongly pursued to respect the belief, rights and customs of the country's Muslim community, which represents 10 percent or about 10.4 million out of the 102 million total Philippines population.

Further, the halal food industry development program is implemented by the DA in partnership with concerned stakeholders to capture a share of the burgeoning global halal industry, which is estimated at US\$2.3 trillion, of which Halal food makes up around US\$700 billion.

Guerrero said ASEAN is home to 62% of the world's Muslim population, making the region a lucrative market for Halal food. Hence, he reiterated the need for ASEAN member-countries to strengthen, align, and consolidate efforts towards establishing strong Halal certification systems to maximize the market potentials of Halal food products in the region and in the world.

The 13<sup>th</sup> AWGHF meeting will be held in Singapore next year. *(BAFPS)*

## Duterte welcomes... (from p1)

what the next administration should pursue to further the growth of the economy.

"When you think about it, this comes very cheap it. If you were to ask them to bill us, I don't think we can afford their talents," he said.

Barcelon said that a comprehensive tax reform package topped the recommendations of the business sector.

The businessmen agreed to have a national identification system that will allow for a more targeted social services and prevent double-counting or leakage.

They recommended automation and streamlining of processing time of per-

mits and bottlenecks in land titling.

Barcelon added they agreed that internet and telecommunication services must be improved to ensure enhanced connectivity.

The private sector recommended amending Republic Act (RA) 7925, an act "to promote and govern the development of the Philippine Telecommunications and the delivery of public telecommunication services."

Barcelon said they saw the need to adopt a value-chain development in rural-based enterprises in the form of a support system through financing, technology, and logistics to raise rural productivity and employment to support

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parts on how they were able to improve their productivity and reduce rural poverty. Dy also commended Duterte's eight-point economic agenda, particularly the first four in the list, including his commitment to the agriculture sector.

"These are good agenda and represents reforms," he said.

### Duterte's economic agenda

Many leaders lauded his agenda for agriculture, but in the end, they said its effectivity would depend on how the presumptive president and his appointed agriculture secretary would implement it. "It depends on how he will implement it," said Edwin Chen, president of Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines (Propork).

For Philippine Maize Federation Inc. President Roger Navarro, a big part of it would be the synergy between the Departments of Agriculture (DA), the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Science and Technology (DOST) and of Trade and Industry (DTI).

The DA, he said, should cooperate with the DILG for the extension of services, the DTI for marketing and trade policies, and the DOST for weather and climate-change concerns, as well as technology development.

"If there is no synergy among these agencies, the DA's programs would fail to reach farmers in the barangay level," Navarro told the *BusinessMirror*.

The *Samahang Industriya Ng Agrikultura* (Sinag), meanwhile, expressed alarm on Duterte's agenda to lift foreign-ownership restrictions on businesses.

"We are concerned with the possible implications of this. Agriculture should be developed locally, and we are wary if this reform happens, foreign companies might buy our agricultural lands and exploit our resources," Sinag Chairman Rosendo So said.

The industry group said foreign investments in agriculture and fisheries production and processing could cripple the local industry and, therefore, should not be allowed.

### High hopes from agriculture sector

Other leaders from different agriculture subsectors also expressed confidence that Duterte is on the right track

in pursuing the development of the agriculture sector. This means the next administration has to perform well, as hopes and expectations from farmers' and stakeholders in the sector are so high.

Chen said the hog industry has high hopes on the fight against smuggling, which is hurting local industries, particularly small farmers and fishermen.

"If the government stops the rampant smuggling of agricultural products and support the local industries through collaboration and increased production, we can see farmers' income to grow," the industry leader said.

Jesus L. Arranza, chairman of the Federation of Philippine Industries Inc. and president of the Coconut Oil Refiners Association, also expressed the same sentiment.

"I feel that he [Duterte] will instill discipline and order in the system...he knows what should be done to prevent the encroachment [of smuggled goods in the country]," he said. Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association Executive Director Stephen Antig, for his part, said banana and pineapple growers in the country are expecting the next president to be supportive of these industries, and aid them in becoming more competitive in the world market through support services that will increase productivity and improve the quality of goods.

"Assistance in the identification of new markets is also imperative, considering that many players and competitors are now encroaching into our traditional market," he added. Roberto Amores, one of the lead conveners of the Agri-Fisheries Alliance and president of the Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization Inc., said stakeholder participation in agriculture projects, supervision of extension workers, credit extension to farmers, production subsidies and technical support are also important to promote aggressive growth in the agriculture sector.

Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. Executive Director Francisco Buencamino said the next administration must also craft effective policies and guidelines that will increase the production and supply of agricultural products to make sure food will be available and more affordable for Filipino consumers. (By *Mary Grace Padin, BusinessMirror*)



**Dr. Dar is shown with former President Fidel V. Ramos during the inauguration of an "FVR Library," at the University of Pangasinan, in Dagupan.**

farmers and fisher folks.

Lao, who presented the second part of the recommendations, said that the participants want the next administration to limit and gradually eliminate the export of mineral ore.

The participants suggested that an action plan should be in place to identify industry clusters and regions where the small and medium enterprises should locate to avail of lower transport, energy, and logistics costs.

He said the government must work on improving the transport networks to address the clamor on expediting infrastructure projects in the country.

Lao cited regional airports, seaports, and mass transit projects like the North-South Railway, C-6 Expressway, Cebu Bus Rapid Transit, and Davao Port projects.

The private sector urged the government to review CCT, or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4PS).

The private sector called for a reduction of bottlenecks in the implementation of public-private partnership by coming up with concrete measures to remove the roadblocks such as right-of-way issues and lack of synergy between local government units and national government agencies. (By *Antonio L. Colina IV, MindaNews*)

### InangLupa Newsletter

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