



Linkage

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BUILDING TOMORROW *to where the road leads*

**RDC 2 EXPANDS
INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT IN
CAGAYAN VALLEY REGION**



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ABOUT THE COVER

Developing the region's infrastructure sector has always been at the forefront of development plans and programs. This quarter's issue showcases the initiatives of the RDC 2 in pushing for the construction of more roads and bridges to improve mobility to and from the Cagayan Valley region, thereby advancing the region's infrastructure development to ease up economic growth.



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COVER PHOTO CREDITS: <http://hwalls.com>;
<http://frjamescoles.files.wordpress.com>

HOW THE ECONOMY FARED IN THE 1ST SEMESTER



The economic performance of Region 2 during the first six months of 2015 was characterized by a generally robust agricultural production and sustained improvements in the industry and services sectors.

On agriculture, prime commodities PALAY and CORN posted increments of 6.9% and 4.6%, respectively, as yield performance improved significantly resulting from the sustained utilization of quality hybrid and inbred palay seeds and hybrid and open-pollinated varieties of corn seeds.

Other CROPS also posted output gains led by vegetable and root crops with 23.1%, followed by fruits (4.2%) and non-food and industrial commercial crops (2.5%).

LIVESTOCK and POULTRY production inched up by 1% and 4%, respectively. In contrast, fishery performance continued its downward trend as production went down by 3.4%.

Contributory to the decline were the low water levels in freshwater fishponds, the drying up of some communal bodies of water, and the lower catch of acetes.

Looking back at the performance of the agriculture sector last year, the growth of the GROSS VALUE-ADDED in agriculture (in current prices) was mostly influenced by the high farmgate prices of agricultural products.

It is worth noting, therefore, that during the period under review, agriculture sector production improved due to the increased productivity of palay and

corn. Said improvements in production should be sustained and expanded to cover other agriculture sectors through continuous technical assistance to farmers and fisherfolk, provision of adequate infrastructure support, and investment on machineries and equipment to modernize production and processing activities.

Along the INDUSTRY and SERVICES sectors, key indicators registered increased activities during the period in review. Investments generated from DTI's Business Name Registration was on the uptrend indicative of an improving MSME sector.

TOURISM sustained its growth as overall tourist arrivals reached more than 1 million and tourist receipts rose to PhP1.32 Billion.

CONSTRUCTION activities also increased during the period. LAND TRANSPORT services registered gains as motor vehicle registration increased by 42.3%.

In terms of CREDIT SUPPORT, 12 new banking offices were opened during this period.

Prices of basic commodities in the region were relatively stable for the first semester as INFLATION eased to 2.3% from the previous year's 4.2%. Food commodities significantly slowed down after the stabilization of prices particularly rice and vegetables.

EMPLOYMENT scenario in the region was also better during the period as unemployment rate decreased to 3.2% from last year's 3.9% rate. Quality of jobs also improved as underemployment rate saw a decline from last year's 11.2% to this year's 10.5%.

MACROECONOMY

- ◆ Higher inflation rate at 2.3%
- ◆ Unemployment rate at 3.2%
- ◆ Underemployment rate at 10.5%

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERY SECTORS

- ◆ Palay production up by 6.90%
- ◆ Corn production up by 4.6%
- ◆ Fruit production up by 4.2%
- ◆ Vegetable and root crop production up by 23.1%
- ◆ Non-food and industrial commercial crops production up by 2.5%
- ◆ Livestock production up by 1.0%
- ◆ Poultry production up by 4.0%
- ◆ Fishery production down by 3.4%

INDUSTRY AND SERVICES SECTOR

- ◆ BNR investments up by 26.8%
- ◆ Domestic tourist arrivals up by 78.8%
- ◆ Foreign tourist arrivals down by 2.6%
- ◆ Gross tourist receipts up by 29.4%
- ◆ New construction projects up by 9.4%
- ◆ Metallic and non-metallic mineral production down by 21.6%

Figures are based on year-on-year comparison between the first semesters of 2014 and 2015.



The 48 year-old Buntun Bridge is known to be the longest river bridge in the Philippines with its span of 1,098 kilometers across Cagayan River, the longest river basin in the country. Built in 1967, Buntun Bridge is one of the only two river bridges in Cagayan Province. It connects Brgy. Buntun in Tuguegarao City to Brgy. Maddarlug in the municipality of Solana.

PHOTO CREDIT: <http://makianbay.blogspot.com>

RDC, RPOC endorse infra projects to improve regional mobility

In the joint business meeting of the Regional Development Council (RDC) 2 and the Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) 2 held on June 23, 2015, more than 10 resolutions related to the region's infrastructure development were endorsed and approved.

Presiding over the meeting, RPOC 2 Chair and Quirino Governor Junie E. Cua emphasized that the meeting was an opportune time to tackle and address traffic-related issues in some parts of the national highway within the region as these concern both the security and development sectors.

