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THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Philippines, Australia aim to deepen economic ties

[Louella Desiderio](#) - The Philippine Star

October 20, 2024 | 12:00am



In a statement, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said Trade Secretary Cristina Roque met with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Secretary Jan Adams to discuss ways on how to strengthen the bilateral economic relationship of the two countries through trade, investment and shared interests.

Composite File photo

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines and Australia aim to strengthen their economic relations by promoting more significant trade and investments.

In a statement, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said Trade Secretary Cristina Roque met with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Secretary Jan Adams to discuss ways on how to strengthen the bilateral economic relationship of the two countries through trade, investment and shared interests.

During the meeting, the officials also discussed Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy for 2040, which aims to bolster two-way trade and investment between Australia and Southeast Asia.

Both ministers expressed their commitment to enhance economic security and resilience and promote a rule-based international trading system, particularly through the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Electronic Commerce.

Last July, over 80 members of the WTO reached an agreement on the first-ever global rules on e-commerce.

This follows five years of negotiations among WTO members, jointly convened by Australia, Japan and Singapore.

In the meeting, Roque also highlighted how the Philippines and Australia complement each other, particularly in sectors like green metals, agriculture, renewable energy, and information technology - business process management.

The DTI believes there are opportunities for both countries to achieve economic growth through these sectors.

Earlier this week, Australia launched its Development Partnership Plan for the Philippines for the years 2024 to 2029.

The plan seeks to support the achievement of the Philippines' development priorities.

Last year, bilateral trade between the Philippines and Australia reached P378 billion.

In 2023, two-way investment between Australia and the Philippines amounted to P321 billion.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/20/2393751/philippines-australia-aim-deepen-economic-ties>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

DA, FAO collaborate to strengthen food security

[Romina Cabrera](#) - The Philippine Star

October 20, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has met with the head of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in a bid to strengthen collaboration towards food security.

“We are keen to develop our agriculture sector through increased trade and investment. The Philippines is dedicated to creating sustainable livelihoods for our farmers and fisherfolk,” he said.

Tiu Laurel met with FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu in Rome earlier this week to showcase the country’s strategic investment plan on four key commodity sectors, namely abaca, bamboo, mango and seaweed.

The Department of Agriculture said these sectors are crucial in boosting local economies, creating jobs and supporting sustainable development.

FAO currently has 19 national projects being implemented in the Philippines, totaling \$41 million. Qu emphasized FAO’s readiness to assist the country in accessing funds as well as in future collaborations.

“FAO stands ready to continue supporting the Philippines in building resilient agricultural systems that can withstand health and climate-related crises,” Qu said.

Tiu Laurel said the Marcos administration is committed to modernizing the sector despite challenges like natural disasters, agricultural smuggling and supply chain fragmentation.

“In response to these challenges, the Philippine government has increased the agriculture sector budget to P167.5 billion, focusing on irrigation, cold storage, farm-to-market roads and direct support for farmers,” Tiu Laurel added.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/10/20/2393866/da-fao-collaborate-strengthen-food-security>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Nestlé confident of attaining local coffee output target

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

October 20, 2024 | 12:00am



Nestlé Philippines corporate affairs head Jose Uy III said the company is on track to hit the goals set under its Project Coffee++, including higher yield and profit for coffee farmers, which is set to end next year.

Pixabay

MANILA, Philippines — Nestlé Philippines Inc. is confident of attaining its goal of increasing the yield of local coffee farmers to at least one metric ton per hectare by 2025 as part of its program to improve farmers' profits and welfare.

Nestlé Philippines corporate affairs head Jose Uy III said the company is on track to hit the goals set under its Project Coffee++, including higher yield and profit for coffee farmers, which is set to end next year.

The project is done by the company in partnership with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ). Under the three-year project, which began last year, some 3,000 farmers would be able to increase their yield and profit by 20 percent by next year.

Farmer-beneficiaries have been producing about 900 kilos per hectare at the end of the previous iteration of the project in 2022. Income-wise, farmers are now earning at least 100,000 per harvest season.

Before the start of Project Coffee++, which began in 2018, farmer-beneficiaries were only producing about 235 kilos per hectare and earning P30,000 per harvest season.

