



# OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION

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Administrator Claro V. Maranan (5th from left) leads the unveiling of the NISRIIP marker. With him are: (L-R) JICA representative Sherilyn B. Aoyama; Deputy Administrator for Administrative and Finance Lorna Grace B. Rosario; Dr. Aurora Corrales of PhilRice; Senior JICA Representative Sachiko Takeda; Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo; Deputy Administrator for Engineering and Operations Modesto G. Membreve; NISRIIP Acting Project Manager John N. Celeste; and Regional Manager Julius S. Maquiling.

## NIA LAUNCHES JICA-FUNDED NISRIIP

By: Lioneil G. Dela Cruz, PAIS - NIA C.O.

Administrator Claro V. Maranan, who viewed the activity as a very significant event for the agency, led the National Irrigation Administration in launching the agency's youngest foreign-funded project, the National Irrigation Sector Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (NISRIIP), together with representatives from the Japan International Cooperation Association (JICA) and Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) on November 19, 2013 at the Convention Hall, IEC Bldg, NIA Complex, Quezon City. NIA officials from the central and field offices, employees, and other guests watched as the JICA-funded initiative was placed into the limelight.

Deputy Administrator Modesto G. Membreve welcomed the audience in this significant event, while Acting Project Manager Engr. John Celeste, proudly introduced the project as a complete 5-year intervention to increase the productivity of 22,563 farmer-beneficiaries from nine different regions nationwide, covering a total service area of 35,670 hectares, through rehabilitation and restoration of irrigation systems, provision of consultancy and institutional development activities, as well as giving operation and maintenance equipment and other agricultural support services.

Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo, as a strong advocate of NIA-IA partnership, mentioned that NISRIIP is a recognition of the importance of Irrigators Associations in NIA's project implementation. He believes that NISRIIP is one of NIA's means to realize not just the agency's vision of becoming a dynamic and viable government corporation but also to improve the socio-economic status of farmers.

Also gracing the event were representatives of NIA's partners in the implementation of the project – JICA and PhilRice. Sachiko Takeda, the Senior Representative of JICA, reminded for a close coordination among the involved agencies to ensure the synergy of project components towards inclusive growth and optimal results. Dr. Aurora Corrales of PhilRice, on the other hand, challenged NIA to ensure that NISRIIP is not just a project with a perfect plan but should also be implemented as it was perfectly designed.

Before the NISRIIP marker was unveiled, Deputy Administrator for Administrative and Finance Lorna Grace B. Rosario closed the program saying that "NISRIIP is another force for the realization of NIA's objectives, mission, and vision with the cooperation of the strengthened Irrigators Association."





Participants of the one-day seminar on the "New Guidelines and Procedures for Entering into Joint Ventures (JVs) between Government and Private Entities" with Certified PPP Specialist Atty. Alberto Agra (seated, 4th from left)

## NIA holds Seminar on Joint Ventures

By: Warren Nicholson Y. Fernando, NIA - CO

"We should be transparent and focused on this program because in the future, this will be a major source of income of the National Irrigation Administration," Administrator Claro V. Maranan stressed as he opened the seminar on "New Guidelines and Procedures for Entering into Joint Ventures (JVs) between Government and Private Entities" held on November 15, 2013 at Classroom B, IEC Building, NIA Complex, Quezon City.

Administrator Maranan spearheaded the conduct of the seminar in relation to Board Resolution No. 7832-13 series of 2013, re: "Creation of a Permanent Technical Working Group (TWG) for the Proposed Joint Venture Agreement for Hydropower Projects." Participants were Regional Managers, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Chairmen, and members of Technical Working Group for hydropower. The seminar aimed to provide a better understanding of the JV Guidelines in preparation for NIA's Hydropower Development Projects.

Atty. Alberto Agra, Certified Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) Specialist, facilitated the day-long seminar. Topics discussed were the following: 1. Overview of the PPPs; 2. JV Vehicles and Operations; 3. JV Agreements; 4. Nature of 2013 NEDA JV Guidelines; 5. JV Parties and Eligibility; 6. Roles of Administrative Agencies; 7. JV Definition and Concepts; 8. JV Projects and Activities; and 9. Private Sector Participants (PSP) Selection Procedures.

*Section 5. of the Guidelines defines Joint Venture (JV) as an arrangement whereby a private sector entity or a group of private sector entities on one hand, and a Government Entity or a group of Government Entities on the other hand, contribute money/capital, services, assets (including equipment, land, intellectual property or anything of value), or a combination of any or all of the foregoing to undertake an investment activity. The investment activity shall be for the purpose of accomplishing a specific goal with the end view of facilitating private sector initiative in a particular industry or sector, and eventually transfer the activity to either the private sector under competitive market conditions or to the government. The JV involves a community or pooling of interests in the performance of the investment activity, and each party shall have the right to direct and govern the policies in connection therewith with the intention to share both profits and, risks and losses subject to agreement by the parties. A JV may be a Contractual JV or a Corporate JV (JV Company).*

## NIA's Seven Pillars: A Call for Change— A Report on the Seven Point Program of Administrator Claro V. Maranan

By: Lioneil G. Dela Cruz, PAIS - NIA C.O.

"Let's start to make changes in ourselves by doing the right things, and by giving value to excellence and integrity; by rejecting mediocrity and dishonesty; and by giving priority to others above ourselves." This is President Aquino's message to government employees that was echoed by Administrator Claro V. Maranan to NIAs. This statement, together with PNoy's Social Contract to the Filipino People (Anti-Corruption, Poverty Reduction, and Sustainable Economic Growth), is where Administrator Maranan anchored the 7-Point Program for NIA when he assumed the leadership of the agency. After six months of diligently performing his duties, he presented his accomplishments anchored on the "seven pillars" of his administration.

In the first program, **Rapid Delivery of Irrigation Projects**: He reported that the agency's accomplishment in terms of project implementation is 61% as of December 2013. He noted that this figure is relatively low compared to current targets but attributed it to the late conduct of project biddings. Yet, looking at it positively, he mentioned that we have performed well in the current context of the agency. In terms of area generation, the agency attained 50% of its target. With the catch-up programs submitted by the Engineering Department and the Regional Managers, a projected 90% accomplishment can be attained in June 2014 and the rest at the end of the year. He also reported that for 2014, 161 projects were already bid out in December last year,

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## DA, DOF, and NIA hold dialogue with Bugkalot Tribe

By: Warren Nicholson Y. Fernando, NIA C.O.



DA Undersecretary Antonio Fleta, NIA Administrator Claro V. Maranan, and NIA Legal Services Department Manager Atty. Genever M. Dionio are among the government officials present during the dialogue with Bugkalot Tribe

The Department of Agriculture (DA) together with the Department of Finance and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) met with members of the Bugkalot Confederation on October 10, 2013 regarding their proposed shares of proceeds from the Casecnan Multi-purpose Irrigation and Power Project at the NIA Central Office in Diliman, Quezon City.

During the meeting, DA Undersecretary Antonio Fleta, NIA Administrator Claro V. Maranan, NIA Legal Department Manager Atty. Genever Dionio, Department of Finance Representative Raine Robinson, and CalEnergy Philippines representative Atty. Edwin Zales talked with the confederation members led by their overall chieftain Mayor Rosario Camma and their counsel Atty. Marlow Licudine regarding issues to be resolved in their share of the proceeds from the said irrigation and power project based on Section 7, Paragraph B of the Indigenous People's Right Act (IPRA).

Undersecretary Fleta said that the confederation needs to prepare a formal proposal letter on the percentage share for the Bugkalot Tribe from the project's proceeds. This was supported by Administrator Maranan and other government officials present.

The undersecretary also assured the confederation that this will be studied thoroughly by the DA, DOF, NIA, and CE Casecnan to come up with the necessary solution that will result in a win-win situation for all parties involved in the issue.

"Ang importante po ay magkaroon tayo ng pagkakaintindihan. Sana po ay maging mahinahon tayo at pipilitin nating ma-resolba ito. Atin din pong iparating sa mga nakatataas sa atin at ito po ay ating gagawin sa lalong madaling panahon," Fleta said.

The NIA Administrator said that he, together with the other government agencies, will also do all that they can to solve and help the Bugkalot Confederation. "The Bugkalot Confederation has a legitimate claim that's why they agreed to the project," Maranan added.

At the end of the meeting, the confederation agreed to prepare a formal letter and both parties agreed to continue to work on the matter so they can resolve the issue at hand.

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## NIA's Seven Pillars: A Call for Change— A Report on the Seven Point Program

others in January and February 2014, and about less than a hundred in March.

In the next point, **Accurate Reporting and Monitoring System**, He mentioned that data are still being validated. Initial validation was made in December that eventually improved NIA's data. With his initiative, data submissions became more accurate and timely. However, he still acknowledged the need to improve particularly on data management.

In the **Organizational Reforms and Process Innovations**: He cited the efforts being done by Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo in organizational reforms. He mentioned that a policy regarding reassignment of managers has been drafted and that there should be a 3-year standard assignment in order for the agency to move. The administrator also reiterated that NIA's structure is bloated calling for a reduction of people. Yet, he assured that people who are really

needed will be retained.

Regarding **the Empowerment and Continuous Learning** of NIAns, he pointed out that trainings and seminars both for the employees and IAs are still on-going but strategies are being observed to minimize travel expenses. In this segment, Engr. Maranan also mentioned that NIA needs to have a Master Plan which consists of medium and long-term irrigation development plans. A master plan, according to him, should also be prioritized as NIAns accumulate new knowledge and skills.

In terms of the agency's **Climate Change Program**, he emphasized the need for a more comprehensive plan. He acknowledged the presence of a plan but emphasized on digging deeper so that the funds for climate change programs can be maximized. He took for example that the annual tree planting activity should not just be once a year, it should be conducted often to maintain the watersheds.

Coming to his last point, the **Strengthening of IAs**, Engr. Maranan said that the agency's resources should be maximized to create livelihood opportunities for IAs and NIA employees. Eco-tourism, aqua-culture, and power generation are the three livelihood opportunities that can be tapped as joint ventures between NIA and farmers. He called for a comprehensive plan for this because this is an effective way to create a more improved relationship with the farmers who are the primary stakeholder of the agency.

Having mentioned all that, Administrator Maranan challenged every NIAN to live by the cornerstones of the government. There are so many pressing issues that the agency is facing yet there are ways to get past these issues. There are still more room for improvement and a lot of work to be done that's why he encouraged every NIAN to work together for change.##

## Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo - A Man of Action!

By: Maria Luisa A. Frias, PAIS - NIA C.O.

Tagged as a performer and achiever, Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo has committed himself to be a "public spirited" official, serving NIA since 1979. He was appointed as NIA's Senior Deputy Administrator on September 1, 2013 and has performed his assigned tasks with flying colors.

In his message during NIA's January 13 Flag Raising Ceremony, SDA-FMR, (as he is fondly called) enumerated his assignments given by Administrator Claro V. Maranan when the former assumed his office, which he diligently performed.

"Chairmanship of different committees is my specific assignment here at Central Office", he says. First in the list is the Governance Commission of Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation (GCG), Performance Commitment-Physical/Operations and Financial. The negotiations and commitments were undertaken with the help of all the sectors in the Central Office. The top management is cascading these targets to the Regional and IMO Managers to get commitments. In the process, sources of income were identified, such as, if and when completed, hydropower plants, Pantabangan Dam Hotel and Restaurant when turned over to NIA.

He also heads the Committee to review Delegated Authorities. As chairman of the Real Property Committee, idle properties of NIA converted into subdivisions for NIA employees' housing in Regions 1, 4, 5, 10 and 11.

Through the Strategic Planning Group, NIA's Vision has been finalized. The new Vision - "We are a dynamic, viable, world class government corporation rendering irrigation and other allied services contributing to the socio-economic growth of the country". This new Vision is one of the strategic initiatives to improve the performance of NIA. He encouraged every employee to be inspired by the NIA's new Vision memorize and recite it during the flag raising ceremony.

SPG also reviewed the agency's Rationalization Program. The Rationalization Plan will enhance effectiveness, efficiency, and improvement of delivery of our assigned tasks; it also promotes accountability and transparency in the agency.

Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo in his parting words embolden every employees of NIA to be one in renewing NIA, to support and strive more towards attainment of our goal.

Truly, this man, a good leader and a man of hope, inspires every one of us in rebuilding and bringing back glory to our agency. XXX

## Deputy Administrator for Engineering and Operations fast tracks project procurement

By: Rocielle Harlette E. Navarro, PAIS - NIA C.O

In line with Administrator Claro V. Maranan's 7-Point Program, Deputy Administrator for Engineering and Operations Modesto G. Membreve concentrated on Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) activities to expedite the procurement process to improve the agency's delivery of services to farmers. In his January 6 speech during the first flag raising ceremony of 2014, he commended the Bids and Awards Committee-A members, Technical Working Group (TWG) and secretariat for their determination and effort in doing a job well done.

One of the projects was the Marimay Small Reservoir Irrigation Project, which had been approved through referendum. Other projects that were awarded and approved through the referendum by the Board are Ibato-Iraan SRIP (worth P455 million) and Sta. Rita SRIP (P331 million). Barotac Viejo SRIP (P365 million) had already been awarded and is yet to be approved by the Board. Maranding Rehabilitation and Restoration is up for re-bidding on January 06, 2014. Bidding duration was shortened to expedite the process before funds allocated for these projects expire.

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## Deputy Administrator for Engineering and Operations fast tracks project procurement

This is still within the 28-day minimum period allowed by law (Annex 'C' of R.A. 9184).

NISRI's service vehicles and light and heavy equipment all worth P264 million (7 packages total) are ready for awarding. Five (5) of these packages are already for Post Qualification and two (2) are for Re-bid.

The Casecan projects will be up for bidding for the first part of 2014. The first package, Construction of Super Diversion Canal, Laterals, and Sub-Laterals including Related

Structures Supply and Delivery and Installation of Gates (worth P357 million) will be opened on January 07, 2014, and the second package for the Construction of Sub-Laterals including Related Structures and Supply and Delivery and Installation of Gates (worth P104 million) will be opened on January 10, 2014.

Upcoming projects lined up for bidding include the Umayam River Irrigation Project Main Canal. As of press time, the project's Pre-Procurement Conference will be on

January 17, 2014, the Pre-Bidding Conference on January 22, 2014 and the Opening of Bids on February 03, 2014.

The BAC-A, through the initiative of Deputy Administrator Modesto G. Membreve, as Chairman, focused on these endeavors due to the new policy that money will expire in a year if not used. The Deputy Administrator, who rose from the ranks, had seen the immense benefits of these projects to our farmer-clientele.

## MADAM LGBR: Wind beneath NIA's Wings

By: Lionel G. Dela Cruz, PAIS, NIA - CO.

Equipped with perseverance and determination in performing her duties, Madam Lorna Grace B. Rosario faced the daunting tasks that she had foreseen in the span of time she had been the agency's Deputy Administrator for Administrative and Finance. She used her optimism to propel NIA to where the national leadership wants the agency to be. And guided by her mission of change, she became one of NIA's sturdy foundations.

To make a clear and concrete picture of the quality in Ma'am Rosario's leadership, here are some of her accomplishments and contributions that shaped NIA's Administrative and Finance sector. Through her initiative, the following have been ensured for the welfare of the agency's employees and improvement of the administrative and financial sector's operations:

**a)** Some payments of the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), which have been unsettled for years, have now been settled;

**b)** The retirement benefit resulting from the implementation of the RatPlan, under EO366 and EO77 have been paid in full as of December 2013;

**c)** Qualified employees received their Collective Negotiations Agreement (CNA) amounting to P15,000.00 in recognition for their contribution under the joint effort of labor and management in attaining the Agency's improved income and productivity;

**d)** The Medical Allowance has been increased from P200.00 to P400.00 effective 2014;

**e)** Under evaluation of the agency's cash position, monetization of leave credits for each qualified and availing employees have been granted;

**f)** NIA employees look more professional through the prescription of standardized cut, design, and fabric for the company uniform;

**g)** Strengthened the security of NIA through outsourcing of additional security guards that resulted to deployment of security personnel on every floor thus minimizing, if not eradicating, cases of loss of personal belongings;

**h)** Ensured timely release of funds to regional offices on or before the 30th of every month;

**i)** Ensured transparency and accountability in all transactions through the institution of the documentation checklist;

**j)** Sought approval, in line with her representation with the DBM, for the inclusion of funds to the General Appropriations Act (GAA) to pay off NIA's outstanding obligation with the National Development Corporation (NDC), that is, for payment for the longest was made for the repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of CIS nationwide;

**k)** Revision of MC 20, s. 2012 Delegation of Authority to NIA Officials. Insured checks and balances in the agency operation more significantly in the release of allotment and equivalent cash as well as personnel appointment through the correction of major provision of the finance and administrative items in the delegated authority;

**l)** Initiated NIA's computerization. The Human Resource Information System is already up and running while the computerization scheme for the financial processes in the agency is already on the works in coordination with the MID;

**m)** Document tracking system has been implemented for more systematic flow and easy monitoring of documents;

**n)** Initiated the first Internal Budget Hearing to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the way things are done in the sector, as well as in the regional and project offices, and to come up with policies and procedures in the agency's financial matters. This activity will become an annual and regular activity in the agency;

**o)** Several subsequent conferences with the Finance and Admin managers nationwide were held to address issues concerning the operations of the agency with the participation from the COA to answer COA Audit findings and memorandum;

**p)** With the support of NIA's top management and department heads, gradual improvement in the offices and training centers nationwide are being done that is beneficial to both employees and farmers; and

**q)** With the available budget each year for office improvement, gradual renovations of the offices in the CO as well in some Regional/Project/Irrigation Management Offices were done.

With all of these significant contributions, Ma'am Rosario can proudly say she has done her share but, true to her mission of change, she will not stop with these. She is still in pursuit of further improvement. For her, this is the time to cheer up for a higher level of performance in response to the expectations set upon the agency. She believes that there will be a better productivity and efficiency in the agency in the years to come. Madam LGBR proved one thing: she is really a force to reckon with in the agency.

*Using a song to describe her, one of her staff - Hartzell Madarang puts it, "She is the wind beneath NIA's wings."*





The Peace Dialogue on land conflict between clans in MMIP AOR on June 11, 2013, MMIP Conference Hall with LGU officials; AFP, NAPOLCOM, MILF Committee & NIA-MMIP



## PM Oyod an Emerging Peace Advocate

By: Melodia C. Dismas, SIRM O A, MMIP

Wikipedia stated that "There are different ideas over what peace is (or should be), which results in a plurality of movements seeking diverse ideals of peace. Particularly, anti-war movements that often have short-term goals, while peace movements advocate an on-going life-style and proactive government policy. The Peace movement is primarily characterized by a belief that humans should not wage war on each other; engage in violent ethnic cleansings over language, race, or natural resources; or ethical conflict over religion or ideology. Long-term opponents of war preparations are primarily characterized by a belief that military power is not the equivalent of justice."

This is the reason that Project Manager Noldin S. Oyod, a Muslim leader who believes in peace in this troubled Mindanao, stepped beyond NIA's perspective to ensure that MMIP II will be completed as per schedule. He trusts that differences could be settled in dialogues, one only needs a mediator to start a peaceful settlement.

As a Muslim, Engr. Oyod is aware of the consequences of a "Rido" in the economic stability and assurance of peace in the community. "Rido" is the sporadic outbursts of reprisal violence between families, kinship groups and between communities. "Rido" is deemed one of the major problems in Mindanao because apart from numerous casualties, it caused devastation of properties; impeded development and crippled the local economy; and displaced families. The recent involvement of a "Rido", Engr. Oyod realized that a dialogue is an excellent means of peaceful settlement instead of arming one's family for defense. It takes courage and will to peacefully settle a "Rido". A peaceful dialogue starts when each party committed to meet and discuss their differences, institute a pact/covenant so when the meeting's done, differences are patched and each group go home considering others a new friend/ally.

On June 11, 2013 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning at NIA-MMIP Conference Hall, Pikit, Cotabato, PM Oyod with the Pikit Municipal Mayor Hon.

Sumulong K. Sultan, Hon. Loreto Cabaya, MILF Task Force, the military and the local police force anxiously awaited the two (2) feuding clans in MMIP II area for a peaceful dialogue. These clans have met and agreed to settle before but agreement was violated by each group until PM Oyod stepped in, initiated and facilitated a peaceful dialogue.

Involved parties were given their own time to express their sentiments and demands on the problem. The military and the police expressed their sides, and the local government leaders discussed the effect of the ongoing "Rido" in the area especially peace and order. Thus, they asked the leaders of the clans to be at peace with each other so the Local Government Units and NIA can implement development in their areas.

PM Oyod moderated the dialogue and the group came into conclusion that (1) the occupied land will be surveyed for the occupants; (2) the land purchased by the former Pagalungan Mayor Norodin Matalam be given to Datu Budo Matalam as an exchange of the Kilangan land distributed to the occupants; (3) stop the hostility on both sides; (4) reparation of victims; and, (5) support the NIA and the local government's efforts for development.

Indeed, peace settlement was achieved not in arms but in pens and handshakes on that fruitful day.

Muslim Leaders have seen these attributes of PM Oyod as an effective advocator/initiator/facilitator of peaceful settlements of feuding families and clans. Thus, another peace dialogue was conducted on August 14, 2013 in Pagalungan, Maguindanao regarding Kilangan Land Conflicts, another area in both MMIP II and MRIS service area.

It was a well attended accord, the former Congressman Hon. Datu Guimid "Jimmy" Matalam acted as the head of the Matalam Royal

family; the occupants of Kilangan land in conflict; Muslim leaders; MILF Coordinating Committee Leaders; the local municipal leaders of both Pikit, Cotabato and Pagalungan, Maguindanao; the police; the military; and, International Monitoring Team who expressed support to the peaceful dialogue.

True to the saying, "All that starts well, ends well", Peace was achieved in these dialogue in PM's home town, Pikit, Cotabato and in Kilangan, Pagalungan. These are only the few peace settlements moderated by PM Oyod and this is not the end, but the beginning of a progressive peaceful actions toward the realization of MMIP II, a peaceful and bountiful Mindanao.

## Uncle Bob retires...

By: Pops Marie S. Dadea, PAIS - NIA C.O.

How can one start to introduce a man dearly loved and well respected by his peers, colleagues, and the entire National Irrigation Administration (NIA) employees?

**Young boy.** November 20, 1948. He was born to the delight of his loving parents, Constante Abes Suguitan and Remedios Lagrio Calaoagan in Dingras, Ilocos Norte. Being an only child, he is the joy of the family.

**Education.** He started his education at the tender age of 6 at Suyo Elementary School and received the Second Honors at the 1960 commencement exercises. He then went to Roosevelt High School and graduated with First Honors. And for he always dreamt of being an engineer, in 1964 enrolled at Mapua Institute of Technology and took up Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering

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## Uncle Bob retires...

and then passed the Board Examinations for Civil Engineering in 1974. For his post-graduate studies, he took up Master in Management at the Philippine Christian University and College of



Immaculate Conception in 1994-1996 and 2000-2001, respectively. He passed the Career Service Executive Examination in 2003.

**Family.** He is married to Eleuteria Aguinaldo and was blessed with two children named Ronelbert and Alpha Donna.

**Career.** He started working for NIA at its field office-Upper Pampanga River Project as an Engineer Trainee on November 16, 1971. Was a Supervising Specification Construction Engineer from February 1, 1975-September 30, 1980, a Supervising Engineer-B at NIA-UPRIIS-Division 4 from October 1, 1980-June 30, 1989, a Supervising Engineer-A from July 1, 1989-May 29, 1990, Principal Engineer-A at NIA-Special Project Staff-Project Development and Implementation from May 30, 1990-July 31, 1991. Under the same project became Project Management Officer-A from August 1, 1991 until January 7, 1999. He then became Assistant Project Manager-B at NIA-Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and Power Project-Irrigation Component from January 8, 1999 until October 2, 2009. After honing his skills at the field offices, he was summoned to the Central Office to head the Internal Audit Services and became its Department Manager for two years. And on October 7, 2011 given his experience and caliber as a leader, he was given a top management position of a Deputy

Administrator for Engineering and Operations from October 7, 2011-September 24, 2013. And on September 25, 2013 he was designated as Assistant Administrator through Office Memorandum No. 81, series of 2013. A colorful and wonderful career that run for four decades. Whew!

**Hobby.** Most NIAs knew that he is into practical shooting. As a matter of fact, on June 19, 2013 he received the championship trophy for bagging the 50th NIA Anniversary Shooting Competition, Executive Division category held at the QCPD Firing Range, Camp Karingal. Other recent victories in the firing range came from the 3rd National Food Authority Administrator's Challenge (Level 1) (Executive Division) on September 14, 2012 held at the QCPD Firing Range, Camp Karingal and in the Joint Leaders Fun Shoot (Executive Division) on November 17, 2012 at the West Point Shooting Range, Tuba, Benguet.

A great enthusiast. A true friend. A boss with a big heart. A man of integrity. An achiever. Adjectives that can very well define NIAs Uncle Bob. Words are not enough to convey our love and respect for Engr. Robert C. Suguitan. We will miss you Sir RCS! And as they say Sir this is not a good bye but more of see you soon!

## Photo News



(l-r) Legal Services Manager Genever M. Dionio, Acting NISRIIP Project Manager John N. Celeste, Region 11 Engineering and Operations Division Manager Ramon A. Bugacia, PAIS Manager Pilipina P. Bermudez, Finance and Administrative Division Manager Cesario M. Ruizal, and Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo attend 12th Annual CES Conference with at theme, "Fit @ 40: Renewing our Past, Leading the Future", on November 27-29, 2013 at Taal Vista Lodge Hotel, Tagaytay City.

*Errata on "Awards for the 50th NIA Anniversary Shootfest" published in the NIA Currents 3rd Quarter, 2013. The winners should have been Mr. Solomon Alfeche of CARAGA as the Champion and Engr. Aristotle Juan C. Salas of Central Office as the 1st Runner-Up for Tyros/Beginners, Classic Division category.*

*We identified Mr. Gerardo R. Homeres' office as CAR instead of Region 6. Our apologies ...*

*"Leadership is not magnetic personality — that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not 'making friends and influencing people' -- that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person's vision to high sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations." --Peter F. Drucker*



## NIA IV-B Hosts ISAPhil's 26th Founding Anniversary and Annual National Convention

By: Glenda G. Buenavista, Palawan IMO, Region IV - B

The National Irrigation Administration Region IV-B (MIMAROPA) headed by Acting Regional Manager Conrado V. Cardenas Jr. hosted the Irrigation Steward Association of the Philippines, Inc. (ISAPhil)'s 26th Founding Anniversary and Annual National Convention which was held at Hotel Centro, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan on November 5-6, 2013.

Present during the said event were key officers namely: Sr. Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo, Deputy Administrator for Engineering & Operations Modesto G. Membreve, Operations Department Manager Efren S. Roqueza, Institutional Development Acting Division

Manager Bayani P. Ofrecio, and Irrigation Engineering Center Division Manager Bonifacio S. Labiano. Participants were composed of 67 Irrigation Management Officers (IMO) and Irrigations Systems Officers (ISO).

In his speech, Sr. Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo stressed the seven (7) point agenda of NIA Administrator Claro V. Maranan.

During the management interaction, IMO and ISO heads were able to raise different concerns and issues which were answered by the key officers. One of these issues was the deletion of funding

allocation for the Repair and Rehabilitation of Existing Irrigation Systems (RREIS) projects which was cited as a problem in the field especially during ISF/Amortization collection campaign periods.

Dr. Esteban C. Golidano, Technical Adviser on Climate Change of the Department of Agriculture System Wide Climate Change Office, presented the Overview of DA Climate Change Vulnerability Mapping Project during the Technical Discussions.

The National Convention ended with a raffle draw in which a Toyota Vios 1.3 J was the grand prize.



## NIA SPEEDS UP RELIEF DISTRIBUTION FOR TYPHOON YOLANDA VICTIMS

By: Maria Luisa A. Frias, PAIS - NIA C.O.

As "Super typhoon Yolanda" battered Visayas particularly Tacloban, leaving thousands of people dead and injuring many others, NIA Administrator Claro V. Maranan immediately directed aid for the typhoon victims.

For an efficient relief drive in NIA Central Office, Committee on Typhoon Yolanda Relief Operations was organized. Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo chaired the Committee. NIAESP Central Office President Louella R. Mercado served as Vice Chair while PAIS Manager Pilipina P. Bermudez, Administrative Department Manager Violeta C. Esguerra and Institutional Development Division Manager Bayani P. Ofrecio as members; while Engr. Filipinas N. Verzosa served as the Secretariat.

The committee is tasked to coordinate all relief operations from fund raising, identification and classification of victims, and the transporting and distribution of commodities.

PAIS was tapped to receive donations in kind while cash donations were directly received thru NIAESP. NIA personnel helped Department of Agriculture (DA) in repacking 1,350 sacks of NFA rice to be given to typhoon victims.



