



**Department of Agriculture  
FIBER INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**PRESS RELEASE**

October 20, 2009

**Philippines hosts international confab on hard fibers**

The Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA) today hosts the three-day joint meeting of the Intergovernmental Group on Hard Fibers (IGHF) and the Intergovernmental Group on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibers from October 20 to 22 as part of the celebration of the International Year of Natural Fibers.

Under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the conference is aimed at fostering trade relations among fiber producing and consuming countries. It also serves as a venue for member countries to hold discussions and consultations on international policies that govern hard fiber production and trading.

“We are very delighted to host this year’s joint meeting” states FIDA Administrator Cecilia Gloria J. Soriano. “This event is very significant in the international hard fibers industry and to the Philippines, considering our country is one of the major players in this field. We hope that this gathering will further develop the industry and help strengthen the economies of its member nations.”

“We believe this meeting which brings together the producers and consumers of natural fibers can provide the opportunity to address critical such as complementation and not competition amongst member nations, proactive stand on environmental protection, and climate change and product development to enhance current markets,” Soriano said

Administrator Soriano also adds that with the country’s long history as a producer and exporter of abaca, which is internationally known as Manila hemp, it is only fitting that the Philippines play an active role in developing the industry that has once been among the pillars of the country’s economy..

Department of Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap will deliver the keynote address and FAO representative to the Philippines Kazuyuki Tsurumi will also speak before the convention.

To mark the celebration of the International Year of Natural Fibers, the IYNF commemorative stamps, will be launched by FIDA and will be personally presented by

Postmaster General Hector Villanueva. In celebration of the “International Year of Natural Fibers 2009”, the Philippines joins the world by paying tribute to the farmers and other rural folk involved in the production and exports of the fibers indigenous to the Philippines, abaca and pina.

The commemorative stamps from the DA through the FIDA and in partnership with the Philippine Postal Corporation honor the back-breaking toil, ingenuity and craftsmanship of over 1.5 million Filipinos working in the industry as farmers, strippers, classifiers, processors and entrepreneurs.

A fashion show featuring the collection of top Filipino designers using sinamay, a natural fabric derived from abaca, is also scheduled on evening of the second day of the conference at the SMX Convention Center. The show is under the direction of Joey Espino. # # # #

## **INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION SECTION**

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### **About the International Year of Natural Fibers 2009**

The idea of a United Nations International Year dedicated to natural fibers was endorsed by a resolution of FAO’s biennial conference which sought to focus international attention on the role that natural fibers play in contributing to food security and poverty alleviation. Among its primary objectives include raising awareness and stimulating demand for natural fibers. It also aims to encourage appropriate policy responses from governments to the problems faced by natural fiber industry; foster an effective international partnership; and promote the efficiency and sustainability of the natural fiber industry.

### **About FAO**

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy. FAO is also a source of knowledge and information, helping developing countries and countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fishery practices, and ensure good nutrition for all. Founded in 1945, FAO has focused special attention on developing rural areas, home to 70 percent of the world’s poor and hungry people. # # #