

## **Philippines works to increase rubber production**

MANILA, Philippines (Xinhua) – The government is to increase the country's rubber production amid the growing demand in the world market, a senior government official said today.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala said that the local rubber production is expected to grow by 3.7 percent in the next 10 years.

“We need to take advantage of the present opportunity in rubber and note that the Asia-Pacific is expected to continue to have the lion's share in the production,” he said.

The Philippines currently contributes a little over 1 percent of the world's rubber production. Its output comes mainly from small-farm of 3 to 10 hectares of land.

“Although we share very little for now, I am confident that we can become a major player soon because of our vast areas for production and adequate technical knowledge that our made available to our rubber planters,” Alcala said.

The Department of Agriculture is set to improve the quality of produce using new technology and upgrade dilapidated processing facilities and provide cooperatives access to financing, infrastructure, and other support services, he said.

At present, the government's national program on rubber caters to the needs of the small holders to enable them to meet the challenges in production, post-production and marketing, Alcala said.

Current interventions have increased yield and intensified production of quality planting materials as well as empower producers to supply quality raw processed products, he added.