IMAGE SOURCE: [HTTP://TIMEGLOBALSPIN.FILES.WORDPRESS.COM](http://TIMEGLOBALSPIN.FILES.WORDPRESS.COM)

In addition, procurement of basic household needs for the victims such as plates, casseroles, pails, among others was immediately done by some NIA personnel authorized by the committee.

On November 24, trucks loaded with construction materials, various goods and other basic needs set off for Region 8, the most devastated place including NIA Regional Office and satellite offices. Region 5 facilitated the procurement of construction materials. On the other hand, initial cash assistance of P200,000.00 was sent to NIA Region 6 personnel. Even NIA Mindanao regions organized teams to facilitate relief efforts for typhoon victims.

Another batch of relief goods were sent to NIA Tacloban on December 11 to provide immediate basic needs and necessities of NIA employees and their families; assistance all came from NIA offices nationwide. NIA MARIIS added chainsaw to their donation.

Meanwhile, during ARDOMA's meeting held at Cebu City, members voluntarily agreed to give their share in addition to their office's donations for the victims.

Generous spirit came to life through relief donations from NIA employees nationwide that kept on pouring PAIS office day by day.

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## NIA SPEEDS UP RELIEF DISTRIBUTION FOR TYPHOON YOLANDA VICTIMS

With these gestures, NIAns are indeed one in uplifting the spirits of our fellow NIAns who survived the rage of super typhoon.

In the aftermath of the typhoon Yolanda, from NIAns to NIAns- No amount of relief can be best given but a hope and prayer that we can still stand amidst the wrath of any calamities that comes our way. XXX

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.



The rage of Typhoon Yolanda stirred the hearts of NIAns and their families to share their time and efforts repacking NFA rice.



Volunteers load relief goods to one of the stake trucks leaving for Tacloban City.



## NIA further utilizes resources for Yolanda survivors and irrigation facilities

By: Rocielle Harlette E. Navarro, PAIS - NIA C.O.

Super typhoon Yolanda had brought about damages that were both unforeseen and catastrophic, leaving behind a trail of destruction and hopelessness to the residents of the affected areas. As of December 3, 2013, there were 42,357 hectares of damaged farmlands and 38,555 plagued farmer-beneficiaries. The amount of damages to crops reached a total of Php3.78B and damages to irrigation facilities amounted to Php652.27M including small and big dams in Regions 4A, 4B, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13.

With this vast expanse of damage to irrigation facilities, there is a need for an equal amount of repair and rehabilitation to be done to continue our advocacy of providing quality irrigation services to farmers. Administrator Claro V. Maranan also made use of machineries and equipment to help rehabilitate irrigation systems affected by the typhoon. In a recent inventory that was made, there were 95 heavy and 88 light

equipment that could be used to help fast-track the repairs. These were already sent to the regions that needed these equipment. This is only the first step in the agency's on-going effort to restore irrigation services for the farmers.

Due to the intensity of the storms that hit the country in the last quarter of 2013, the management decided to allocate Php140M for areas that are constantly ravaged by typhoons.

The agency is also in the process of finalizing a proposal to the World Bank Mission to realign the amount of \$10M to address facilities damaged by the typhoon.

More than the damage done to irrigation facilities, Yolanda had displaced thousands of survivors, including the agency's employees. Some lost their homes and others, their loved ones. News from the affected regions was at a standstill after the storm,

as communication had been next to impossible.

In a move to help affected employees, the NIA created a committee in charge of relief operations with Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo as its head to identify and evaluate the needs of affected people. PAIS Department Manager Pilipina P. Bermudez reported that there were already two sets of relief goods delivered to Region 8 during the month of November and it included basic necessities such as food, clothing, blankets, and construction materials using the state trucks from MARIIS, CAR, and Region 3.

Furthermore, the Administrator, through PAIS Manager Bermudez, advised that this will be a continuing process until the survivors are able to stand on their own. As of press time, the committee on relief operations will hold meetings in 2014 to further evaluate the needs of the agency's affected employees.



# Relief Goods arrive at NIA Tacloban City



The two stake trucks from MARIIS, Isabela were used in transporting their relief goods for victims of YOLANDA



The relief goods coming from Central Office and from the different regions of NIA.



Unloading of relief goods.



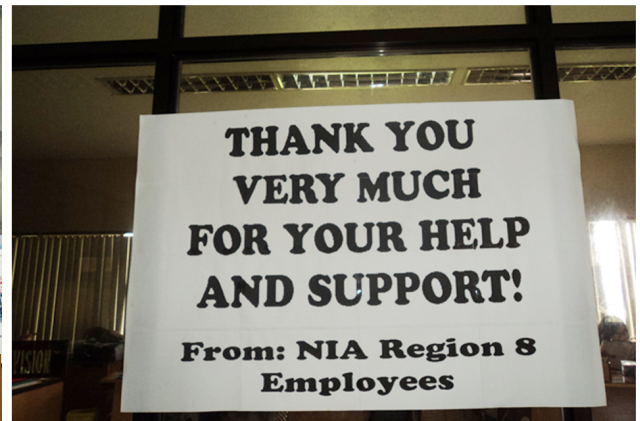
Clothings



RO Personnel repacking relief goods.



AFD Manager Jesusa Sibonga receiving the cash/check donation from Region 8 NIAEASP Dist. President Albinde Dave V. Jbilado in the amount of P17,866.00





## TYPHOON YOLANDA – A WAKE UP CALL

By: Dr. Oliver P. Pacheco, Medical & Dental Services - NIA C.O.

With the calamities happening around the world today, and just recently in the Philippines, particularly in the Visayas, we can't just watch and hope that these calamities will not happen here in Metro Manila.

A disaster can be natural, like a Hurricane, Tornado, Flooding or Earthquake. It can also be manmade, like a Biothermal attack or a Chemical spill. One should know the risks and danger signs of the different types of disasters. Preparing for a disaster can reduce the fear, anxiety, and losses that it may bring.

The big question is, "Are we ready?" Before typhoon Yolanda struck the Visayas region, NDRRMC was looking forward to a zero casualty with the preparations they have put in place. But we have seen what has happened, death toll has reached 5000 and still counting.

A photo of what Typhoon Yolanda left behind after its onslaught

IMAGE SOURCE: [HTTP://TIMEGLOBALSPIN.FILES.WORDPRESS.COM](http://timeglobalspin.files.wordpress.com)



No matter what kind of disaster we experience, it causes emotional stress. After a disaster, rescue and recovery may take some time, so one should have a disaster plan. Be ready to evacuate from your home and bring with you as much food and water as you can, and must be calm all throughout.

Awareness of our environment is the first step on being prepared. The little things that we do to conserve our environment, may eventually prevent calamities, if not, may prepare us for one. In any situation being prepared spells the difference between life and death.



NIA Evaluators and WEBAMSI Officers during the evaluation of this IA at Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur. A recipient of so many awards due to cooperation and proper IA management by the officers.

## Success Story of WEBAMSI Irrigators Association

By: Silvestre Albore, PRO, NIA - CARAGA

WEBAMSI IA is located at Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur about 45 Kilometers from NIA-Caraga Regional Office. It is one of the IAs of Andanan RIS. It has 15 Turn-out Service Areas manned by dynamic Board of Directors and IA officers.

