

RDCom Mindanao Conducts 17th Conference; Discusses Area Spatial Development Plans

The Regional Development Committee (RDCom)-Mindanao conducted its 17th Area Conference on 6 November 2015 at the Park Inn by Radisson, Lanang, Davao City to discuss, among others, the Area Spatial Development Frameworks (ASDFs) of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The meeting was graced by the heads of the Luzon and Visayas RDCom Secretariats, as well as NEDA Assistant Director General Kenneth V. Tanate, who represented NEDA Board-RDCom Chairperson and NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan.

In the Secretary's keynote message, delivered by ADG Tanate, it was emphasized that Mindanao plays an important role in the ASEAN Economic Community, as attributed to its strong trade and investment relationships with the ASEAN countries, as well as its proximity to BIMP-EAGA. "AEC presents a window of opportunity for Mindanao's food manufacturing sector, particularly on halal production, as well as on infrastructure and logistics development," he said in his message.

According to Director Maria Lourdes D. Lim, Head of the RDCom-Mindanao Secretariat, Mindanao shall pursue its position as the country's agri-industrial center as spelled out in the Mindanao Spatial Strategic Development Framework (MSS/DF), 2015-2045. The MSS/DF, including the Luzon Spatial Development Framework (LSDF), 2015-2045 and the Visayas Spatial Development Framework (VSDF), 2015-2045, have adopted the paradigm shift introduced in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) which focuses on 3 key strategies: Concentration, Connectivity and Vulnerability Reduction. OIC-Director Remedios S. Endencia of the NEDA Regional Development Staff said that the core strategy of the National Physical Framework Plan (NPF) is the NSS, hence advocated for adoption in the ASDFs.

The NPF is the blueprint for spatial development in the country that shall serve as guide for policy makers and investors in bringing about efficient settlement, production and service delivery systems consistent with sustainable use of land and other natural resources and disaster risk. The NSS, on the other hand, serves as the NPF's core strategy taking into consideration inclusive growth in terms of spatial and physical factors such as population, economic and other activities, and location of the population.

ADG Tanate observed that the MSS/DF, benchmarked with ASEAN economies, particularly in terms of productivity of production areas, which he considers important in the pursuit of global competitiveness. Acting RDC XII Chairperson and Presiding Officer Arturo G. Valero, on the other hand, pointed out the need to harmonize the programs and projects included in the NPF and the ASDFs for consistency and complementation.

Updates on the Bangsamoro Basic Law

The Conference likewise tackled updates on the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which incurred some delays in legislative proceedings. Former Secretary Senen Bacani of the Government of the Philippines Peace Negotiating Panel said that once the law is passed by Congress, a referendum in the affected geographical areas will be conducted. On regulations affecting existing hydropower plants in Lake Lanao, Secretary Bacani explained that these will remain under the concerned national government agencies. Facilities not connected to the national transmission grid shall be under the regulatory powers of the Bangsamoro Government.

Mindanao Component of the Comprehensive and Integrated Infrastructure Program (CIIP)

The overall estimated investment requirement for the updated CIIP reached Php7 Trillion, of which 7 percent or Php525 Billion are Mindanao-specific projects. About Php236 Billion (45%) is allocated for transportation; Php150 Billion (29%) for social infrastructure; Php72 Billion (14%) for power and energy; Php67 Billion (13%) for water resources; and Php46 Million (.01%) for ICT. The NEDA Infrastructure Staff reported that the Mindanao-specific ICT projects refer to administrative-related ICT requirements of SUCs and agencies, however, this amount is augmented by nationwide projects, that cover Mindanao areas, which increase the investment level to about Php1.43 Trillion pesos or about 20 percent of total investments in the CIIP.

Improvement of Health Services and Facilities

The policy paper on the Improvement of Health Services and Facilities in Mindanao, which was based on a focus group discussion (FGD) with major stakeholders in Region X, delved on the outcomes/impacts of the devolution of health services and facilities. According to NEDA X ARD Mae Ester Guiamadel, the major findings of the FGD included, among others, the lack of complementary funding support for devolved health services/programs, low priority given by LGUs to the health and nutrition sector, and high dependence of LGUs on the Health Facility Enhancement Program of DOH resulting to inadequate and inaccessible health services, particularly in low-income LGUs. She said that there is a need to improve health governance by involving the private sector and civil society in policy making and monitoring of health programs, as well as strengthen inter-agency collaboration among the DOH, DSWD, DPWH and DA in the provision of support infrastructure.

RDC XI Vice-chairperson Maria Lourdes D. Lim pointed out the need to analyze the actual health budget allocation of LGUs to provide basis for the FGD results.

Status of Cadastral Survey

The cadastral survey among the municipalities and cities in Mindanao is about 84.8 percent and 81.2 percent completed, respectively. While most regions reported that the survey in their areas has been completed, validation of results is still ongoing. Generally, the issue on boundary conflicts is due to overlap/conflict in technical descriptions indicated in legal documents creating the LGUs.

Director Teresita Socorro Ramos, RDC IX Acting Chairperson, stated that cadastral surveys are conducted to delineate political boundaries and determine the metes and bounds of all parcels within an entire municipality or city for land registration, land titling and other purposes. DENR-LMB needs to fast track validation of the results of the survey and completion of the cadastral map of Mindanao for accurate titling and land registration, as well as integrate and improve land reference database/information system of concerned agencies to ensure non-overlapping technical descriptions of LGU boundaries.



Committee members and representatives of the RDCom-Mindanao, together with guests/resource persons from NEDA Central Office (ODG, PIS, IS, RDS), OPAPP, DOH and DENR and Secretariats of RDCom Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao