

17th National Organic Agriculture Congress (NOAC)
University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan, Cotabato
22 March 2023 (4:15 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.)

Greetings!

First of all, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to President Francisco Garcia and his team for welcoming and allowing us to hold this Congress in the University of Southern Mindanao.

I would also like to thank the DA-Regional Field Offices, especially Regions 11 and 12, to RED Abel James Monteagudo and RED Sailila Abdula, for providing support and assistance to make this event a success.

To the National Organic Agriculture Board members –

- 1) DA Undersecretary Zamzamin Ampatuan,
- 2) Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Lopez De Leon,
- 3) Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Dir. Juanito Batalon,
- 4) Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Undersecretary Milagros Isable Cristobal,
- 5) National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) Chairperson Allen Capuyan,
- 6) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
- 7) Department of Health (DOH)
- 8) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA),
- 9) Small Farmers Representatives – Dr. Victorio Fernando Nacpil, Dir. Jesus Antonio Orbida and Dir. Renato Dela Cruz,
- 10) Participatory Guarantee System Group Representative – Joffrey Frinal,
- 11) Academe Representative – Dr. Adeflor Garcia, and
- 12) Agribusiness Representative – Henry James Sison,

To the DA officials, Undersecretary Kristine Evangelista, regional executive directors, bureau directors,

To the representatives from the International Federation on Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM) - Asia, members of the League of Organic Agriculture Municipalities, Cities and Province of the Philippines (LOAMCP-Ph), policymakers from Cotabato, members of the Organic Agriculture Society of the Philippines (OASP), NOAP operating units, researchers and panelists, organic practitioners, farmers and other stakeholders, we are truly grateful for your presence and participation in this congress.

I sincerely appreciate your commitment, passion, and dedication in intensifying the propagation of OA. Rest assured that our efforts will be brought to fruition as we see more people benefitting under these undertakings.

Through this event, we were informed and exposed on the new technologies and practices on OA. We met and mingle with other people having the same advocacy, sharing different experiences and exchanging ideas.

This is the closing ceremony but we still have an activity for tomorrow where we will visit organic farms to see, and hopefully we can capture techniques from our farmers here in Region 12 that we can apply back home.

May these new learnings from the researches and technologies presented serve as fuel in your insatiable hunger to expand your knowledge-arsenal for the propagation of organic agriculture. The kind of hunger that will continue to strive more to increase certified organic areas as well as organic practitioners.

I believe that all of you are not only our partners in combating the challenges in the OA industry but also the prime advocates for environment fortification and food sufficiency.

At this point, we need not only to be informed on the boundless benefits of organic agriculture but also there is a dire need to be engaged in the creation of local and national strategies in the promotion, propagation, and further development and implementation of organic agriculture in the country.

Let us continue to join hands in promoting organic agriculture for the betterment of our farmers, consumers and more importantly, our environment.

Once again, a great and blessed day to each and every one. I pray for our safe travel going back home bringing the learnings and insights we acquired through this event. May all of us apply what we have learned.

Marami pong salamat and may God bless us all!