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Philippines inaugurates â?±30 million irrigation project to strengthen El NiÃ±o resilience

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The new water impounding facility in Kalinga will support irrigation across 85 hectares of farmland, benefiting 35 farmers and improving water security during dry periods.



The Department of Agriculture (DA) has completed a P30-million small water impounding project in Tabuk City, Kalinga, expected to provide more reliable irrigation to 35 farmers cultivating 85 hectares and help cushion agricultural production against another spell of drought.

The Bulo-Magasusu Small Water Impounding Project in Barangay Bulo is part of the government's broader effort to expand irrigation coverage and improve water security in farming communities, particularly as the country prepares for the potential impact of the latest El Niño episode.

The facility has a service area of 85 hectares, a pond area of 18 hectares and a watershed covering 177 hectares. Its infrastructure includes a 13-meter-high dam, a 1.75-kilometer irrigation canal and a 94-meter outlet pipe.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel jr. said that improved access to stored water would help farmers maintain crop production during periods of inadequate rainfall while reducing their dependence on fuel-powered pumps, which add to production costs when surface water supplies decline.

"This project—one of many the DA had envisioned-would help address one of the biggest uncertainties confronting farmers, particularly those whose livelihoods depend on increasingly unpredictable weather patterns," he said.

He congratulated the Magasuso Small Water Impounding System Association, led by president Mokon L. Oticao, for its participation in completing the facility.

Tiu Laurel said the project was more than an infrastructure investment, as a dependable water source could improve farm productivity, lower irrigation expenses and protect the livelihoods of farming families.

He also urged the association to maintain the facility properly and ensure that its benefits extend to future generations of farmers.

The project comes as the DA steps up efforts to widen irrigation access and strengthen the agriculture sector's capacity to withstand climate-related disruptions. Small water impounding facilities are particularly important in areas where expanding conventional irrigation systems may be difficult or costly.

While the Bulo-Magasusu facility is expected to provide immediate protection against water shortages, the broader challenge is to build more durable irrigation infrastructure that can sustain agricultural production through successive dry seasons.

For the 35 beneficiary farmers, the project offers a more dependable source of water for their fields, potentially reducing production risks when rainfall becomes scarce.

Tiu Laurel said the department would continue pursuing programs that raise crop yields, reduce production costs and improve farmers' incomes as part of the administration's push for a more productive and resilient agricultural sector