At the onset of their operations under the ARIS, just like any other ordinary IA, they also encountered common problems and issues that hinder the development and progress of the IA and it even affected the relationship within the family, as officers, especially the president who is frequently absent in his farm to attend meetings in relation to their organization. The same is true with other officers. That is how sincere these officers are

in the organization. It was then resolved-wives are designated as alternate farm managers/caretakers in the absence of the spouses.

Years later, with officers' continued presence and foresights, WEBAMSI began to grow mainly through NIA's assistance and linkages with other institutions and avail almost all of the opportunities extended to them. They were able to overcome problems simply by just cooperating with each other moving to the same direction.

To date, they were able to acquire an IA lot and office building; extend soft loans; establish lending business to members;

invest in hog fattening; and, gain access to fertilizer assistance. Attendance to PhilRice seminars encouraged the IA to establish a seed bank. The City LGU is also very supportive knowing that it is a well managed IA (consistent highest collection efficiency) with hard working officers capable of transforming into a viable and progressive organization. In fact, WEBAMSI also received numerous awards and recognition from different institutions. #

### DAVAO DEL NORTE IMO's Stars

## DUJALI ISIDRO TALISAY CASAY IRRIGATORS ASSOCIATION INC. (DITCIA I)

By: Aida Paraiso, IDO, LALIK RIS, Region 11

DITCIA I is located at Bugtong Talisay, Dujali, Davao del Norte under the Libuganon River Irrigation System. It is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Davao Extension Office per Registration No. CN200429289 on August 26, 2004. It is a downstream Irrigators Association, about 50 kilometers away from the Libuganon Diversion Dam and part of Division VIII. It covers a service area of 140.67 hectares, 112.39 hectares of which are planted with rice and 28.08 are bananas; benefitting 127 farmer-members. It is 52 kilometers north of Davao City and 16 kilometers north of Davao del Norte IMO, Sto. Nino, Carmen, Davao del Norte.

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## DUJALI ISIDRO TALISAY CASAY IRRIGATORS ASSOCIATION INC. (DITCIA I)

The strengthening of DITCIA I began when the IA President Eduardo V. Bernadas graduated from the second batch of the NIA-JICA in-Country Training in December of 2001. All activities of the association have been guided by its vision, mission, goals and objectives. There are nine (9) turnouts with its Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and members.

DITCIA I is an awardee of Department of Agriculture's AGRI-PINOY RICE ACHIEVERS AWARDS 2012, Hall of Fame Award in 2008 (based on its three (3) consecutive years as Most Outstanding IA in the Philippines in 2004, 2005 and 2006) and the Gawad Saka Agri Achievers (both at the Provincial and Regional level in 2003-2004 and 2007-2008). Other awards and distinctions they received are Most Outstanding IA Adopting IFS IN 2004-2006, Gawad Saka Agri Fisheries Stakeholders in 2003-2004, awarded by NIA Regional Office Most Outstanding IA 2010, Outstanding ISF Collection Crop in 2004-2010. Also plaques of recognition were awarded to them over the years namely: Most Outstanding IA (with cash) in 2003-2006, from 2005-2007 Cal Energy recognized their efforts plus cash award of P100,000.00, and on June 22, 2008 NIA Central Office presented them a Hall of Fame award. Mr. Bernadas went to Tokyo, Japan on December 16, 2005 to personally receive the plaque of citation given by the Japanese Institute of Irrigation and Drainage for the paper presented on Participatory Irrigation Management.

The association provides their farmer-beneficiaries with high quality inbred seeds; three (3) of its members are duly accredited seed growers under



THEME: NIA at Irrigators Association nagkakaisa para sa maayos na Sistemang patubig at agricultura  
DITCIA Pres. Eduardo Bernadas (3rd from Right) with other IA Officials received an award during the 4th National Association Congress with them are Madam Pilipina P. Bermudez, PAIS Manager, then 10 Regional Manager Felix M. Razo now the Acting Senior Deputy Administrator.

DAMSEPCO with a total area of eight (8) hectares. Their seeds have passed the strict quality and purity standards of the National Seed Inspection Council (NSIC).

In support to the Municipal/Provincial Rice Self-sufficiency Road Map programs, DITCIA attended and participated the Palay Check System Farmer Field School, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Farmer Field School, Location Specific Technology Development (LSTD), Organic Farming Methods, Use of Post Harvest Facilities, and Ratooning.

The Operation & Maintenance Contract of DITCIA is based on Irrigation and Management Contract (Model 2) with the Davao del Norte Irrigation Management Office of Sto., Nino, Carmen, Davao del Norte. They are well guided by its By-laws and IA policies in running their association. Further, guided by their repair and maintenance plan, ISF collection plan, water delivery distribution, and the cropping calendar pattern of planting. The farmers' request for water form shall be used for water delivery, without this request water shall not be delivered to their farm.

The IA has maintained its 100% collection performance and collection efficiency. The financial reports are updated and submitted to the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the SEC. DITCIA has a five-year Development Plan.

The services extended to its members are credit assistance to members for agricultural production, livelihood programs, women involvement in livelihood programs, marketing assistance to members, agricultural machineries and implements for use of IA members, tie-ups with LGUs, NGOs/GOs, free use of bodega and drier and provision of incentives to its members and employees.

The association formed a cooperative named DITCIA Multipurpose Cooperative and registered with the Cooperative Development Authority with registration no. RN2846-Davao on November 29, 1993. It has 148 members, 102 are IA members and forty-six (46) came from outside DITCIA. The total asset as of December 31, 2012 is 7,226,800.51. To-date DITCIA is sustaining its operation and maintenance, financial capacity and members' strengthening.

## BALISONG SAN VICENTE IRRIGATORS ASSOCIATION, (BASIA) INC.

By: Aida Paraiso, IDO - LALIK RIS, Region 11

BASIA's mother Irrigators Association was Cabayangan Irrigators Association (CIA); due to the splitting of one big IA into several IAs as advocated by the then Irrigation Superintendent Engr. Alejandro L. Alberca, BASIA is one example of an IA that came from a big IA. It was organized by the Institutional Development Staff of the second Davao Irrigation Project (SEDIP) and registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 29, 1988 per Registration No. DS0924. The majority of the service area is located at Balisong, Sto. Tomas, Davao del Norte.



BASIA represented by its President Edgar Cocoy (5th from left) received an award from D.A. as Agri-Pinoy Rice Achievers Award for 2012 (NIS Category).



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## BALISONG SAN VICENTE IRRIGATORS ASSOCIATION, (BASIA) INC.

Their cooperative, the San Vicente Development Cooperative (SVDC), was registered with the Cooperative Development Authority on November 11, 1991 per Registration No. RN-939-DVO. The documents were submitted for registration to SEC in 2003 and finally completed on November 29, 2007 per Registration No. CN200731546.

BASIA is a Department of Agriculture Agri-Pinoy Rice Achievers Awardee for 2012 (NIS Category). Also an awardee of Nationwide Outstanding Irrigators Association in 2007-2012, Outstanding ISF Collection in 2003-2010, Most Outstanding IA in 2007-2010 (Regional & National) and Hall of Fame awardee, and awarded by D.A. RFU XI Most Outstanding IA in 2007-2010.

It is a midstream IA of about 30 kilometers away from the Libuganon Diversion Dam and part of Division II of Libuganon RIS. BASIA is 62 kilometers north of Davao City and 18 kilometers north of NIA-Davao del Norte IMO, Sto. Nino, Carmen, Davao del Norte. It covers a service area of 154.68 hectares benefiting 126 farmer-members.

