



Stronger than Storm!

Cooperative leaders and advocates from Central Visayas successfully participated the Visayas Coconut Farmer Cooperatives Summit, themed "**Nurturing Sustainability: Innovating for a Resilient Coconut Industry,**" at Summit Hotel, Tacloban City on October 22-23, 2024, despite Typhoon Kristine.

With the collective efforts of the Cooperative Development Authority Regional Extension Offices from Central Visayas, Western Visayas and the host region, Eastern Visayas, the two-day Visayas-wide summit was made possible, providing a holistic approach for coconut farmer cooperatives, to address the various needs of the sector and establish a strong coconut industry.

For Central Visayas, a total of 38 delegates from coconut farmer cooperatives in Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental and Siquijor attended, both physically and virtually. Some of the cooperative leaders from the four provinces participated online after being stranded in Cebu Port due to adverse weather conditions brought by Typhoon Kristine. Stranded participants were provided meals and accommodation by the CDA – 7 through the directive of Ms. Cristina H. Villamil, Regional Director and in coordination with the Philippine Coconut Authority – Region 7 headed by Mr. Brendan P. Trasmonte, Regional Manager.

Amid typhoon warnings, the cooperative leaders completed the summit with valuable learnings, and experiences, seizing the opportunity to collaborate and benchmark with other coconut farmer cooperatives across the Visayas regions.

The Visayas regions gained the full support of the Undersecretary Joseph B. Encabo, Chairperson of CDA who was present in the event, stressed on the importance of having shared actions, spirit, mind and perspective for the progress and development of the cooperative sector. Along with CDA Chair Encabo, the event was also attended by the Assistant Secretary Virgilio R. Lazaga, Head of the Agriculture Cooperatives Cluster who conveyed his message of solidarity to all the participants. The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) was also well represented by Mr. Jimbo Mallari, Project Manager.

Active and meaningful discussion were conducted during the plenary sessions catering to concerns and recommendations from the cooperative leaders. Esteemed resource speakers were from the partner agencies and organizations including the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), PCA, Philippine Agricultural Cooperative Ecosystem (PACE), Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship Foundation, Inc., Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech), Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), Eastern Visayas Coconut Development Industry Council, Axel Integrated Farm and the Small Business Corporation. The event also received support from the Provincial Government of Leyte, represented by Atty. Ronnan Christian Reposar on behalf of Hon. Carlos Jericho L. Petilla, Governor.

The summit also featured the **Coco Farm Coop Trade Fair and Exhibit** where cooperatives from Regions 6,7, and 8 showcased their various coconut products. The event ended with the signing of the Cooperative Statement of Commitment or the Coconut Farmer Cooperatives Covenant for Development. This initiative echoes the collective effort of the three regions in championing the

essence of the Coconut Industry Development Plan (CFIDP) for coconut farmer cooperatives. // *Analyn T. Conocono CDS II*

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS: VISAYAS COCONUT FARMER COOPERATIVES SUMMIT

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