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**Economy**

## Cebu raw material suppliers, exporters to address concerns

**CEBU CITY -- Exporters based in Cebu will meet with raw material suppliers and manufacturers this week to explore opportunities in materials development.**

The Materials Research and Development Conference, one of two events organized by concerned government agencies and business support organizations for tomorrow, is an offshoot of a government project to develop an inter-regional value chain to support the furniture, fashion accessories, as well as gift, toys and houseware sectors.

These three export sectors have identified the lack of supply of raw materials as a common concern. The development of an inter-regional value chain is meant to address the issue.

The other event is the Exporters' Conference, which seeks to prepare the export industry for the projected upswing in the global market, through innovation in technology, materials, and marketing strategies.

The Exporters' Conference, which will carry the theme, "SME Competitiveness through Innovation," will be part of the celebration of the Exporters' Week. It will be held prior to the Materials R&D Conference.

Both events are organized by the German Technical Cooperation-Small and Medium Enterprise Development for Sustainable Employment Program (GTZ-SMEDSEP), Department of Science and Technology (DoST) 7, Department of Trade and Industry-Cebu Province and Philexport-Cebu.

In a press statement, the Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation, Inc. said the Materials R&D Conference aims to help exporters link up with raw material suppliers, maximize their design capabilities and improve other aspects of competitiveness.

The activity will also provide manufacturers-exporters and suppliers the opportunity to see the Materials Library, the first of its kind in the country that provides a venue for designers and product developers to study traditional and new materials.

The library is the result of collaboration of the Furniture Foundation, the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and DoST 7.

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