In 2002, Edgar Cocoy, BASIA President spearheaded the strengthening of Farmers Irrigators Group (FIG) to assist in the water delivery and equitable distribution of water. Its vision, mission and goals guide all activities. And the By-laws and IA policies are strictly adhered/ followed.

Being one of the outstanding IAs, BASIA and NIA are in Irrigation Management Transfer Contract (Model 2). Their operation and maintenance is similar with DITCIA. Its collection efficiency is 100%. BASIA is financially stable and of good standing.

The San Vicente Development Cooperative (SVDC), the economic arm of BASIA has 222 members, 77 are BASIA members and 145 non-BASIA members. The asset of SVDC is 30,351,308.79 and a net surplus of 86,064.36. It provides a rice loan at the rate of 22,000.00/hectare /cropping payable after harvest. They also have a Marketing Agreement with the National Food Authority. However, at times when the prevailing market price is high they sell it to traders. The warehouse was constructed out of their Cooperative Incentive Development Fund. Their cooperative received an award as Most Distinguished Post Harvest Facility Recipient in 2009 given by BPRE, Munoz, Nueva Ecija.

According to Mr. Cocoy, when there is a problem encountered, a meeting of the Board of Trustees is necessary to address the problem and immediately arrive at a solution. And most importantly, there should be teamwork to make things done. Edgar Cocoy is a born leader once you hear him share his experiences with IA leaders and farmer-beneficiaries. Other NIAs and IAs from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao visit BASIA to gain knowledge and learn from experiences of the association that strive to produce rice and become self-sufficient.

## PhilCCAP: Training on Climate Proofing and Retrofitting Irrigation Infrastructures

By: Environmental and Watershed Management Section (EWMS) PPD-Engineering Department

Philippines is widely known as one of the most vulnerable country to natural hazards including typhoons, floods, landslides, droughts, earthquakes and tsunamis. Adding to these challenges is a new risk that exacerbates the vulnerability of the Philippines - the global climate change. The projected trends in average temperatures, rainfall patterns, and sea levels are very alarming, given the large implications for water resources, agriculture, forestry, coastal areas, and human health. However, an important portion of the impacts of climate change in the Philippines will materialize through changes in climate variability and extreme weather events, which are projected to include more intense rainfall events (more floods and landslides), more hot spells, and stronger monsoon rainfall variability. In agriculture, higher temperatures eventually reduce yields of desirable crops while encouraging weed and pest proliferation. Changes in precipitation patterns increase the likelihood of short-run crop failures and long-run production declines.

In the event of climate change, Philippine Climate Change Adaptation Project (PhilCCAP) was introduced to develop and pilot-test adaptive strategies to promote agriculture development and natural resources management in the Philippines. This project seeks to increase farmers' capacity to cope with climate change through measures such as making irrigation and other agricultural infrastructure enhancing delivery and effectiveness of extension services for farm-level climate risk management, pilot-testing of a weather index-based crop insurance, and improving management of watersheds and protected areas. This is composed of different components spearheaded by different national government agencies.

NIA PhilCCAP Sub Component 2.1- Retrofitting Irrigation Infrastructures aims to strengthen the climate resilience of vulnerable irrigation infrastructures/systems developed under the Bank-supported PIDP (two pilot sites: Pinacanauan RIS and Jalaur RIS). The project will assess climate risks to the irrigation infrastructures being developed under the PIDP, which did not take account of climate risks in the original design and provide guidance on the redesign, retrofitting, or operational modification of irrigation infrastructures. The methodology developed for assessing the climate risks to irrigation infrastructures would also be applied to small impounding dams, farm to market roads and trading posts.

Being part of the activities under the NIA PhilCCAP Sub-Component 2.1 - Retrofitting Irrigation Infrastructures, the Training on Climate Proofing and Retrofitting Irrigation Infrastructures was conducted on November 14-20, 2013 at Tuguegarao City participated by NIA Central Office, NIA Region 2 and 6, counterpart agencies from Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), DA-RFU (Region 2 & 6), Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), PAGASA, representatives from the LGUs of Region 2 and 6 and Irrigators Associations from the two pilot sites.

The main objective of the training program is to impart the overall content of the supplemental guidelines and manual to NIA and other stakeholders responsible in undertaking project preparation, planning and design and operation of infrastructures vulnerable to climate change. The proposed Training on Design Manuals with Climate Change Approach aims to provide NIA Engineers and other stakeholders with a standard approach and methodology to the design of irrigation projects incorporating current PAGASA climate change data application.





# CHRISTMAS, The NIA Way

By: Lioneil Dela Cruz, PAIS - NIA C.O.



Administrator Maranan with NIAs and guests after the celebration of Thanksgiving Mass officiated by Rev. Fr. Freddie Sabado, SVD (7th from right).



Administrator Claro V. Maranan reminded NIAs to be prepared and live life to the fullest.



NIA's Santa Claus. Engr. Maranan distributed aguinaldos to kids and NIA Employees.

Dropping the accustomed week-long Christmas extravaganza, the National Irrigation Administration – Central Office celebrated the Christmas season in a simple yet meaningful gathering led by none other than Administrator Claro V. Maranan on December 20, 2013. The day started with a mass at the NIA Chapel followed by the delivery of the Administrator's Christmas message.

In Engr. Maranan's message, he paid tribute to our brothers and sisters that were victims of the calamities that hit the Visayas in the last few months. He also asked everybody to be very vigilant and watchful of the natural phenomena so that we would become well-prepared if other catastrophes arrive. Reading between the lines, the Administrator asked every NIA to live life to the fullest as we will never know what's going to happen in the days to come.

After the morning activity, NIAs returned to their respective offices to conduct separate simple gatherings to concretize the Christmas spirit of giving, sharing, and merriment. The simplicity and austerity of NIA's Holiday Season is in line with the government's call to tone-down celebrations in consideration of the catastrophic wrath of Super Typhoon Yolanda.

## MUSINGS ON THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTMAS

By: Lioneil Dela Cruz, PAIS - NIA C.O.

As a kid, my Christmases were always peppered with extravagance. As early as September, I bug my mother to take out the Christmas decors. I threw tantrums whenever my sisters or my brother would be asked to put the star atop the tree. "Bakit hindi ako?" I would ask Nanay, flinging my hands upward in an uncontrollable wail. I would talk to my father who had been working abroad to send me money for my new shoes and clothes. I would also ask him to send gifts. I cried when Nanay turned-off the radio that was playing my favorite Christmas carols. I jumped for joy when the Christmas lights were turned on. I stared at the twinkling lights until my eyes watered with glee and drowsiness. I bugged Nanay to send me to parties because I knew there would be tons of gifts to receive. It was the time to flaunt my newly unpacked shoes and clothes. In other words, my Christmases would be spoiled without all these. My Christmases would be nothing.

Years later, I found myself in the clutches of the world of employment – from freelancing to full-time jobs. My pockets thickened with my fruits of labor. "Masaya ang Pasko!" I always remind myself. Still, my childhood view of Christmas persisted

until, suddenly, I hit a wall called "the realities of adulthood."

