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Philippines to launch new DA-PRRI facilities in Zamboanga Sibugay

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A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been signed between the Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA) and the DA-Philippine Rubber Research Institute (PRRI) on June 13 to establish the "Research and Development buildings, Experimental station, and Propagation Nursery" of the DA-PRRI in a seven-hectare lot within the DA-Integrated Zamboanga Sibugay Research and Extension Services (IZRES) in Region IX.

The soon-to-rise facilities in Zamboanga Sibugay has gained reputation as the â??Rubber Capital of the Philippinesâ?• for its 80,000-hectare rubber productionâ??shall serve as important facets of the DA-PRRIâ??s research, development, and extension functions as well as the implementation of its initiatives for the Philippine rubber industry.

â??Through collaborative efforts, as attested by the execution of this landmark agreement, we shall attain the goal of Masaganang Bagong Pilipinas. With this endowment, PRRI stands poised to establish a sanctuary of development for rubber growers, ensuring that no one is left behind,â?• DA-PRRI Executive Director Dr. Cheryl Eusala said.

The DA-PRRI was created by virtue of the Republic Act No. 10089 mainly to propagate and promote Philippine rubber trees for the production of latex and raw materials, to capacitate local rubber farmers and processors for increased productivity and profitability, and to kick-start research and development (R&D) projects on rubber, among others.

Currently, it has been addressing the threats posed by the occurrence of rubber tree pests and diseases, ensuring the steady increase in rubber prices, and encouraging more Filipinos to engage in rubber farming and processing through the provision of technical support and the promotion of modern technologies and facilities for a more efficient rubber production in the country.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. acknowledged the DA-PRRI, as a vital institution in the advancement of the Philippine rubber industry and in supporting the livelihood of over 700,000 rubber growers in the country.

â??The Department of Agriculture pledges to continue to collaborate to bring forth a robust rubber industry. We renew our commitment to ensure the delivery of accurate, efficient, and effective public service in the agriculture industry,â? the Secretary reaffirmed.

The MOA signing was also attended by DA-Regional Field Office IX Executive Director Engr. Marcos Aves Sr. as well as Zamboanga Sibugay Governor Dr. Ann Hofer, the latter being the author of the RA 10089.

â??This ceremonial signing comes at a time when prospects are improving for farmers and stakeholders and a multifaceted intervention will truly revive this industry. I have full trust that you will continue to lead in finding solutions to age-old issues and new challenges within the industry. I will be doggedly pushing for you to craft a comprehensive strategy for the development of the rubber industry in Zamboanga Sibugay, other areas of Mindanao, and the entire country, focusing on leveraging advanced technology, enhancing capacity-building, and training initiatives for farmers and stakeholders,â? Gov. Hofer expressed