“We are confident of hitting or even surpassing the target. We commit at least one metric ton per hectare and we see it growing beyond,” Uy said.

The project also aims to encourage farmers to implement regenerative agriculture in their farm practices to ensure sustainability of their production.

Regenerative agriculture refers to the use of various practices such as intercropping, cover cropping and composting to rejuvenate soil health and reduce wastage as well as carbon emissions.

The goal is in line with the corporate vision of Nestlé of sourcing at least 20 percent of their green coffee beans from farmers practicing regenerative agriculture and 50 percent by 2030 until it becomes 100 percent by 2050.

“We are going beyond sustainability. We want to replenish the health of the soil as well as reducing water waste and protecting biodiversity,” Uy said.

To meet this goal, the company partnered with the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and GIZ in rolling out an expanded training program for coffee producers aimed at capacitating them to implement regenerative farming practices to reduce their soil degradation and rejuvenate land to ensure sustainable production.

The training module has been incorporated in the ATI’s digital learning platform that farmers can access remotely, making it the 23rd course offered by the attached agency of the Department of Agriculture.

Citing the World Coffee Research, Nestlé government and industry affairs executive Donnel Jun Tiedra said 47 percent of the global coffee supply comes from countries that may lose 60 percent of suitable land by 2050 due to the climate crisis.

This, Tiedra said, makes it more imperative to help farmers change their farming practices toward more climate-resilient coffee production, including regenerative agriculture.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/20/2393741/nestl-confident-attaining-local-coffee-output-target>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Farmers group slams Marcos admin for continued rice importation

By: [Jown Manalo](#) - Reporter / [@jownmanaloINQ](#)

INQUIRER.net / 07:00 PM October 20, 2024



PHILIPPINES PROJECTED TO BE WORLD'S TOP RICE IMPORTER. Workers load sacks of imported rice from Thailand and Vietnam on a truck in Dagupan, Manila for transport to various dealers and distributors. The Philippines is expected to remain the world's top importer of rice this year with the US Department of Agriculture predicting that the country would increase its procurement of the staple. INQUIRER PHOTO / RICHARD A. REYES

MANILA, Philippines — Farmers organization Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women and rice watch group Bantay Bigas on Sunday criticized the Marcos administration for another round of rice importation this October.

According to the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Philippines has imported a total of 3.29 million metric tons (MT) of rice as of October 3, solidifying its position as the world's largest rice importer.

Vietnam continues to be the Philippines' top rice supplier, exporting 2.61 million MT, based on DA's data with the same reference period. It is followed by Thailand with 416,185.19 MT and Pakistan, which supplied 157,564.48 MT. India shipped 76,971 MT of rice to the Philippines.

Amihan secretary-general and Bantay Bigas spokesperson Cathy Estavillo said the continued rice importation is neither a solution nor beneficial to farmers and poor consumers, as it only undermines Filipino farmers and the country's self-sufficiency and food security.

According to Estavilla, the revenue lost due to imports could have been additional income for Filipino rice farmers if the government only prioritized local production to achieve rice self-sufficiency.

“The farm gate price of rice remains very low because traders are underpricing it, and the NFA is not buying directly from farmers. Instead of providing compensation and aid to farmers affected by successive calamities like El Niño, La Niña, typhoons, and floods, Marcos's response has been importation. Importing rice is often done simultaneously with the harvest period, like in the recent case, which causes farmers to suffer losses,” she added in Filipino.

“We must oppose Marcos' efforts to beg for food from other countries and his promotion of land grabbing and land-use conversion, which reduces land for food production,” Amihan's statement read.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1994683/farmers-group-slams-marcos-admin-for-continued-rice-importation>

BUSINESS WORLD:

New NFA buying price seen providing relief to rice farmers

October 20, 2024 | 8:09 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/ KJ

ROSALES

By **Adrian H. Halili**, *Reporter*

THE National Food Authority's (NFA) new system for setting the purchase price for palay (unmilled rice) is supporting farmers as farmgate prices for the grain fall, analysts said.

University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) Center for Food and Agribusiness Executive Director Marie Annette Galvez-Dacul said that the government's new price scheme is a relief to farmers struggling with weak prices offered by private traders.