I was exposed to an array of people as I trudged the paths of life and, as a Christmas-loving person, easily noticed how they celebrate the season. There were those who had to work during the holidays while their families huddle around in a kerosene lamp, enjoying a plate of pancit and a bag of stale pan de sal. There were also those who spend their noche buenas in the streets, wrapped in rags and sacks to keep the Christmas chill away. There were also those who, from fences or glass windows, watch others toast their chardonnays and nibble fancy hors d'oeuvres as the clock strikes twelve. And, there were also those who chose to spend Christmas in their unconscious, lying in bed, dreaming of lavish feasts and luxurious gifts, while in reality their stomachs mumble of hunger and they're merely covered with used tarps and greasy sacks. And, just recently, calamities hit the country like the devastating earthquake in Bohol and Cebu and the deadly typhoon that ravaged Samar and Leyte. Many were left homeless, forcing them to have Christmas amidst a sea of destruction and devastation. Most of us were left dumbfounded

by the catastrophic effect of nature's wrath.

I reflected. I softened. I enjoined myself to the world's collective sight, mind, and heart as they were diverted to the victims of such calamities and to those who consider Christmas as lust. The materialistic view of Christmas melted. I dropped the consumerist nature of the season. And I, in turn, was faced with a realization about the real essence of Christmas. There is too much divulgence in merriment and celebration paving way for insensitivity. Radios booming with carols condition minds with the commercial pre-requisites of Yule. Houses and buildings with twinkling lights tend to blind people towards materialism. Wreaths and trees wrap hearts rendering them immobile and cold. The superficialities of the occasion enslave minds.

Christmas, as I realized, should be viewed in a rather opposite perspective – grounded, sincere, considerate, and above all more 'human.' Heart, above everything, they say. And I couldn't agree more.



# NIA joins 2013 World Food Day Celebration

By: Rocielle Harlette E. Navarro, PAIS - NIA C.O.

Undeterred by continuous rain, NIA employees and other DA-attached bureaus and agencies joined in the celebration of the 2013 World Food Day (WFD) with the theme "Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition" October 14-16, 2013 at the DA Grounds and Liwasang Aurora, Quezon Memorial Circle.



Agriculture Secretary Proceso J. Alcala leads the event stressing out "hindi sapat na ang bawat mamamayan ay busog, dapat ay malusog."



NIA joins DA family during the opening of the WFD celebration at DA Grounds, Diliman, Quezon City



The highlight of the evening – FAO and DA led the lighting of the candles and the recitation of the pledge to protect healthy food systems.

# PROs Media Literacy Workshop

By: Pops Marie S. Dadea, PAIS - NIA C.O.



The future of public relations lies in smart and intelligent campaigns, which channel new mediums, enabling the message to be translated quickly, coherently and directly to the right audience. Thus, the NIA Public Relations Officers together with their public relations partner attended a six-day guided advanced photography, photojournalism and video production seminar-workshop held at Baras, Rizal.

The said activity aims to equip NIA PR personnel with the knowledge, skills and techniques on how to take and use photos, graphics, audio and video messages to improve communication between people and organization and effectively convey messages through a wide range of media to promote NIA's programs and projects.

Mr. Sandino Nartea, Mr. Gil Nartea and Mr. Erwin Pascual of Sandino Nartea Photography and Multimedia were the workshop instructors. The team proved to be effectual, competent and

(TOP PHOTO): NIA PR Team together with Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo, Region 4A Regional Manager Romeo M. Lopez, and PAIS Manager Pilipina P. Bermudez.

(RIGHT PHOTO): "Ginto" Ms. Vinille Montalla of Region 4A's winning entry to the Most Marangal Photo Contest.



helpful lot that guided the keen participants.

Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo went out of his way to personally greet the NIA PR group. He encouraged every participant to always be a sender of good and valuable news and to always promote the best image of the agency. He lauded the group most especially the minds that makes the agency's newsletters, digests, primers and other PR work for making a great contribution

for the betterment of our beloved NIA.

Also on hand to receive the participants was Acting Regional Manager Romeo M. Lopez of NIA 4-A.

For the culmination, each participant had an entry to the Most Marangal Photo contest. The said contest featured best photos taken, with emphasis on all the principles of photography learned.



# Central Office sports fest warms Christmas Chill

By: Rocielle Harlette E. Navarro, PAIS - NIA C.O.

Just when the holiday chill starts to creep in, NIA-EASP heats up the cool season when they organized the CO sports fest with Engineer Othello Razon as the overall tournament coordinator.

CO employees had three sports to watch out and cheer for—men's basketball, mixed volleyball, and badminton—all held at the NIA basketball court to be played all through the month of November.

The games opened on November 5, 2013 immediately followed by a men's basketball match between the Special Projects Group and Finance Department.

The activities were halted for two weeks when all

NIA employees were enjoined to repack rice to be donated to the Yolanda survivors in Region 8. The games resumed first week of December.

Seven teams clashed for the coveted title of men's basketball champion but only one emerged as the winner. Engineering slammed CARP-IC during their final game on December 9, making the department champion and CARP-IC as the first runner up. Last year's champions, the Administrative Department, came second runner up.

Although a force to be reckoned with, the Engineering Department failed to steal the mixed volleyball championship title from the Finance Department, last year's winner. Operations

department placed second runner up after Engineering's first.

With quick moves and good hand-body coordinating movements, the Engineering Department grabbed the badminton championship trophy from the Administrative and Finance Department, who came in first runner up. Operations Department once again placed second runner up.

The Central office Sports fest is usually held during the summer months but it was adjusted to November to pave the way for the grand preparations for the agency's 50th golden anniversary.



Players eagerly wait for the start of the sports competition.



Ceremonial toss with Administrator Claro V. Maranan and Senior Deputy Administrator Felix M. Razo to officially start the NIA In-house basketball tournament.



Administrator Maranan (left) and Senior Deputy Administrator Razo deliver inspiring messages to the players.





# Goodbye Tension, Hello Pension

By: Portia Sandoval Angulo, IRDO A, HRD , NIA C.O.



The young at heart smiling broadly together with their wacky speaker.

The Human Resources Division conducted a Pre-Retirement Seminar on October 25, 2013 for NIA personnel who are expected to retire in five years or less. The whole-day activity was attended by forty-eight (48) soon-to-retire employees. It was held at Classroom A, 3/F IEC Building, NIA Complex, EDSA, Diliman, Quezon City.

The seminar was purposefully veered on financial management due to the likelihood that most of the would-be retirees will rely on government pension and own savings for income upon retirement. Invited speakers came from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS),

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company and its subsidiaries, and the Colayco Foundation for Education, Inc. (CFE).

Representatives from the GSIS discussed their retirement plans and programs. The occasion provided the participants a chance to inquire relevant concerns that will affect their retirement benefit from the government. Other related matters were advised to be coursed through the liaison officer for appropriate resolution.

Metrobank, on the other hand, offered their different investment opportunities. The lecture of CFE Executive Director, Mr. Armand Q. Bengco,

about "Managing Personal Finances" was well-applauded by the participants. He assessed their readiness to retire from paid work with the consideration of combined amount of money they currently have plus their probable retirement pay versus their expected monthly expenses plus inflation rate.

Mr. Bengco promised to be back to give a one (1) hour pro bono lecture about investment to the same participants, provided that they will reach a minimum of thirty-five attendees. The date of the free lecture is yet to be determined.

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Find comfort and strength in the  
biblical promises on***

## Honesty

"Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need."

***1 Thessalonians 4:11-12***

"He who speaks truth tells what is right, but a false witness, deceit. There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment."

***Proverbs 12:17-19***

Reference: <http://www.intouch.org/You/GodsPromises.aspx>