

RDC XI Pushes for Expansion of Mt. Hamiguitan Protected Area, Supports Philippine Long-Term Vision

Davao City – Chaired by Governor Rodolfo P. del Rosario of Davao del Norte, the Regional Development Council XI convened for its 2nd Quarter Regular Meeting on 7 June 2016 at the NEDA-RDC XI Center.

During the meeting, the Council agreed to submit to the Philippine Congress a legislative proposal for the expansion of the Mt. Hamiguitan Range and Wildlife Sanctuary (MHRWS) protected area. Republic Act No. 9303 in 2004 proclaimed the Mt. Hamiguitan Range and Wildlife Sanctuary (MHRWS) a protected area under the Network of Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS). An expansion of the MHRWS is now proposed, bringing its total protected area to 26,652.54 hectares from the current 7,132.76 hectares, to further enhance its wildlife protection, specifically the habitat of the Philippine Eagle and other endemic wildlife species. While the municipalities of San Isidro and Governor Generoso and Mati City have already passed municipal ordinances declaring the expansion area as a “*local conservation area*”, these local initiatives are being threatened by a pre-existing mining claim inside the expansion area under a Mining Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) approved in 2008.

The meeting likewise resulted in, among others, the approval of the inclusion of the coffee industry as one of the priority industries of Davao Region; the adoption of the *Davao Region Program of Action for Internal Migration and Development*; and the presentation of the Philippine long-term Vision (LTV).

The Council recognized the Region’s coffee industry’s potential as the second biggest contributor to the country’s overall coffee production, as well as the active support of the private sector and the local government units (LGUs) to the industry. Compostela Valley has the largest area devoted to coffee with 4,765 hectares. The coffee industry stakeholders in the Region composed of government agencies, academe, and private sector players, had earlier commenced the formulation of the Regional Coffee Industry Cluster Roadmap, 2016-2030.

The Davao Region Program of Action for Internal Migration was formulated with reference to the *14 Key Actionable Points* identified during the 2015 National Summit on Internal Migration on June 25, 2015 in Manila. The Program of Action details proposed actions at the regional and local levels, addressing the effects of population movement on education, economy, social welfare and protection, environment, employment, health and urban management and local governance, with the responsible entity identified for each actionable point.

The Council was also briefed on the long-term vision (LTV) of the Filipino people, dubbed as “*Ambisyon Natin 2040*”. The LTV, which embodies the aspirations, values and principles of the Filipino people, shall serve as a guide in development planning across administrations. According to “*Ambisyon Natin 2040*”, the Filipinos envision for themselves to enjoy a stable and comfortable lifestyle, secure in the knowledge that they have enough for their daily needs and unexpected expenses, that they can plan and prepare for their own and their children’s futures. Their families live together in a place of their own, yet they have the freedom to go where they desire, protected and enabled by a clean, efficient, and fair government.

These are the findings of a survey initiated by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) conducted among 10,000 respondents, aged 15-50, wherein they were asked to convey their aspirations, describing what it is that they want to have, to do and to be, by 2040 or 25 years later.

Relatedly, the Filipinos' vision for the nation is that the *Philippines shall be a country where all citizens are free from hunger and poverty, have equal opportunities enabled by a fair and just society that is governed by order and unity. A nation where families live together, thriving in vibrant, culturally diverse, and resilient communities.*

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