On her part, RDC 2 Acting Chair and NEDA Regional Director MaryAnne ER. Darauay recognized the importance of convening both Councils to deliberate on development concerns in the region.

"In the words of our dear Governor Cua, there can be no development

when there is no peace," she averred.

Vehicle buildup in Sta. Fe, Nueva Vizcaya

Through joint resolutions, the RDC 2 and the RPOC 2 requested the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) RO2 to ensure the presence of a heavy equipment to be on stand-by for 24 hours in Sta. Fe and Diadi in Nueva Vizcaya to clear traffic jams or gridlocks.

Likewise, a resolution was passed requesting the RDC in the Ilocos Region to fast track the completion of the Region 1 side of the Sta. Fe – San Nicolas road. This road was identified as an alternate road from Region 2 leading to Metro Manila via the Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX).

The DPWH has already completed the concrete paving of the Sta. Fe side of this road. What is left to be done is the construction of

the remaining road section of approximately 17 kilometers and one bridge along the Cabalisan River in Brgy. Sta. Maria East in San Nicolas, Pangasinan.

Alternate bridges for Cagayan Province

The RDC 2 and the RPOC 2 also recognized the need to improve mobility within the region through the construction of more bridges particularly in Cagayan Province.

Six new bridges are being proposed to serve as alternate bridges along the Cagayan River, in addition to the existing 449.14-meter long Magapit Suspension Bridge in the municipality of Lal-lo and the 1,369-meter long Buntun Bridge in Tuguegarao City.

In his presentation, RDC 2 Secretary and NEDA Assistant Regional Director Victor B. Ubaldo said that, "when implemented, these alternate bridges spanning the Cagayan River

will improve inter-municipal and intra-provincial access, mobility, trade and commerce.”

“It will also pave the way for the development of the western municipalities and contribute to the socioeconomic transformation of the province,” he added.

The six proposed bridges will be located in (1) Anguiray–Pacac in Amulung; (2) Tupang–Afusing in Alcala; (3) Nassiping–Dungao in Gattaran; (4) Camalaniugan–Allacapan; (5) Taran–Paruddun in Aparri East and West; and (6) Solana–Bagay in Tuguegarao City.

The Councils resolved to request for the inclusion of the proposed bridges under the Feasibility Studies Fund of either the DPWH or NEDA for CY 2015 or 2016.

Development of the RGC

Engr. Marlo L. Iringan, the RPOC 2 Acting Head Secretariat and OIC-Regional Director of the Department of the Interior and Local Government RO2, also reported on initiatives for the development of the Regional Government Center (RGC).

One approved proposal was the installation of uniform agency signages in street corners in the Center.

Currently, agency signages of different sizes and materials are lined up on major entry points in the RGC. The DPWH, through OIC-Regional Director Nerie D. Bueno who sits as Chair of the RGC Management Committee, has committed to do the fabrication and installation of the uniform signages with corresponding costs. | **AYLASAM, NEDA DRD**

IDC proposes more alternate roads in Isabela, N. Vizcaya

The RDC 2 - Infrastructure Development Committee (IDC) has proposed several road projects that will provide more alternate roads in the provinces of Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya.

This was the IDC's move to address the frequent vehicle build up and traffic congestion in some areas between the two provinces due to accidents or road rehabilitation.

During the Committee's 84th regular business meeting held on June 4, 2015, Engr. Edgardo Sabado, Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator, presented the proposal entitled “Enhancing Regional Connectivity, Mobility, and Redundancy of National Roads at the Southern Gateway of Region 2.”

“This proposal involves the construction of two major critical road projects that will address the traffic congestion affecting the flow of goods and services brought about by road cut-off, accidents, or disasters,” Engr. Sabado said.

The two alternate road projects include the 38.52-kilometer road that

will connect Diffun, Qurino to Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya and the 33.3-kilometer Bayombong-Quezon-Bagabag alternate road in Nueva Vizcaya.

Subsequently, these two road projects were approved and endorsed during the joint meeting of the RDC 2 and the RPOC 2 held on June 23, 2015. Two resolutions were passed that sought the inclusion of the project proposals in the Feasibility Studies Fund of either the DPWH or NEDA as well as under the DPWH's Public Investment Program for CY 2015 or 2016.

The Councils also approved the preparation of a project proposal for the construction of a coastal road that will link the municipalities of Divilacan and Palanan in Isabela. Also part of the project will be the construction of three new bridges, namely the Dilakit, Dibiguan, and Dinadasan bridges.

When fully operational, the Divilacan-Palanan coastal road is envisioned to contribute to the realization of the Eastern Seaboard Highway that will connect the coastal municipalities of Isabela with Casiguran and Dinadiawan in Aurora Province. | **ERIC M. CABUTAJE, NEDA PMED**



PHOTO CREDIT: <http://doctrine.files.wordpress.com>

A brighter future awaits travelers to and from CV

It will be an answered prayer for motorists plying the Diadi - Sta. Fe section of the Maharlika Highway after the RDC 2 and the RPOC 2 approved and endorsed during their joint meeting three resolutions concretizing the solution to the worsening traffic congestion in the area.

