

BFAR XII joins National Fisherfolk Day Celebration

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Regional Field Office 12 in cooperation with the Local Government of General Santos City and the private sector joined hand in hand to celebrate this year's edition of Farmers and Fisherfolk Day at Market 4 of the General Santos Fishport Complex on May 31, 2018.



A crowd of more than a hundred fisherfolk, government officials, and other stakeholders were gathered with the theme “Protect our fishing ground. Defend our livelihood.”





Eduardo Gongona, the undersecretary for Fisheries of the Department of Agriculture said in his message as read by his representative, “During this event, the men and women of the agri-fishery sector are given due recognition and tribute on the major role they play in economic recovery. We believe that the farmers and fisherfolk deserve to be recognized because of their significant role in attaining food sufficiency and sustainability.”

The celebration started with a fluvial parade from the Philippine Ports Authority wharf to General Santos Fishport Complex and was then followed by a formal program. The participants joyfully graced the event with their song and dance numbers.

As highlight of the program, BFAR XII turned over one unit of freezer, one smoke house, four sets of processing kits, 25 units of gillnets, and 20 units of life vests to the some registered fisherfolk as interventions for the fisheries sector.



General Santos City Mayor Ronnel C. Rivera expressed his gratitude to give recognition to the fisherfolk as the country's major contributor to fisheries production. He highlighted the need to protect the sea and its marine resources for this is the number one source of income to most of the marginalized family.



Moreover, Councilor Brix Tan, the Chairman of Committee on Fisheries, Marine Life and Aquatic Resources of General Santos City, added some understanding to everyone's view of the theme. He pointed that in order for the fisherfolk's livelihood to endure, everyone must move hand in hand to ensure the protection of the fishing grounds. He also added that "without the fishermen, there will be no fish on our plates."

City Councilor Elizabeth Bagonoc, on the other hand, pointed out that the protection of the marine resources is not only the responsibility of the government officials, rather, all of the residents must take part in the action of protecting everybody's livelihood. She said that whatever the intensity of the campaign against illegal fishing, this will be useless if the fisherfolk do not put this advocacy in their hearts and mind.

Currently, Bagonoc is the Chairperson of the Committee on Climate Change Adaptation and Environment of the City of General Santos.

In his message, Usop Pandaliday, the OIC Regional Director of BFAR 12 said that this activity reminds everybody of the direction of the fisheries sector. He emphasized President Duterte's goal which is to secure food sufficiency. "This goal which is well complemented by the department's policy to produce sufficient food at an affordable cost and the bureau's mandate

to protect, preserve, and take care of our municipal waters. Congratulations to the fisherfolk,”
Pentaliday ended.

The National Fisherfolk Day is annually celebrated pursuant to Proclamation No. 33 signed by the late Pres. Corazon Aquino in 1989 declaring the month of May as Farmers and Fisherfolk Month.