The NFA set its buying price for palay at P23 to P25 per kilogram for the wet-season harvest.

"However, it may not fully cover rising expenses, especially for those affected by adverse weather," Ms. Dacul said via Viber.

The average farmgate price for palay was P22.43 per kilogram in September, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

"It's important to note that the NFA has limited procurement funds... and once these are used up, things will shift to a buyer's market," she added.

The NFA said last week that its procurement budget for unmilled rice for the remainder of the year has been set at P9 billion. Most of the allotment will go to meeting its palay inventory goals for the wet season.

The NFA is targeting palay inventory of 435,000 MT by the end of the year. It is required to maintain a rice reserve equivalent to about nine days' demand.

“P23-35 per kilo is okay with farmers given that production cost is P16-17 per kilo,” Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura Executive Director Jayson H. Cainglet said via Viber.

The DA has said that the new palay buying scheme will aid the government in taming rice prices.

“The NFA must procure at least 10% of the harvest to force traders into lowering their buying prices,” Mr. Cainglet said.

UA&P’s Ms. Dacul said traders might adjust their prices to stay competitive with the NFA’s new buying price.

“But not all may follow suit, as this will depend on factors like supply levels and the quality of palay,” she added.

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/10/20/629322/new-nfa-buying-price-seen-providing-relief-to-rice-farmers/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Durian exporters awaiting China clearances to ship frozen durian

October 20, 2024 | 8:09 pm



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

DAVAO CITY — Davao City Durian Industry Council President Emmanuel Belviz said on Friday that three exporters are awaiting the approval of their China Import Food Enterprise Registration (CIFER) prior to shipping frozen durian to China.

Mr. Belviz, owner of Belviz Farms, said the exporters awaiting CIFERs are Eng Seng Food Products, SQ Fresh Fruit Corp., and D' Farmers Market Fruits and Pastries Center.

CIFER is a primary requirement for businesses seeking to export food products to China.

“China approved and allowed the export of frozen fruits just last month. *Marami na tayong* exporters *na nag-apply*... (Many exporters have applied),” Mr. Belviz said.

Mr. Belviz said Thailand is currently the biggest buyer of frozen durian. The Philippines has exported around 3.13 million kilograms of frozen durian to Thailand this year, followed by South Korea with 185,664 kilograms and Malaysia 25,650 kilograms.

“The exporters are holding out (to send more) after the season,” he said.

Meanwhile, for fresh durian, Mr. Belviz said in the nine months to September, Davao durian exports to China topped 9,295 metric tons (MT). Singapore took in 55.70 MT and Japan 184.25 kilograms.

“Durian season is still ongoing. We still have to harvest from high elevation areas like Tamayong and Sirib,” Mr. Belviz said.

He said China remains the most lucrative and biggest market for Davao durian.

In April 2023, the Department of Agriculture in Davao Region shipped 18 metric tons of durian to China following the signing of a bilateral agreement governing shipments of Philippine fresh durian to China. The deal was signed during the state visit of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. on Jan. 3, 2023.

Meanwhile, Mr. Belviz said the upcoming National Durian Industry Summit on Oct. 23-24 at the Grand Men Seng Hotel in Davao City is expected to address pressing issues for the Davao durian export trade.

Mr. Belviz said during the Business Matters media forum at Hukad, Abreeza Ayala Malls, that one of the issues exporters have encountered was rejection of durian shipments due to quality problems.

Mr. Belviz said the industry invited experts from Malaysia and Thailand to consult on boosting fruit quality.

Mr. Belviz added that the summit will also gather international speakers who will share best practices on durian production. — **Maya M. Padillo**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/10/20/629324/durian-exporters-awaiting-china-clearances-to-ship-frozen-durian/>

REMATE:

Pagpapahusay ng ASF vax protocol iniatas ng DA chief

October 19, 2024 14:52



MANILA, Philippines- Ipinag-utos ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. sa Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) na ayusin ang vaccination protocol nito para mapabuti ang pag-rollout ng Vietnam-developed African Swine Fever (ASF) vaccine.

