

“Scientists Race to Save Coral Reefs”

- Philippine Daily Inquirer, March 14, 2017

“ With global warming it is expected that more than 90% of corals will die by 2050.”

Coral reefs support 25% of all marine species and half a billion people around the world.

- In 2010, Paul Gunther published his book on “The Blue Economy: 10 Years, 100 Innovations, 100 Million Jobs”

What is the Blue Economy?

- “Marine-based economic development that leads to improved well-being and special equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.”
- “Prioritizing the use of the seas to benefit people, alleviate poverty, generate employment, and promote equity.”
- “Integrates conservation, sustainable use of oil and mineral wealth extraction, bio-prospecting, sustainable energy production and marine transport.”



REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CREATION OF
THE
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC
RESOURCES

NAST Agricultural Sciences Division

Chair: Acd. R.D. Guerrero III

Members:

NS A.C. Alcala

NS G. C. Trono Jr.

Acd. R.G. Davide

Dr. M. D. Santos

Rationale of the Committee

- One of the Resolutions made at the 38th Annual Meeting of the NAST is the creation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources “to give more emphasis on sustainable fisheries, particularly mariculture which is the cheapest source of high quality protein and is our comparative advantage with potential for value-added export products.”
- The Committee was formed by the Agricultural Sciences Division of the NAST to review the Congressional initiatives for the creation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.
- The theme for the 39th ASM of the NAST is “Attaining Sustainable Development Goals: Philippine Fisheries and Aquatic Resources 20/20” based on Sustainable Development Goal No. 14 (Life Below Water) of the United Nations.

The Review Process

- The Committee reviewed the three bills filed in the Senate for the Creation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, namely SBs 51, 242 and 937 and three bills filed in the House of Representatives for the same, namely HBs 426, 1427 and 1612.
- Upon review of the abovementioned bills, the Committee made recommendations.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Fisheries - the industry dealing with the production (through capture and culture), processing and marketing of fish and other products from the aquatic environment
- Aquatic Resources – the natural environment or habitats (ecosystems) of plants and animals exploited for fisheries
 - include both freshwater and marine resources
 - include non-living components like minerals

Reasons Why We Should Have a Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

Our Vast Aquatic Resources

- The Philippines is an archipelago with 7,100 islands and 36,289 km of coastline.
- Our country has 26.6 million hectares of coastal waters, 193.4 million hectares of oceanic waters and more than 800,000 hectares of inland waters. Our land area is only 30 million hectares.

Fisheries Provides Employment

- More than 2 million Filipinos are directly employed including 1.6 million small fishermen who are among the “poorest of the poor.”

Fisheries Contributes Significantly to Our Economy

- In 2014, the fisheries sub-sector contributed 17.65% of the total output of the agricultural sector to which it is under, next to that of crops sub-sector, with gross earnings of PhP 242 billion.
- Fisheries is a net exporter of products (mainly tuna and seaweeds) while agriculture is a net importer of rice and meat products.
- Fisheries contributed 1.8% to the GDP in 2014.

Fish is a major staple food of Filipinos next to Rice

- Fish is the cheapest source of animal protein in the diet of Filipinos .
- Aside from food, fisheries also provide industrial products, nutraceuticals and drugs.

The Philippines is an Outstanding Fisheries Producer in the World

- The Philippines ranked 7th of the Ten Top Countries in Fisheries Production of the World in 2012 and 5th of the Ten Top Countries in Aquaculture Production in the World in 2014.
- The Philippines ranks No. 1 in World Milkfish Production, No. 2 in Carrageenophyte Production and No. 5 in Tilapia Production.

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Low Priority of Fisheries Under the Department of Agriculture

- Fisheries is regarded only as a “commodity” under the Department of Agriculture at par with crops, livestock and poultry whereas it is a multi-commodity and an ecological services providing sector with much more undeveloped aquatic resources compared to land.
- In 2010, the fisheries sub-sector had a growth rate of only 0.82% and -0.45% in 2014.
- In 2016, the budget of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources under the Department of Agriculture was only 13.8% of the DA's PhP 48.48 billion budget although fisheries contributed 19% to the total agricultural output

Dr. Rolando Dy, Economist of the University of Asia-Pacific:
“My support for the Department of Fisheries is absolute and total. DA is for rice.”

THE INDONESIAN MODEL FOR FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

- The Indonesian Government established its Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) in 1999 separate from its Ministry of Agriculture because Indonesia is the world's second largest archipelago with more than 13, 000 islands and a coastline of 54, 720 km.
- In 2015, the fisheries sector of the country grew by 8.37% compared to 4.73% of the overall economy.

- The MMAF had a budget of US\$ 1 billion in 2016.
- Indonesia ranked No. 2 among the Top Ten Countries of the World for Aquaculture in 2014.
- Indonesia overtook the Philippines as the world's top producer of carrageenophytes (red seaweeds) ten years ago. It now has more than 2 million hectares planted to seaweeds compared to only around 60,000 hectares in the Philippines.

The Bottom Line

A Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources separate from the Department of Agriculture in our country will give more attention and support for improving the productivity of our aquatic resources on a sustainable basis for more economic benefits and for alleviating the poverty of the small fishermen who are among the “poorest of the poor.”

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

- Of the bills filed in Congress for the creation of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, SB 51 authored by Sen. Francis Pangilinan and HB 426 authored by Rep. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo are recommended as primary bills. The other bills filed can be consolidated with these two.
- Only the living aquatic resources should be within the scope of the DFAR's mandate. The non-living aquatic resources (*e.g.*, minerals, OTEC) should be left to the responsibilities of the concerned agencies such as the DENR and DOE.

- Aquatic ecosystems (*i.e.* mangroves and coral reefs) should be kept under the “biodiversity conservation” mandate of the DENR. There should be an Inter-Agency Coordinating Body to include the DENR, proposed DFAR and concerned LGUs for resolving issues/conflicts related to fisheries.
- The National Fisheries Research and Development Institute of the DFAR should have Regional Centers for its efficient and effective operation.



“The Sea is
Our Future”



Fish Be
With You!