

DENR-BARMM accord on climate, disaster forged

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The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and its counterpart agency in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) have forged an agreement to boost Mindanao's climate and disaster resilience and sustainable development goals.

DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga and BARMM's Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (MENRE) Akmad Brahim signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to support their

respective programs and projects based on the objectives and strategies defined in the Mindanao Climate Resilience Framework Plan and the output of the DENR-led Multi-stakeholder Forum.

Loyzaga stressed that the diversity in Mindanao requires a systemic, consultative and contextualized approach to environmental conservation and protection.

"The DENR is committed to ensuring that consultation with communities and different sectors are at the basis of the fundamentals and ground works that need to be done in order to become responsive to these various needs," Loyzaga said.

Under the MOU, the DENR will provide technical assistance to MENRE-BARMM for the exploration, development and utilization of natural resources under its territorial jurisdiction.

This includes the mobilization of DENR bureaus, attached agencies and regional offices in Mindanao to assist BARMM in exercising its authority over ancestral domain and natural resources, classification of public lands, and ecological solid waste management and pollution control enshrined in the Bangsamoro Organic Law pertaining to Environment and Natural Resources.

The agreement will also ensure the inclusion of MENRE-BARMM in the National Greening Program and the participation of its employees and personnel in capacity development programs and trainings, such as the Land Management Training System, Forest Land Use Plan/Planning, and Protected Area Management Board.

"This partnership is a promising development in ensuring a complete, nationwide protection and conservation of our environment and natural resources. We have to work together to nurture our nature; besides, we are all stewards of the environment," Brahim said.

Both the DENR and MENRE-BARMM are optimistic for a partnership built on shared knowledge and best practices for identifying strategies and priority actions, consolidating priority targets, and establishing a database management system to manage the data needed for planning, monitoring and evaluation.

True to the administration's agenda to promote a green and blue economy by establishing livable and sustainable communities, Loyzaga said the DENR is committed to fulfilling its mandate to preserve, protect, manage, restore, and regenerate the country's environment and natural resources, and ensure that no community is left behind.