



Working Group on Sustainable Rural Development

HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING

Office of the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Conference Room
Department of Agriculture
Elliptical Road, Diliman
Quezon City

20 August 2009

1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Undersecretary Serrano, Co-convenor of the WG on SRD, at 2:15 in the afternoon. He then welcome and acknowledged the participants. (listed in Annex 1).

2.0 Adoption of the Agenda

Undersecretary Serrano requested the body to go over the provisional agenda. Having no further comments or additional issues for inclusion, the body adopted the agenda for today's meeting. (Annex 2)

3.0 Approval of the Highlights of the Previous Meeting

Undersecretary Serrano requested the body for comments on the draft highlights of meeting prepared by the secretariat.

On *Item 6.0: Updates on the 2009 PDF Meeting*

To date, there are ideas floating regarding the 2009 meeting of the PDF- that it will be held on October 19 or may no longer be held this year, however, the secretariat reported that based on its follow up with the PDF main secretariat, the date has not been set nor an official communication been sent out by the PDF Secretariat regarding the schedule and preparations for the PDF meeting. Undersecretary Serrano also informed the body that the co-convenors have requested the PDF main secretariat to consider the representatives of civil

society as full members of the WG and therefore, should no longer be invited as Other Stakeholders as in previous PDF meetings, however, they have not replied on our request. The WG secretariat was requested to make another follow up.

Undersecretary Serrano proposed that in the event that the 2009 PDF meeting will not push through, the Working Group will hold its own Conference in recognition of the numerous activities undertaken by the WG and the sub-Working Group. It will be an integrative meeting where the groups will present what they have done, share lessons and experiences and come up with policy recommendations. He further recommended to invite other stakeholders, such as representatives of agencies who are beneficiaries of the outputs of the Sub-Working Groups as well as representatives from the academe and the legislative with similar advocacy for priority issues identified by the WG.

On the other hand, just to be prepared if and when the PDF meeting pushes through, the planned two-day out of town meeting of the WG in September will have to be organized. This meeting will also serve to finalize the WG's accomplishment report to be submitted to the PDF secretariat.

The body agreed to hold a regular meeting within September to finalize the plans and schedules.

Other options considered in case the PDF meeting will not push through include: 1.) a joint activity or meeting with the sub-WG on Decentralization to discuss and share experiences on common issues such as local planning, land use and other resource conflicts; 2.) briefing from PAGASA on disaster risk management (DRM) and how this is factored in local planning, land distribution, etc. and climate scenarios, disaster risks and their implications to agribusiness development. Climate change is another possible topic for discussion in the planned meetings in September.

To enable the Secretariat to lay down these options and set the schedule of the proposed Conference, the out-of-town meeting and the regular meeting, the Undersecretary asked Ms. Dolatre to coordinate with the members on available dates.

Having no major comments, the highlights of the previous meeting was approved by the body.

4.0 Updates from the Sub-Working Groups

4.1 Sub-WG on Agri-Business

Mr. Benjamin Cuevas, DA/PADCC reported that a roundtable discussion on “Overseas Farming Investments: Implications to Food Security and Rural Economic Development” was recently conducted by the National Convergence Initiative. The Roundtable discussion aimed to clarify relevant policies related to agribusiness foreign investments and to share experiences of LGU-private sector-multinational companies on agribusiness

ventures. The roundtable was also part of the preparations for the National Agribusiness Summit to be held in September 24-25, 2009.

The Roundtable discussion also provided the venue to discuss the challenges in Agribusiness development in the Philippines particularly in the areas of production, marketing, and financing and the emerging issues on *landgrabbing by foreign countries* in view of the MOAs signed by the Philippine government with *alleged* landgrabber-governments.

A compendium of agribusiness policies was presented to illustrate the numerous laws and guidelines to safeguard agribusiness partners, the farmers and upland dwellers. In recognition of the contradictions, overlaps and gaps in policies, a follow up action to harmonize such policies in order to come up with one policy statement was agreed upon in time for the National Agribusiness Summit.

The roundtable discussion was participated in by more than ___ representatives from relevant agencies such as DA, DAR, DENR, DTI/BOI, DILG, NEDA as well as representatives from LGUs, private sector, academe and civil society.

Mr. Cuevas acknowledged the support of GTZ in making the roundtable discussion a success.

Undersecretary Madueño suggested that in addition to issues around land grabbing, other issues that need to be addressed in the promotion of agribusiness investments have to be looked into as well, such as a) protection of farmers; b) food security vs. biofuel; and c) agrarian reform vs. agribusiness. In order to ascertain the country's competitiveness, Undersecretary Serrano proposed to conduct a comparative study with respect to the strategies employed by other countries to attract agribusiness investors.

Relatedly, Mr. Don Marquez/ANGOC informed the body about the National Landwatch Conference organized by the Civil Society in coming up with their inputs as resource persons to the Roundtable discussion. The Conference was attended by about sixty (60) people consisting of farmers, IPs, NGOs and POs. Among important issues discussed were the landgrab issues by foreign governments and even by local elites, conflicting/overlapping policies on land use and tenurial instruments. Another concern raised is the absence of a body to arbitrate agribusiness conflicts between farmers, the Philippine government and the foreign investors. He also emphasized the proposals made during the Landwatch Conference, i.e. for the government to make an immediate and full disclosure on agribusiness deals and to promote strong advocacy and support to the passage of the National Land Use Act.