Reporting for the RDC 2 Infrastructure Development Committee, DILG R02 OIC-Regional Director Marlo L. Iringan said that this particular section of the national highway is the shortest route from the region going to Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon. It is also the main thoroughfare of vehicles transporting goods in and out of Region 2.

"Given the volume of vehicles passing through Dalton Pass, this road section is prone to damages," stated Dir. Iringan, who is also the RPOC Head Secretariat.

Dir. Iringan further said that because of these damages, the DPWH R02 is incessantly conducting road maintenance and re-blocking activities.

"In addition to this, there are also instances when long vehicles break down in the middle of the road, thereby causing more traffic," he added.

The three approved resolutions mainly request the DPWH R02 and the Provincial Government of Nueva Vizcaya to effect actions immediately to address these concerns.

Specifically, the DPWH R02 was requested to organize and implement an inter-institutional arrangement to install a 24-hour standby heavy equipment or wrecker in strategically located road sections within Diadi and Sta. Fe. The agency was also requested to improve the Diadi-Tarictic-Ramon road and upgrade this to an all-weather alternate road.

Meanwhile, PLGU-Nueva Vizcaya and the LGUs of Diadi and Sta. Fe were asked to install signages of alternate routes within their jurisdiction.

With the two Councils' joint resolutions, motorists will hopefully have a better and smoother journey along Dalton Pass. Economic losses due to delay in the delivery of goods and services will be lessened as well. | **FLORENDO T. IRIGAYEN, JR., NEDA DRD**

RDC, RPOC approve Baggao Level III Water System Project for PPP funding

Being a priority project of the Municipal Government of Baggao in Cagayan Province, the implementation of the Level III Water System Project was endorsed by both the RDC 2 and the RPOC 2 during their joint meeting held in June.

At present, majority of Baggao's almost 80,000 population get their water supply from shallow wells or deep wells which they themselves built. Water from these sources is not disinfected properly to make it potable or safe to drink or use.

In contrast, having a Level III water service will make potable and clean water available to customers on a 24/7 basis.

The project is of high priority as reflected in the municipality's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Executive-Legislative Agenda for 2014-2016.

The proposed P85 Million project is designed to be financed through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreement under a Build-Operate-Transfer contractual arrangement between the municipal government and a private proponent.

During its first year of operation, the project is expected to benefit about 6,000 households in 24 barangays, half of Baggao's total of 48 barangays. It consists of three separate systems to be strategically located in Barangays Tungel, Tallang, and Poblacion. | **LILIAN D. MARASIGAN, NEDA DRD**



RDC 2 OKs 2016 budget proposals of regional agencies

In a joint meeting of its Advisory Committee (AdCom) and Executive Committee (ExCom), the RDC 2 approved and endorsed the budget proposals of 19 Regional Line Agencies (RLAs) for Fiscal Year 2016 amounting to a total of Php 54.1 Billion.

Held on April 28, 2015, the joint AdCom-ExCom meeting was also attended by the heads or representatives of the 19 RLAs to address issues that may crop up regarding their budget proposals.

In her presentation during the joint meeting, Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Regional Director Isabel C. Taguinod said that these 19 budget proposals



RDC 2 Acting Chair MaryAnne ER. Darauay (*center*) is flanked by newly-installed RDC 2 Secretary and NEDA Assistant Regional Director Victor B. Ubaldo (*left*) and DBM Regional Director Isabel C. Taguinod, who presented the budget proposals of the 19 RLAs being the Chairperson of the Regional Budget Review Committee.

have undergone rigid deliberation and review during the Regional Budget Review held on April 20-21, 2015.

According to Dir. Taguinod, the budget proposals were reviewed based on the DBM's Two-Tier Budgeting Approach which separates the review of ongoing and approved programs from the

new and expanded ones to give better focus on each program.

She added that the process also incorporates three important components, namely: (1) strengthening the role of the RDC in the region-wide infrastructure planning through the reinstitution of the Three-year Rolling Infrastructure Program; (2) rationalizing the Special Purpose Funds; and (3) adopting the Unified Accounts Code Structure.

As an addendum, RDC 2 Acting Chair and NEDA Regional Director MaryAnne ER. Darauay also presented some proposed road projects in Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela, and Cagayan for the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to consider in their 2016 budget as requested by the aforesaid Provincial Local Governments.

DPWH Assistant Regional Director Alexander Nola said that two of the four Nueva Vizcaya road projects are already incorporated in their FY 2016 budget. The remaining proposals will be referred to the RDC-Infrastructure Development Committee for review and endorsement. | **AYLASAM, NEDA DRD**

POPCEN 2015 to start on Aug. 10

During the joint meeting of the RDC 2 Executive and Advisory Committees on April 28, 2015, RDC 2 Secretary Victor B. Ubaldo reported that the 2015 Census of Population will run for the whole month of August 2015, with August 1 as the reference date.



