

Philippines to promote integrated rice supply chain development program

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The Philippines Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and National Irrigation Administration (NIA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that aims to ensure an efficient rice supply chain and create an alternative market for the grain which will benefit both farmers and consumers.

The MOU seeks to promote the Integrated Rice Supply Chain Development Program, a project that will foster an efficient supply chain; develop a business-to-business online market platform; create alternative market access for buyers and sellers; enhance farmers' income; promote proper rice branding and classification; and make rice affordable to consumers.

"This MOU establishes a formwork for collaboration in the development and implementation of a project that holds the promise of transforming our rice supply chain," said Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. Agriculture Secretary in a message read by Chief-of-Staff Atty. Alvin Balagbag.

With the cooperation in production, classification, marketing and distribution of domestic rice, he said the country could elevate the status of its agricultural products on a global stage. "We aim to enhance the income of our hard-working rice farmers through more efficient market and supply chain arrangements," Sec. Tiu Laurel said.

"We envision a future where our rice is not only of high quality but is also recognised and appreciated in the market," he added.

Agriculture contributed 9 per cent to gross domestic product last year. The sector, however, employed around 25 per cent of the 49.7 million Filipinos in the labour force as of November.