

Lake Lanao body formed

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CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The provincial government of Lanao del Sur has created the Lanao Basin Management Council to ensure proper planning and implementation of the Integrated Natural Resources and Environment Management Project or INREMP for the Lake Lanao River Basin.

Meeting with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and different local government units on Tuesday, the provincial government created programs and a roadmap for the river basin's development.

Under INREMP, \$100 million (P5 billion) from Asian Development Bank and 13.25 million in Special Drawing Rights from the International Fund for Agriculture Development—worth about P884 million—will be used to bankroll the program.

Lake Lanao is in Lanao del Sur, covers 340 square kilometers and is the largest lake in Mindanao, the second largest in the Philippines, and is one of the 15 “ancient lakes” in the world. It used to be the sole source of power of Mindanao through hydroelectricity, now it provides roughly 30 percent of the region's energy, officials said.

Lake Lanao was named a watershed reservation in 1992 through Presidential Proclamation 971 to ensure the protection of its forest cover and its water yield for hydropower, irrigation and domestic use.

Salma Jayne Tamano, Lanao del Sur Provincial Information Officer, said the council aims to have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. Under INREMP, the Lake Lanao Basin Management Council and five sub-watershed management councils were created as governance and oversight bodies.

“(INREMP) is intended to address the unsustainable watershed management in four priority river basins in Mindanao, including Lake Lanao,” Tamano said.

Lanao del Sur Gov. Soraya Adiong said the lake presents many benefits for the people, “be they economic, recreational, aesthetic, cultural, educational, scientific and ecological benefits.”

INREMP intends to protect, manage and develop the watershed of Lanao del Sur, which has a coverage area of 138,834 hectares, apart from three other major upper basins in the country.

Under a 2014 project blueprint, it also covers the Upper Bukidnon River Basin with 446,620 hectares, the Upper Chico River Basin with 405,894 hectares, and the Upper Wahig-Inabanga with 62,853 hectares.

Adiong said failure to protect the lake “will have a negative impact not only in the lives of the Maranaos but to all Mindanaoans.”

“We must protect Lake Lanao for future generations by doing our work now, and creating a roadmap for sustainable use. We owe it to the people of Lanao as we also enjoin residents around the lake to take ownership of the program that will benefit us and the generations to come,” she said.