This mid-decade census, which will be conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), aims to update the population count in the 42,029 barangays across the nation. Data derived from the 2015 POPCEN will serve as basis for both the government and the private sector in the formulation of future development policies, plans, and programs.

RDC 2 Acting Chair MaryAnne ER. Darauay, who is also the Chair of the Regional Census Coordination Board, enjoined the members of the Council to support and participate in this year's POPCEN. (*Photo Credit: <http://www.the-apps.org>*)



DG Balisacan inspires NEDA/RDC 2 Staff & encourages them to carry on excellent work

DG Arsenio M. Balisacan (4th from R, front row) gamely took selfies and groupies with the RDC 2 Secretariat headed by RDC 2 Acting Chair and NEDA Regional Director MaryAnne ER. Darauay (2nd from R, front row) when he visited the region on April 9, 2015 together with DDG Margarita R. Songco (3rd from R, front row), ADG Kenneth V. Tanate (extreme R, front row), and Executive Assistant Karl Manalang (extreme L, second row).

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and NEDA Director-General Arsenio M. Balisacan recently visited Tuguegarao City to personally interact with the NEDA staff and RDC 2 Secretariat to check on the progress of the current improvements being made on the office's physical environment and have a firsthand account of the region's development.

Through an informal gathering at the Pamegafanan Hall of the NEDA2-RDC2 Building, Sec. Balisacan expressed his pleasure and excitement over the accomplishments being made.

"I believe that you can only be as productive as your environment," the Cabinet Secretary said.

"We want to be able to serve our country better. There's so

much that's demanded of us as bureaucrats, technocrats, and government workers," he added.

"Especially so that while our neighboring countries are prospering, we are left far behind, hence, we have a lot of catching up to do," the Secretary averred as he encouraged the staff to work harder and to continue excelling in their respective fields, aside from being efficient and effective members of the RDC 2 Secretariat.

Together with the DG during his visit were NEDA Deputy Director-General Margarita R. Songco of the Regional Development Office, Assistant Director-General Kenneth V. Tanate, and

the DG's executive assistant Karl Manalang.

Leading the nation's economic development

As the big boss of NEDA, the Secretary disclosed that he and President Benigno Aquino III



This was not the first visit of Sec. Balisacan to Region 2 as he considers the region a big part of his life.

share one important characteristic – they are both evidence-based persons. For him, dealing with and understanding data is crucial, especially in NEDA's work.

“NEDA is the heart and soul of policy making. We are tasked not only to plan but also to advise, recommend, voice out, and advocate the right policies,” he emphasized.

“We want our advocacies and policy positions to be grounded on good data, good analysis, and a clear understanding of what works and what does not,” the Secretary added.

The DG then encouraged the RDC 2 Secretariat to continue pursuing higher education to keep up with the fast pace of developments happening across the globe.

“If we stop educating ourselves, we become irrelevant,” he said. “I strongly believe that the organization is as good as its people, therefore, we always need to retool.”

Facelifting of the RDC2 building

For her part, DDG Songco expressed her joy in seeing the big changes in the office's physical surroundings. She congratulated

the management and staff for effecting major improvements within only a year, adding that everything looks different since her last visit to the region back in March 2014 during the meeting of the Luzon-Regional Development Committee in Sta. Ana, Cagayan.

In her response, RDC 2 Acting Chair and NEDA Regional Director MaryAnne ER. Darauay conveyed her utmost gratitude to DDG Songco and to the NEDA management for being instrumental in making it possible for the regional office to receive budget augmentations for the upgrading of its infrastructure and facilities.

Dir. Darauay also sincerely thanked Secretary Balisacan for his truly special and inspiring visit to Region 2 and for spending quality time with the staff. It was a humbling experience indeed for everybody to personally chat, jog, and share stories and jokes with the DG himself, as well as to take photos with him – selfies and groupies included. | **AYLASAM, NEDA**



(TOP) On Day 2, DG Balisacan and his party got a taste of Tuguegarao City's delicacies during their visit to selected government-assisted livelihood and development projects. One such product is the Chicharabao, or chicharon made from carabao skin, which is uniquely produced by the Lighthouse Cooperative Processing Center. The group was also given a tour of the facilities of the Integrated Farmers' Cooperative Dairy Project, where they tasted dairy products such as milk candy, pastillas, and pasteurized milk.

(BOTTOM) A certified long-distance runner, DG Balisacan started the day with a jog and went as far as the streets of downtown Tuguegarao City, about 6 kilometers away from the regional office. He found the 2-kilometer jogging route prepared for him too short as he is used to running about 14 kilometers during weekdays and 21 kilometers during weekends.





LET'S HRAC & ROL!

The RDC 2 and the RPOC 2 have recently expressed support through a joint resolution to the mainstreaming of human rights through the Human Rights Action Center and Rule of Law (HRAC & ROL) Strategy.

