

**Women in Organic Agriculture in Asia
in the Philippines (WOAA-Ph)**

Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte
04 June 2023 (2:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.)

Congratulatory Message of NOAP Director Bernadette F. San Juan

- To Ms. Julia Lernoud, IFOAM-Organics International Vice President;
- Ms. Jennifer Chang, the Founder of the Women in Organic Agriculture in Asia (WOAA);
- Ms. Shamika Mone, President of the International Network of Organic Farming Organizations (INOFO);
- Mr. Mathew John, President of IFOAM-Organics Asia;
- Ms. Marivic Fabre Tagupa, the Founding President of Women in Organic Agriculture in Asia in the Philippines (WOAA-Ph);
- Ms. Sonia Arnado, WOAA-Ph First Lady Focal of Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte;
- DILG Assistant Secretary Elizabeth de Leon;
- Hon. Jennie Uy-Mendez, Mayor of Villanueva, Misamis Oriental;
- Hon. Maria Liza L. Evangelista, Vice Mayor, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur;
- Regional Technical Director Rebecca Atega of the Department of Agriculture CARAGA;
- Ms. Noralaine Rasul, Provincial Director of TESDA Lanao del Norte;

To all the women present here today, and to all the other guests and participants, a pleasant afternoon to everyone.

Today marks another milestone in the organic agriculture industry. We gain additional strong mover of organic practices from the most empowered yet selfless and caring sector among gender – women.

Farming is not just for men. Particularly in organic farming, women are very active and play alongside men in increasing certified organic areas in the Philippines and promoting different organic produce and products locally and internationally.

In the Philippines, four (4) out of nine (9) accredited Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) – Organic Certifying Bodies (OCBs) were led by women, and almost 50% of the PGS-certified organic farmer-members are women. I would also like to emphasize that the implementers of different programs to promote organic agriculture in the country are also governed by women, including yours truly, Asec. Beth de Leon, BAFS Director Karen Roscom and ATI Dir. Remelyn Recoter to name a few.

Evidently, women play a very vital role in every aspect of life. And the formation of this organization, the Women in Organic Agriculture in Asia in the Philippines (WOAA-PH), is a promising act to strengthen and further promote organic farming in the country.

At this point, I would like to commend the women and men who initiate and stepped up to form and organize this group. Women's presence and contributions have been

recognized and we are given an opportunity and avenue to lead, develop and implement programs to contribute in promoting and expanding organic agriculture in the country.

I believe that this group will make a big difference to the organic agriculture sector and will surely contribute together with the national government to attain food security while also protecting biodiversity and our environment from harmful chemicals and malpractice.

Rest assured that the National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP) is always here to support and open for collaboration. Once again, congratulations and I am looking forward to working with WOAA-Ph very soon.

Thank you very much and may God bless us all!