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Philippines to foster and support seaweed businesses by industry stakeholders coalition

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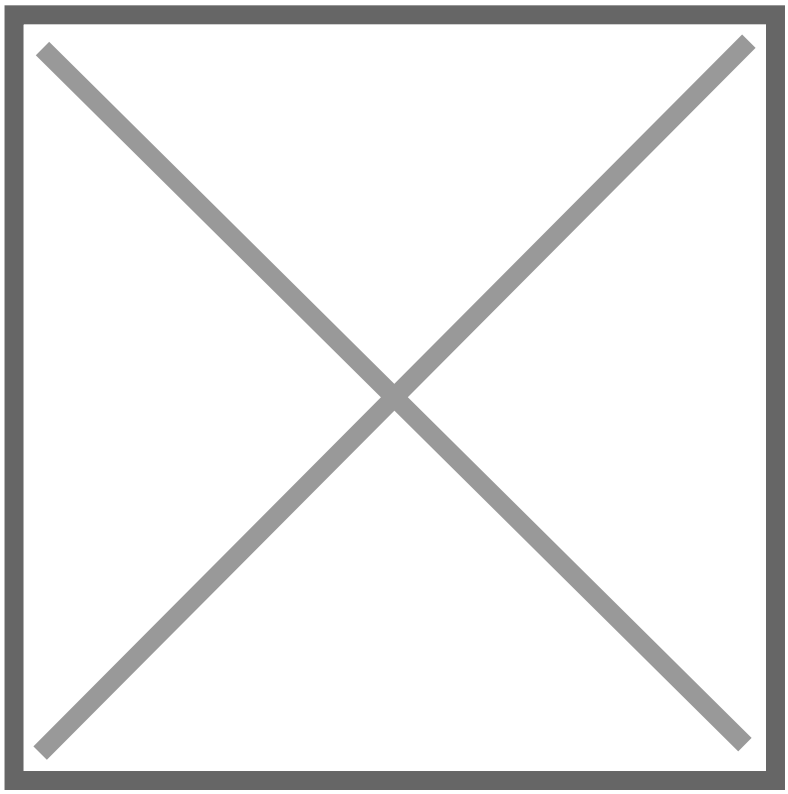
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Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) underscored the need to increase support for local seaweed producers to boost the potential of the second biggest export earner in the country's aquaculture. DA held a gathering of seaweed industry stakeholders to address the concerns.

DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. pointed out the local seaweed industryâ??s potential to regain its status as the worldâ??s biggest exporter.Â



In 1990, the Philippines accounted for 80% of the worldâ??s seaweed requirement while Indonesia only produced 10%. That has since changed. Indonesia produces five times more than the Philippines.

â??Indonesia already surpassed our productionâ?¦(but) we still have unutilized area of 85,000 hectares. Until we reach that, we shouldnâ??t stop. If possible, we should accelerate the industryâ??s area expansion. Major concerns raised by industry leaders is limited support for the industry and lack of seedlings, which could be addressed by having bigger tissue culture laboratories and more technicians. Logistics issues also need to be resolved, including building more ports to take raw materials to processing plants and more power plants to address the high cost of powerâ? said Sec. Tiu Laurel.

While most seaweed production comes from Mindanao, processing facilities are in Cebu and Manila. The seaweed industry earned around $250 million during 2020-21 and generated export sales of $350 million in 2022.

Secretary Tiu Laurel acknowledged the industryâ??s proposal to provide support in terms of seedlings, implements, lines, floaters, and counterweights to help seaweed farmers, who could produce 70,000 metric tons of seaweeds a year. He said once dried, the seaweed harvest would generate around 10,000 tons every year worth P550 millionâ??a good return for a total investment of P1 billion for the industry, including large tissue culture laboratories, dryers, warehouses and training more technicians