Mr. Marquez also acknowledged the support of local and international organizations, including GTZ in this activity. Proceedings of the conference will be shared with the members of the WG.

Undersecretary Serrano commended the civil society's achievements as members of the WG. He also suggested to include discussions on National Land Use Act in the September meeting of the WG. In particular, a briefing on its salient features and provisions from legislators will be appreciated so that the WG could give support and enlist further multi-party support.

Lastly, Undersecretary Serrano requested for regular updates on the National Agribusiness Summit.

4.2 Sub-Working Group on Upland Development

Ms. Texon (DENR) reported the physical and financial status of the Upland Development Program (UDP) as of 31 July 2009. She informed the body about the program's target of developing 52,811 hectares, with the same number of beneficiaries (i.e., 1 household to be awarded 1 hectare for reforestation and agroforestry development).

About 2,663 hectares have been developed as of this period, or only 5% of the target. Accordingly, this is due to the fact that planting activities have just started in July. She further reported that 47,533 Letters of Agreement (LOA) and 46,147 Notices to Proceed have been issued, attaining 90% and 87% accomplishment, respectively.

Insofar as the financial status is concerned, she notified the body that out of the P1.5 Billion allocation, a total of P1.095 Billion Sub-Allotment Advise (SAA) has been released, of which about P425 Million has been obligated. Financial utilization is only 28.36%.

It was explained by Ms. Texon that the beneficiaries of the Program are the members of the Peoples' Organizations (POs) in the CBFM areas. Moreover, the Program does not cover the 3.1 million hectares of lands under CARP and the CADC/CADT areas.

4.3 Sub-Working Group on Land Policies

Undersecretary Madueño reported the passage of the new Agrarian Reform law (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms or CARPER) last _____. The law extended Land Acquisition and Distribution (LAD) for another five (5) years. Accordingly, the law introduces various reforms, such as reforms in support services to be provided to about 700,000 beneficiaries. Some 200,000 hectares of agricultural lands are expected to be distributed per year. It also intends to strengthen the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC).

He added that preparation of the Omnibus Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) is ongoing. Refinement of the draft IRR will start in the last week of August and should be ready by first week of September for presentation to the Senate plenary and is expected to be adopted by the end of September.

Undersecretary Serrano suggested to utilize the sub- WG to support this process, which is in line with the convergence strategy since about ten years back.

Ms. Quiñones/WB congratulated DAR and all other stakeholders with the passage of the new law. She informed the body about a Technical Working Paper prepared by WB entitled “Land Reform, Rural Development, and Poverty in the Philippines: Revisiting the Agenda” which could help in crafting the IRR. The Executive Summary contains their key findings on “what worked and what did not work” in the implementation of the CARP. Ms. Quinones also expressed WB’s wish to be invited and support the process.

5.0 Adjournment

The meeting ended at about 4:00 in the afternoon.

There will be a regular meeting in September in preparation for the PDF meeting or a culminating meeting towards the end of September. Undersecretary Serrano reiterated that the Working Group will proceed with its own Conference even if the planned PDF meeting will not push through.

**MEETING of the
PDF WG on Sustainable Rural Development**

Office of the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Conference Room
Department of Agriculture
Elliptical Road, Diliman
Quezon City

20 August 2009

List of Participants

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| 1. | Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano | DA |
| 2. | Undersecretary Gerundio Madueño | DAR |
| 3. | Linda Dolatre | GTZ |
| 4. | Benjamin Cuevas | DA-PADCC |
| 5. | Fernando Flores | DA-PDS |
| 6. | Charmielaine Ramos | DA |
| 7. | Angelie Abriña | DA |
| 8. | Nieva Natural | DA |
| 9. | Minnie San Juan | DAR |
| 10. | Juliet Texon | DENR |
| 11. | Emelyn Talabis | DENR |
| 12. | Rita Flordeliz | DENR |
| 13. | Nilda Patiga | DENR-FMB |
| 14. | Amiel Sarne | NEDA |
| 15. | Carolina Figueroa-Geron | WB |
| 16. | Maria Theresa Quiñones | WB |
| 17. | Genaro Castro | FAO |
| 18. | Aristeo Portugal | FAO |
| 19. | Anne Orquiza | UNEP |
| 20. | Don Marquez | ANGOC |
| 21. | Emma Abasolo | ICRAF |
| 22. | Roger Barosel | OPACC |



Philippines Development Forum



MEETING OF THE PDF-WG ON SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Office of the Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Conference Room
Department of Agriculture
Diliman, Quezon City

20 August 2009
2:00 in the afternoon

AGENDA

2:00	Call To Order	Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano Dr. Walter Salzer <i>Co-Convenors</i>
	Welcome Message	
10 minutes	Approval of the Highlights of Previous Meeting	
	Updates from the WG/sub-WG	
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WG • Sub-WG on Agribusiness • Sub-WG on Upland Development • Sub-WG on Land Policies 	Usec. Serrano/ Dr. Salzer
10 minutes		Mr. G. Serrano/Mr. M. Agbon
10 minutes		Usec. Gerochi/Mr. A. Tayyab
10 minutes		Usec. Madueno/Mr. F. Bresciani
	Discussions/Presentations	
	Other Matters	
	Adjournment	