

Abstract

Since its declaration as a city on June 20 1947, Dagupan has come a long way and proved its worth as a city. It has survived the disastrous earthquake that struck in 1990 which ravaged its economy, structures and its ecological balance. But through its people's sheer hard work, team-spirit and the will to survive, the city continues to be a livable, competitive, bankable, vibrant and environmentally sustainable community that improves the quality of life.



Dagupan City's Bangus Festival on 2003. A strong community spirit moved Dagupan residents to join in a collective effort to land in the Guinness World Record for the longest outdoor barbecue grill beating Lima, Peru.

With decades of endured challenges, rich history and fast-paced development, the city continues to flourish with developments contributing to its evolution as the first-class city that it is today. With the efforts of the City Government in marketing its prime product through various marketing strategies, the city is now proud to be known as the Bangus (milkfish) Capital of the World. This trademark of the City is further advanced globally by obtaining the Guinness World Record for longest bangus grill in 2003, which measured 1,007.56 m (3,305.64 ft).

Aside from this impressive world title, Dagupan has always been proud of its intrinsic all-around capabilities to become the center of trade, education, banking and community development in the Ilocos Region. Furthermore, the city was identified in 2008 as one of the country's most competitive small-sized cities outside Metro Manila in a survey by Asian Institute

of Management (AIM) Policy Center. Still in 2009, the city secured the same title in the Philippine Cities Competitiveness Ranking Project (PCCRP).

In August 2009, the Republic of the Philippines National Disaster Coordinating Council awarded the Dagupan CDRRMC the "National Gawad Kalasag Award" for disaster preparedness¹. Dagupan was finally recognized as a model city for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the country and the region, with the Philippine national government facilitating replication courses and regular exchanges of city officials to determine how to apply the successes of the Dagupan City model to other locations.

¹ Urban Governance and Community Resilience Guides, *Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction*, pages 31-36 (ADPC 2010) USAID.



Mayor Benjamin S. Lim, Presidential daughter Luli Arroyo and City Vice Mayor Alvin Fernandez triumphantly applaud Dagupan's world record feat during the February 2004 unveiling ceremony of the Guinness award.

In 2010, Dagupan City was also cited in the *Urban Governance and Community Resilience Guides* as one of the most successful demonstrations of community resilience to flood and tropical cyclone disasters, out of eight (8) cities that participated in the Program for Hydro-Meteorological Mitigation for Secondary Cities in Asia (PROMISE)².

One of the recent awards that the City has received is the Best Local Government Award for the City Category of the Likas Yaman 2011 (Natural Treasures) Award given by the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources. Dagupan was also given special citation by the same award-giving body for its successful implementation of the Dawel-Watak River Cruise Project as the eco-tourism thrust of the river clean-up and rehabilitation made by the City Government.

The people of Dagupan City is working together to achieve its vision which is:

"We envision Dagupan City as the premiere center of the north for education, information technology, health, commerce and trade, and aquaculture, with God loving, well-informed, healthy, self-reliant, empowered and vigilant citizenry who live in a balanced, planned, attractive and safe environment and a globally-competitive, diversified and environment-friendly economy under a firm, decent and progressive leadership."



Central Business District of Dagupan City.

The people of Dagupan City have adopted the working slogan of the City Mayor, which is: **"Our city, our shared responsibility."** Our city believes in the Principle of Reciprocity that with social rights comes social responsibility. The City Mayor was right in challenging and assuring the Dagupeños in his

² Urban Governance and Community Resilience Guides, *Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction*, pages 31-36 (ADPC 2010) USAID.

inaugural speech on June 2010, saying, “pledge for us to work together, pledge for us to work harder, to be selfless and to sacrifice, to put God and City above all else, and I assure you **the best is yet to come.**”