

Belmonte forms food security task force

The Philippine Star · 25 May 2020 · 8 · Janvic Mateo

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte has created a task force to strengthen the city's food security program amid the coronavirus pandemic.

With the uncertainties brought by the public health emergency, Belmonte said she formed the Food Security Task Force to boost the city's capability to produce food.

"We've seen the people struggle to put food on the table in the past months. Our idea is to strengthen our capability to produce our own food and meet the needs of every family as we move forward," she said.

The task force is mandated to formulate the city's food security plan, which involves the repurposing of suitable open spaces for urban farming, creating partnerships with agricultural provinces and the development of food zones for direct trade and processing of food. It is also tasked to promote urban agriculture, creation of agricultural inputs and animal production as well as work with legislative committees and other stakeholders to ensure long-term food security.

The city has partnered with the Department of Agriculture to promote urban farming, home gardening, community nurseries and urban aquaculture to boost food security.

The local government recently launched a program that provided farming starter kits to residents in the city.

Task force co-chairman Emmanuel Velasco said they are focusing on developing strategies to increase food production and help the local economy bounce back under the new normal in the postpandemic recovery period.

"The coronavirus crisis has been difficult for all of us. Food is a concern of everyone. So we must all work together, allow new ways of thinking and initiate processes that can be sustainable not only to survive this pandemic but to also to reboot the economy," Velasco said.

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