MEDIA RELEASE

As El Niño looms, DOST urges public to look for science solutions offered at 2026 NSTW

Department of Science and Technology Secretary Renato U. Solidum Jr. (leftmost) discusses how science, technology, and innovation can help address the current crisis of El Niño during the 2026 National Science and Technology Week media kickoff with Undersecretary for Regional Operations Engr. Sancho A. Mabborang (middle) and DOST-XII Director Engr. Sammy P. Malawan (rightmost) at SMX Convention Center, Davao City, Oct. 16.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) announces that this year's National Science, Technology, and Innovation Week (NSTW) underscores solutions to pressing crises currently faced by the Philippines, particularly the ongoing "very strong" El Niño phenomenon.

Anchored on the theme "Science, Technology, and Digital Innovation: Driving Food Security, Sustainable Energy, and National Resilience," DOST Secretary Renato U. Solidum Jr. emphasized that the 2026 NSTW in General Santos City is timely in addressing this national climate challenge.

“We are facing the challenge and effects of the ongoing very strong El Niño. And I hope that many of our kababayan, especially the local government, would be able to attend, listen, and explore the solutions relevant to the times,” the secretary said during the 2026 NSTW media kickoff at the SMX Convention Center in Davao City on October 16.

This September, the DOST-Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (DOST-PAGASA) advised that El Niño intensified from a ‘strong’ to ‘very strong’ phenomenon and is projected to last through mid-2027.

In light of this, Solidum strongly urged government agencies and local government units (LGUs) to immediately implement strategies through scientific innovations to cushion its impact, especially on food security, energy production, and public health.

Among these are precision and climate-smart technologies, made by the DOST and various Filipino innovators, which will be showcased in the upcoming edition of NSTW and are expected to help aid overall national climate resilience.

Of these, the DOST put the project Smart Approaches to Reinvigorate Agriculture as an Industry (SARAI) at the forefront to help mitigate agricultural drought and safeguard food security amid this climate phenomenon.

SARAI is a DOST initiative that provides site-specific, science-based crop advisories using high-tech camera drones, artificial intelligence (AI), and mobile software to enhance crop disease and field health detection.

“‘Yung paggamit ng AI at mga bagong apps (through SARAI) to have a precise decision, makatutulong doon sa [ating agricultural] productivity,” Engr. Sammy P. Malawan—DOST-12, the host region director—affirmed.

The NSTW will also showcase clean transport alternatives in response to energy strain and air quality amid extreme dry periods, such as converted e-trikes, hybrid electric train (HET), e-tranvia, and other electric vehicles.

“Ang tina-target natin para sa e-vehicles ay ma-deploy natin ito this year. Ito ‘yung mga solutions sa energy crisis ngayon at saka solves the problem ng pollution sa air. Napakalaki ng maitutulong,” the director added.

Studies show that prolonged dry spells significantly worsen air pollution; hence, e-vehicles intervene to lessen the heavy buildup of harmful particulate matter and gases through the release of far less waste heat.

Beyond agriculture and sustainable energy, the NSTW is also set to feature the National Grassroots Innovation and Circular Economy (GICE) Exposition, showcasing innovations directly from within local communities who experience the realities of climate and environmental challenges.

“They [SOCCSKSARGEN communities] themselves have developed, through centuries or decades, these technologies and tools that they have used to combat emergencies and disasters and other calamities in their area,” DOST-Davao Regional Director Anthony C. Sales said.

The DOST partnered with the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) to link Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and Climate Change Adaptation (DRRM-CCA) with economic development while ensuring that climate resilience reaches grassroots level across the region.

“We hope to showcase their interventions that can help them survive hazards and then to continue their development. Kaya ang focus natin really is sustainable development,” Solidum said.

About NSTW

The National Science, Technology, and Innovation Week (NSTW) is an annual celebration organized by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) that highlights the country’s scientific and technological achievements, research and development projects, and innovative solutions. The event brings together researchers, innovators, industries, government agencies, academe, and communities to showcase how science, technology, and innovation (STI) contribute to inclusive, sustainable, and resilient national development. The NSTW serves as a platform for promoting homegrown technologies, strengthening collaboration among STI stakeholders, and bringing science-based solutions closer to Filipinos. This year’s NSTW will be held on November 25–29 in General Santos City, South Cotabato. For more information, visit www.nstw.dost.gov.ph or the NSTW Facebook page. ***(By Karl Jerome A. del Mundo, DOST-STII and photos by Patrick James Lee C. Alfonso, DOST-STII)***