During the councils' joint meeting in June, Cauayan City Mayor Bernard Faustino M. Dy, the Chairperson of the RDC2-Committee on Development Administration and

Communication (CODAC), presented the HRAC & ROL strategy and stressed that it aims to widen the democratic space for civil society organizations, peoples' organizations, and NGOs to become part of local governance.

He added that the approach is in line with the government's PAYapa at MASaganang PAmayanan (PAMANA) Program and the President's Social Contract with the Filipino people which prioritizes a "Just and Lasting Peace and the Rule of Law."

"The HRAC & ROL strategy aims to organize Human Rights Action Teams at the provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels to ensure the mainstreaming of human rights," Mayor Dy said.

The strategy was designed to strengthen the Barangay Human Rights Action Centers, whose main mandate is to empower citizens to take the lead in the promotion and protection of human rights at the grassroots.

During the meeting, RDC private sector representative Corona C. Borja inquired on the possibility of including the teaching of the strategy in the K to 12 curriculum as it can most likely address the problem of child bullying.

RDC2 Acting Chair MaryAnne E.R. Darauay said that such recommendation shall be elevated to the National Social Development Committee for further deliberation. | **LILIAN D. MARASIGAN, NEDA DRD**

In a move to give the youth sector a voice in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) efforts, the RDC 2 and the RPOC 2 endorsed through a joint resolution the request for all Local Chief Executives (LCEs) in Region 2 to include a youth representative in their respective local DRRM councils.

In his presentation during the joint RDC-RPOC meeting, Social Development Committee (SDC) Co-Chair Elpidio B. Atal Jr. said that this proposal aims to strengthen the participation of the youth in DRRM efforts, both locally and nationally.

Emanating from the National Youth Commission, which sits as a member of the SDC, the proposal will serve as a way to promote

Youth sector to be represented in local DRRM Councils

and protect the physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being of the youth.

He added that having them participate in planning and decision-making processes will inculcate in the youth the concepts of patriotism and nationalism.

"It will also encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs," said Dir. Atal, who is also the Assistant Regional Director of the DOLE RO2.

He further stated that Republic Act No. 10121, or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, does not limit the composition of the local DRRM councils and it is the prerogative of the LCEs to select its members.

The SDC Co-Chair mentioned that the youth representative in the DRRM councils shall be involved in the preparation of a local youth DRRM plan and shall participate in the budget process of the local DRRM office and propose disaster-related policies, programs, and projects that will benefit the youth sector.

The approved joint resolution will be forwarded to the LCEs in Region 2 for their consideration of the proposal. | **AYLASAM, NEDA DRD**

37 ARCs to be recipients of IPAC project

A total of 37 Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) in Region 2 were identified as potential recipients of the Inclusive Partnership for Agricultural Competitiveness (IPAC) Project of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

Funded by the World Bank, the IPAC is a development strategy which aims to contribute to the thrust of the government in developing a competitive, sustainable, and technology-based agriculture as a means to spread the benefits of economic growth across various beneficiary groups.

The project has recently been approved and endorsed by the RDC 2 and RPOC 2 during their joint meeting in June.

DAR Assistant Regional Director Jess Beth B. Quidasol reported during the meeting that “out of the 142 ARCs in Region 2, 37 ARCs in Cagayan, Isabela, and Nueva Vizcaya have been identified as potential beneficiaries of the IPAC project.”

“The IPAC emphasizes market-oriented and value chain based agri-business enterprise development that will enable beneficiaries to gain greater benefits through a system of Matching Grant,” she added.

The 5-year IPAC project is also viewed by DAR as a means to improve the partnership between and among farmer-beneficiaries, NGOs, private businesses, and government agencies.

“The IPAC is expected to improve not only the living conditions of beneficiaries but also their competitiveness in terms of productivity, product quality, and ultimately, better incomes,” ARD Quidasol stated. | LILIAN D. MARASIGAN, NEDA

Carbon Footprint of RGC Locators to be benchmarked this year

Between July and August this year, the 44 agency locators within the Regional Government Center (RGC) will be surveyed to determine their individual carbon footprints or the amount of carbon emitted by their day-to-day activities.

The RDC 2 and the RPOC 2 approved the conduct of the benchmarking survey during their joint meeting in June.

During her presentation of the proposal, RDC 2 Acting Chair and NEDA Regional Director MaryAnne ER. Darauay said that the carbon footprint is a very powerful tool to understand the impact of personal behavior on global warming, which is primarily caused by huge emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere.



“By knowing our carbon footprint, we will be able to understand how our daily activities disturb the Earth, which will allow us to identify ways to protect our natural resources,” said Dir. Darauay, who also sits as Chairperson of the Regional Committee on Sustainable Development (RCSD) which came up with the proposed benchmarking.

“When we travel by car or motorcycle, the engine burns fuel which creates a certain amount of CO₂. When we use electricity, CO₂ is again emitted. Even the production of the plastic bags we use everyday emits this greenhouse gas,” she added.