“We’re hopeful that impending changes to the vaccination protocol will finally fasttrack the vaccine rollout and finally address our problem with this stubborn virus,” ang sinabi ni Tiu Laurel.

Sinabi pa ng Kalihim na ang isinagawang blood tests ng BAI sa mahigit sa tatlong dosenang baboy sa Lobo, Batangas —ang ground zero ng pinakabagong ASF outbreak —nagpapakita na ang mga baboy ay nakapag-develop ng sapat na antibodies para labanan ang ASF virus.

Sa ulat, ang DA ay paunang nagdala ng 10,000 dose ng AVAC live vaccines sa pamamagitan ng emergency procurement noong Agosto bilang bahagi ng mas pinalawak na plano para mamahagi ng 600,000 vaccine doses.

Layon ng vaccine rollout na alisin sa hog industry ang kinatatakutang animal disease na sumira sa local hog population simula pa noong unang outbreak noong 2019.

Sa kabilang dako, hindi naman lingid sa kaalaman ng Kalihim na may mga backyard hog raisers ang nag-aalala na makiisa sa ASF vaccine rollout dahil sa ilang negatibong publisidad at may ilang magsasaka ang nangangamba na ang kanilang baboy ay papatayin kapag lumabas sa resulta ng pagsusuri na ang kanilang baboy ay “infected.”

Samantala, makikita sa pinakabagong BAI data ukol sa ASF infection na hanggang noong Oktubre 2, 2024, may 30 lalawigan sa 14 mula sa 17 rehiyon ang may aktibong kaso ng ASF. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/pagpapahusay-ng-asf-vax-protocol-iniatas-ng-da-chief/>

DoH, DA to build regional offices

By Eugene Y. Adiong

October 20, 2024

BACOLOD CITY — Key national agencies are readying for the Negros Island Region (NIR) as they have put up transition teams tasked to prepare the groundwork for a regional office for the newly created administrative region.

Undersecretary Mary Ann Maestral said the Department of Health (DoH) is ready to put up its regional office, as well as its personnel and facilities.

Maestral added that the regional office will be set up in Dumaguete City and a satellite office in Bacolod City.

Razel Nikka Hao has been designated as the regional director of DoH Center for Health and Development of NIR.

Health Secretary Ted Herbosa only needs to sign the Implementing Rules and Regulations for the Negros Island Region Act to finalize the putting up of the regional office, Maestral said.

Hao said the regional office will initially borrow DoH staff from both Regions 6 (Western Visayas) and 7 (Central Visayas).

Meanwhile, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has tasked a transition team of putting up a regional field office for the NIR, said Jose Albert Barrogo, the acting regional director for NIR.

Barrogo said the transition team is tasked to place an interim plan that would prioritize the organizational structure, the most cost-effective and economical way of assigning personnel, and the financial requirements needed for the operation of the agency's regional office.

The regional office will be established before the end of 2024, said Barrogo.

Aside from Barrogo, who has been designated as officer in charge (OIC)-regional executive director of Department of Agriculture (DA) Western Visayas, Alejandro Rafal has also been designated as the OIC-regional technical director for operations and extensions.

Barrogo was formerly DA regional technical director for operations in Western Visayas.

Barrogo said the DA's regional office for NIR will be located at its current field office in Bacolod City, beside the Land Bank of the Philippines along Gatuslao Street and Cottage Road.

He added that they will also establish an agricultural road map for NIR through a workshop-planning to be participated in by all local government units in Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental and Siquijor.

Aside from the DoH and DA, also appointing a regional director is the Commission on Elections.

Comelec Chairman George Erwin Garcia designated Leonil Marco Castellano as acting regional election director of NIR.

Negros Occidental Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson said the regional offices of agriculture, agrarian reform, justice, foreign affairs, environment and natural resources, interior and local government, and Commission on Audit will be set up in Negros Occidental.

On June 13, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed Republic Act 12000, or the NIR Act, creating an administrative region comprising Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental and Siquijor.

Under the NIR Act, Negros Occidental was separated from Western Visayas and Negros Oriental and Siquijor from Central Visayas.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/20/regions/doh-da-to-build-regional-offices/1987670>