

Lanao Sur, university forge project to save Lake Lanao

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By Philippines News Agency

Cotabato City – To address threats facing the country’s second largest lake, Mindanao’s biggest state university in Marawi City and the provincial government of Lanao del Sur have agreed to carry out a project that will protect Lake Lanao and preserve its dwindling fish species and other marine resources.

The 34,000-hectare Lake Lanao serves as the major source of energy for Mindanao.

Lanao del Sur Governor Bedjoria Soraya Alonto-Adiong and Habib Macaayong, president of the Mindanao State University (MSU), on Tuesday signed a memorandum of agreement binding their offices to cooperate on the projects.



Lake Lanao / credit: lanaodelsur.gov.ph / Manila Bulletin

Signed at Lanao Sur’s provincial capitol, the deal is aimed at protecting the interest of Maranao fishing communities and ensure fish abundance in the lake.

It also includes preservation of the lake against contamination due to human activities and natural calamities.

Massive tree planting around the lake will also be launched by students of MSU-Marawi, in partnership with the local government of Lanao and municipalities down to the barangay level.

Mindanao’s largest state-run university, MSU offers fishery courses manned by professors with doctorates and master’s degrees.

Inland fishing is among the major source of livelihood for Maranaos, the people of Lanao Sur, and years of sourcing food from the lake have depleted fish supplies, thus the need to revive its productivity.

According to Salma Jayne Tamano, Lanao del Sur's provincial information officer, the deal supports the environment protection programs of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under Secretary Gina Lopez and DENR-ARMM under Regional Secretary Kahar Kedtag.

ARMM Governor Mujiv Hataman has given the regional government's all-out support to the partnership, saying similar joint efforts are being considered for other inland waters and the shorelines of the ARMM provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

Hataman has suspended all logging operations in forested areas around the lake in 2012 in an effort to protect it.

The ban still exists with an increasing number of illegal loggers and poachers landing behind bars and a rise in the confiscation of illegally-cut forest products.

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