Dir. Darauay also reported that urban greening is being implemented at the RGC to address the lack of green urban forest areas or trees. In order to give the initiative a stronger push, she says, it is important to benchmark the carbon footprint of each agency locator within the RGC to establish a baseline.

“This survey will assess the individual contribution of the locators to carbon emission and to find out which among the consumption categories of travel, power, food, or waste recycling is carbon-intensive,” Dir. Darauay further said. “The results will also help the RDC 2 and the LGUs to develop strategies to address climate change within our region.”

To calculate the carbon footprint, the estimated carbon emission factors shall be applied to each major category, focusing on areas of impact where the staff or individuals have some direct or indirect ability to influence consumption behavior.

Compared with other countries, the Philippines is not a major carbon emitter, but what is alarming is that the country’s CO₂ emission has increased from 0.81 metric tons per capita in 2006 to 0.92 in 2010, as per world CO₂ emission from the consumption of fossil fuels.

“This survey will confirm that the more we consume, the greater is our carbon footprint,” the RDC 2 Chair averred. | AYLASAM, NEDA DRD



VLPCEP implementation to equip 3 ARBOs with improved processing sites

PHOTO CREDIT: DAR R02

Three (3) Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Organizations (ARBOs) from Cagayan and Nueva Vizcaya provinces will acquire better facilities for the processing and manufacturing of their products through the Village Level Processing Center Enhancement Project (VLPCEP).

The ARBO products that passed the validation for the first quarter include the Banana Chips of Malasatco in Rizal, Cagayan; Bugnay Wine of Sunrise Multi-purpose Cooperative in Capissayan, Gattaran, Cagayan; and Pineapple Vinegar of Amballo South Agricultural Association in Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya.

The joint field-level validations conducted by the Department of Agrarian Reform Region 02 (DAR 02) and the Food and Drugs Administration Region 02 (FDA 02) sought to scrutinize whether the ARBOs met the qualifications set by DAR to be recipients of the project.

The FDA, meanwhile, inspected the processing centers and gave suggestions based on their guidelines and requirements before the ARBOs can obtain their License to Operate (LTO) to be issued by FDA.

“We need to ensure that the identified ARBOs are practicing

Good Manufacturing Practices or GMP,” Marites U. Allag, DAR 02 Regional Marketing Assistance Officer (RMAO), said.

RMAO Allag further explained that the LTO issued by the FDA will enable the ARBOs to penetrate wider outlets for their products.

“For 2015, a total fund of Php337,500.00 was allocated for the implementation of the project which will be divided among the identified ARBOs per province,” she added.

The total fund is intended for the renovation of the recipients’ existing processing centers and for paying the laboratory testing fees for their products, the results of which will be the basis of the issuance or non-issuance of the LTO. The fund will also be used for capacity development activities.

During the on-site validations, the FDA 02 representative encouraged the ARBOs to continuously collaborate with DAR and FDA to ensure that the products are safely and properly prepared in order to protect the safety of consumers.

The validation of the identified ARBO products for the provinces of Isabela and Quirino will be undertaken during the third quarter of this year. | **MICHAEL ANGELO L. BENIGNO, DAR R02**

Cagayan town avails DOLE programs for the first time

No less than Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) awarded on 27 April 2015 the amount of 1.24 Million pesos to the Local Government Unit of Abulug, Cagayan as livelihood grant for at least 141 of its informal sector workers.

The awarding was one of the highlights of the visit of Secretary Baldoz in the province of Cagayan particularly in Tuguegarao City and in the municipality of Sta. Ana.

Abulug Mayor Jesus Emmanuel P. Vargas received the livelihood grant for the 53 members of the Dragon Fruit Producers Association and 58 ambulant vendors of his town.

“With gratefulness in our hearts, we are exceedingly jubilant to receive this grant from the DOLE for the first time,” Mayor Vargas expressed.

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Also for the first time, the municipality is implementing the Special Program for the Employment of Students (SPES) this year.

Meanwhile, Atty. Sixto T. Rodriguez, Jr., DOLE Regional Director, said he is committed to provide technical and financial support to LGUs who have been inactive previously.

"I am encouraging you to institutionalize the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) because in doing so, you are building a strong market-oriented employment office," Atty. Rodriguez said.

The livelihood grant awarded to LGU-Abulug is under the DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP). It is part of the agency's strategy which seeks to contribute to poverty reduction and reduce susceptibility to risks of the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized workers, either through transitional emergency employment or promotion of entrepreneurship and community enterprises. | **LIEZEL P. MAGNO & REGINALD B. ESTIOCO, DOLE RO2**



DSWD stages celeb event for 4Ps high school graduates



“Pagtatapos niyo, tagumpay ng Pilipino!”

This was the highlight statement during the series of provincial celebration events for the high school graduates of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program or 4Ps in the region.

The festivity kicked-off in Cabarroguis, Quirino on April 27, 2015 and was subsequently held in Nueva Vizcaya, Cagayan, and Isabela from April 28-30, 2015.

