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### Cotabato City holds dialogue on lease of public lands for fishpond dev't

by [Sheryl Cabildo](#)

Koronadal City (5 March) -- A dialogue on rules and regulations governing lease of public land for fishpond development was organized by the Bureau of fisheries and Aquatic resources region 12 in cooperation with the local government of Cotabato City last February 26, 2008.

The purpose of the consultation was to discuss the Fishpond Lease Agreement (FLA) requirements and obligations with the fish pond operators. FLA is an agreement entered into by and between the Secretary of Agriculture and a qualified fishpond applicant for the use of public land for fishpond development purposes of a period of twenty five years.

Assistant Regional Director Roger Diro of the Bureau of Internal Revenue Region 12 (BIR) was present to explain the issues regarding on revenues and taxation. Edgar R. Alcorido, Account Officer on Agrarian Loans of Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), discussed the facilitation of credit assistance. LBP offers credit assistance to small farmers and fisher folk through cooperatives and rural financial institutions to finance various livelihood projects.

Mr. Eduardo E. dela Fuente, Jr. the City Agriculturist said that this consultation was a good opportunity for the them to know from the Regional Director what assistance BFAR 12 can offer especially on strengthening the production capacity of bangus and crabs. It is also the chance for fishpond operators to raise their problems and ask how these problems could be addressed by BFAR.

Mayor Muslimen G. Sema of Cotabato City is planning to put up a processing plant and hatchery for Bangus. The potential area for fishpond in Cotabato is 3,500 hectares yet the production is very low with only 600 kilos/ha per year due to lack of physical developments for fishponds. An expert from the South East Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) visited the city to evaluate the situation of the fishpond industry.

Regional Director Sani D. Macabalang said "We are not here to answer all the problems but we will see what are the best solutions to these problems." He also added that fish pond operators need to be organized so that their officials can talk with BFAR.

The dialogue was attended by the different fishpond operators and cooperatives from different municipalities of Cotabato. An election of officers was also held for the Cotabato City Fishpond Operators Association. (BFAR12/PIA 12) [\[top\]](#)

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