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Philippines, US government, BCIU hold forum for advancing food security goals

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The Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) officials, United States (US) government officials, and Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU) members convened on October 3, 2023 for an open forum and networking lunch as part of the US and BCIUâ??s agriculture mission to the Philippines.

With the main objective of advancing food security goals, the meeting was led by DA Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban, US Embassy Senior Economic Officer Paul Taylor, and BCIU Senior Director/Global Head of Regions Max Horwitz.

â??For agriculture, the Philippine government is interested in promoting public-private partnerships and investments in agricultural inputs and fertilizers, as well as vital infrastructure â?? such as post-harvest and cold chain facilities, smart agriculture technology, seed technology, and irrigation systems, among others,â? Undersecretary Panganiban said.

He added that the said investments are especially important as the country strives to mitigate the consequences of rising food inflation, high production costs, and the possibility of drought.

The officials also discussed on-going DA initiatives which are possible areas for collaboration with concerned BCIU members, such as pest and disease control, farm clustering and consolidation, food safety regulations, expanding marketing and trade opportunities, engaging young farmers and agri-preneurs, training opportunities, technology transfer, digitalization, and

modernization, among others, during the forum.

The forum is an outcome of the bilateral discussions led by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. and President Joseph Biden, Jr. last May when they agreed that the two nations should closely cooperate on the common pursuit of resilient and sustainable food systems.

â??I trust that your mission to our islands has been productive and rewarding thus far â?? and that you have gained useful insights, particularly into the wealth of investment opportunities in the Philippines,â? the DA official said.

He also shared the priority programs of the DA under the leadership of President Marcos such as boosting the production of rice, corn, fisheries, livestock, and high value crops, strengthening the agri value chain, and developing products for export.

The US is the Philippinesâ?? top trading partner for agriculture, fisheries, and food products with total trade amounting to $5.22 billion in 2022. Moreover, it has been a significant source of investments, technology, and technical assistance for the local agriculture sector.