Exemplary graduates from the provinces also shared their transformation stories on how the Pantawid Pamilya program brought positive impacts on their lives, especially on their education.

“Before, my parents always had to sign promissory notes from our schools because we couldn't pay for my tuition fees,” shared Rhealyn Zonio, a valedictorian from Diffun, Quirino.

She said that her parents had to borrow money from relatives just so she can attend seminars and contests. Everything changed, however, when the program came into their lives.

Rhealyn continued, “It was in 2012 when we became a

beneficiary. Since then, I was able to pay my school obligations on time and I can always attend seminars and co-curricular activities without thinking about where to borrow money. Indeed, being in the program motivated me to study harder. I finished high school at the top of my class.”

In her message, DSWD Regional Director Remia T. Tapisipan encouraged the graduates to continue the positive change within them and continue reaching for their dreams.

“Kami sa DSWD ay tunay na nagagalak na masakihan ang bunga ng aming programa. Kayo ang mga patunay na ang Pantawid Pamilya ay nasa tamang daan upang masugpo ang kahirapan. Ipagpatuloy niyo ang pag-aaral ng mabuti at lagi niyong patunayan na *Kayang-kaya niyo ang magandang pagbabago!*,” Tapisipan said.

For this year, the 4Ps program has produced the first batch of more than 300,000 graduating high school students nationwide, 5,560 of whom are from Region 2.

The “Pagdiriwang para sa mga Pantawid Pamilya High School Graduates” was a manifestation of how the program positively affects the lives of its beneficiaries and how it is helping keep the children in school. The celebration also served as a venue for the graduates to have access to scholarships, internships, and part-time jobs. | **MARICEL B. ASEJO, DSWD RO 2**

Quirino Police addresses increasing road mishaps



The Quirino Police Provincial Office (QPPO) has installed eye-catching road signages in strategic locations to address the increasing number of crimes through reckless imprudence.

From January to March of this year, some 26 road accidents were recorded and these were mostly caused by reckless driving and drunkenness, with one of them resulting in homicide.

Some of the road signages installed were "Drunk drivers know no rules", "Eyes on the road not on her lap", "Just drive, don't fly", and "Undertaker loves over-taker", among others.

The QPPO, along with the Technical Education Skills

Development Authority (TESDA) also sponsored a training on automotive maintenance with trouble shooting and safety driving for drivers.

Furthermore, the six municipal police stations have intensified their police visibility and mobile checkpoints.

Based on the QPPO's first quarter accomplishment report, for the period under review, it has recorded a total of 64 index crimes, higher than the recorded number during the previous quarter.

The QPPO also reported a crime clearance efficiency of 87.5%, translating to 56 of the 64 crimes being cleared.

On its crime solution efficiency, it has recorded 60.93%, which means that some 40 cases have already been solved. | **ALM / TCB, PIA R02**

Cagayan embraces "Operation Listo"



The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) recently launched the Operation 'Listo' Disaster Preparedness Manual here in an effort to ensure public safety during calamities specially typhoons.

DILG OIC-Regional Director Marlo L. Iringan said that the manual will assist LGUs in formulating plans, allowing them to know if they are ready and showing what they need to do.

He said Operation Listo contains three critical preparedness actions: Alpha or the yellow alert, Bravo (Orange) and Charlie (Red).

"Alpha actions are done by LGUs inside the cone but are farthest from the direct typhoon track while Bravo presumes Alpha actions have been done coupled with additional acts that are essential for LGUs near the vicinity of the direct typhoon path. Charlie assumes that Alpha and Bravo actions have already been done and additional acts must be done to address the severe threat of the typhoon," Iringan explained. | **ALM / OTB, PIA R02**

P7-B solar power plant to rise in Isabela



Cheap solar energy will soon be available for Isabela residents after the proponents of the P7-billion solar power plant have already secured its funding.

Iligan City Mayor Jose Marie L. Diaz said the 100-megawatt solar power project will help provide additional power supply to the Luzon Grid, which is experiencing a shortage of supply and an increasing demand for energy.

"The funding has been secured to enable the project to be constructed starting July and put into operations," Mayor Diaz said.

He added that its German contractor needs at least 1,000 laborers to put up the facility.

He said the solar power facility will be constructed at a 100-hectare land at barangay Cabannungan in Cauayan City, several kilometers away from the city proper.

"The project is an excellent alternative for fossil fuels like coal and petroleum because solar energy is practically emission-free while generating electricity," the mayor said.

He added that with solar energy, the danger of further adding damage to the environment is minimized. | **ALM / MGE, PIA R02**

NV PLGU to fund flood control, dredging, bridge repair projects

The provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya is expected to pour in funds for the implementation of various flood control projects, waterways dredging and construction, and improvement of bridges.

A total fund allocation of P14.5 million has been recommended by the provincial government's Local Finance Committee (LFC) and was already submitted to the office of Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Governor Ruth R. Padilla for her approval.



