

## Cambodia and Philippines discuss strengthening bilateral trade and food supply resilience

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The Philippines and Cambodia have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening agricultural cooperation during a bilateral meeting between Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. and Cambodian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Dith Tina.

The meeting, held during President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s state visit to Cambodia, focused on enhancing agricultural trade, food security, and market access for farm products. Minister Dith expressed optimism about the growing demand for Cambodian agricultural exports in the Philippines, particularly premium aromatic rice, which is increasingly sought after in urban areas like Manila.

Secretary Tiu Laurel, in turn, highlighted the potential of Cambodian products such as rice, fish, meat, and vegetables to meet the needs of the Philippines' expanding population. He noted that the Philippines is preparing to welcome more Cambodian agricultural goods, a move that will bolster bilateral trade and improve food supply resilience.

"This bilateral meeting is a step forward to flesh out the agreement signed earlier this year by the Philippines and Cambodia on agricultural trade, cooperation, and knowledge transfer," said Secretary Tiu Laurel. The talks emphasized the importance of mutual food security and sustainable trade between the two nations.

The meeting builds on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Agricultural and Agribusiness Cooperation signed in February during Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet's state visit to Manila. The agreement aims to boost investments in

Cambodia's agriculture sector, particularly in rice production, and explore trade opportunities in vegetables and meat while facilitating technical exchange and training.

As part of their ongoing collaboration, Secretary Tiu Laurel and Minister Dith visited the Khmer Food Group and the Tram Bok Modern Agricultural Community to observe best practices in vegetable farming and agri-innovation. These visits underscored the shared goal of enhancing agricultural productivity and fostering knowledge exchange between the two countries.

The bilateral meeting concluded with both sides reaffirming their commitment to advancing agricultural cooperation, ensuring food security, and promoting sustainable trade. This partnership is seen as a significant step in strengthening the agricultural ties between the Philippines and Cambodia, paving the way for greater collaboration in the future.