

APEC SEMINAR – Sept 27, 2015 Ilo Ilo City

Title: Strengthening Public Private Partnership to Reduce Food Losses in the Supply Chain of Fishery and Livestock

The fishery sector particularly in the medium scale commercial fishing spearheaded by the Southern Philippines Deep Sea Fishing Association Inc. (SOPHIL), home ported in Zamboanga City through this representation sincerely expresses our gratitude to have been invited to share our contributions for strengthening Public Private Partnership to Reduce Food Losses in the Supply Chain of Fishery and Livestock.

SOPHIL is an association of medium scale commercial fishing engaged in the harvest of Sardine and other small pelagic species operating purse seine fishing vessels within the East Sulu Sea vicinities. Majority of the catches are supplied as raw materials for can processing in the finished product of which are distributed nationwide.

Looking ahead to sustain the fishing operations, the advocacy to conserve and protect the resources by adopting fish ban during heavy spawning period surfaced because of poor harvest when abundance is expected. The presence of fishes with bulging bellies with fish eggs during certain period of the year, prompted SOPHIL to seek the technical assistance of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) to conduct science based research and studies by taking samples at the landing sites.

Some of the fishing operators suspend operations starting every 2nd week of December until about March of the following year annually, although not yet fully aware of any science based research and studies. The science based research and studies somehow seemingly confirmed the presence of fishes with eggs that are about to spawn were abundant. Validated by other groups for similar science based research and studies including the academe resulted for the Philippine Government to act on this advocacy and passed a law that will prohibit the harvest of the Sardine species during spawning period starting year 2011 periodically starting every December 1, up to Mar 1, of the following year as originally proposed by SOPHIL.

The ban has then been practiced officially and as reflected in the periodic catch reports showed 10-15 per cent increase of harvest for the last three years and as of July this year (2015) majority of the fishing operators has declared as the most improved year in terms of harvest compared to the past three years.

Policing among the ranks is seriously considered during the fishing ban. To protect the juvenile from being harvested, the regulation for the fishing net mesh sizes are fully complied with. We take pride to inform this body that after a year of the fish ban in the East Sulu Sea, the Visayan sea operators were also encouraged to seriously practice an existing fish ban for several small pelagic species. After the 2nd year, the Davao Gulf fishing operators, also initiated to adopt the same practice. The Northern Palawan fish ban will soon be adopted as well possibly starting end of the year for the fish ban of round scad species.

With the support of the science based research and studies by the NFRDI and other institutes, these are significant contributions of the fishery industry to maintain food security, by proper management and for the sustainability of the resources. We believe that this practice has benefited the municipal fishers as well, the fisher folks and the general populace and our neighbors considering that the fishes are highly migratory in nature.

(this will be followed by the 7 min video related to the sardine conservation, proper management and for sustainability will be shown)