Evaliza Agamata, provincial disaster risk reduction and management coordinator, said this will

be included in the budget of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) under the Local Expenditure Program (LEP) for 2015. The funding will be sourced out from the Special Trust Fund.

"This will improve our disaster preparedness and mitigation programs against flashfloods and landslides," she said.

The P14.5 million fund will cover the implementation of flood control projects along (1) the Bambang

town-barangay Salinas-barangay Pingkian Road in Kayapa; (2) Salinas-Tabla section in Bambang; (3) barangay Barat-barangay San Leonardo section in Bambang; and (4) the barangay Comon-barangay Sta. Clara-barangay Canabuan road in Aritao.

It will also fund the dredging of waterways along the Sta. Cruz river in Bambang through the Barat-San Leonardo and Salinas sections as well as the Bintawan creek in Villaverde town through the Calaoagan-Capiddigan section.

Part of the fund will also be used for the construction and improvement of bridges such as the Wangwang bridge in Ambaguio and the San Antonio bridge in Bambang. | **ALM / BME, PIA R02**

KULAY, Ivatan's food preservation secret

There's a tradition among the Ivatans on the preservation of their food bounties: air-drying.

Termed as 'kulay' in the Ivatan language, this has been part of the survival process of the islanders.

For the Ivatans, harvest from the sea can be best preserved through the application of enough salt which can last them until the fair weather returns.

That is likewise true to their famous root crops like sweet potatoes, cassava, and uvi where the benefits from the sun and air are maximized to the fullest.



Among the Ivatans, kulay is an easier, more economical, and a more environment-friendly way of

preservation as against cold storage using refrigerators which generate gases that are destructive to the environment.

In Batanes, in the absence of rice, root crops become the staple food of the sturdy Ivatans which they eat with dried fish.

"Kulay has been part of our traditional lifestyle," says Basco Mayor Demetrius Paul Narag. "It ensures sustainability particularly during the rainy months when food from the mainland cannot be depended upon."

Basco, the capital town, has adopted Kulay as the name of their

festival for the last few years as a way of recognizing their culture.

This year's Kulay Festival will be highlighted by a trade fair where preserved foods will be displayed aside from the usual festival events and festivities.

While even the Department of Agriculture continues to introduce new technologies for the preservation of products in the province, the Ivatans of Basco are faced with the problem of irregular power supply.

But still, for the Ivatans, the practice of kulay will ensure food sustainability in the province. It is one of Batanes' secrets why they continue to survive since their existence as a people, possibly from Tao island (Orchid island), now the toast of a research to link Ivatans and them. | **OTB / NGA / PSL, PIA R02**

Learning is more fun here!

Schoolchildren enjoy new and better classrooms thru BEF

Elementary pupils in two schools in Isabela were recently awarded with better learning environments through new typhoon-resistant classrooms that were constructed through the Basic Education Facilities (BEF) Program of the DPWH RO2.

During their visit to these schools, the Project Monitoring Team of the Regional Project Monitoring Committee (RPMC) found that the students of Salvacion Primary School in Echague, Isabela have already transferred to the new two-classroom building.

Meanwhile, the teachers of the Salvacion Elementary School in Alicia have also started holding classes in their new classrooms. Ms. Milagros Guzman, the school principal, happily informed the RPMC team that their enrollees have increased from 103 to 221 this school year as more students became interested to go to school because of the new classrooms.

Monitoring more projects in Cagayan & Isabela

The team's three-day field monitoring visit in Tuguegarao City and Isabela aimed to assess and ascertain whether project implementers abided by the standards and specifications contained in their respective Program of Works (POW).

Officials of the Isabela Provincial Government gave the members of the RPMC Project Monitoring Team a tour of the facilities of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) which contained survival kits, an advanced support ambulance, and search and rescue operations equipment such as rubber boats, responders' bags, and helmets. (INSET) The survival kit contains ready-to-eat food and other basic needs.



In Tuguegarao City, the team visited the Philippine National Police Station Hospital in Camp Adduru which was being upgraded under the CY 2013 Health Facilities Enhancement Program of the DOH. They found that the hospital was not yet in operation although it was constructed in accordance to its POW. In their desire to have a functional facility, the project proponents sought the intervention of the RPMC for a problem-solving session to be held in July.

Traveling to Tumauni, Isabela, the RPMC monitoring team next checked on the status of implementation of the Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program of the DOLE RO2, particularly the

Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers or TUPAD program. They noted that 415 residents have been provided with emergency employment, receiving a salary of P255/day for 30 days by planting, landscaping and dredging the 52-hectare Camp Samal and in the town's public market.

The team also monitored the three-storey evacuation center cum Isabela Rescue Academy which is expected to be completed this August. They were informed that the provincial government will continue to improve and upgrade their equipment and facilities for disaster operations and other emergencies. | SUZETTE R. ADDURU, PIA RO2, AND THE RPMC PROJECT MONITORING TEAM

