

PRESS RELEASE

**DepEd targets 2.5M kindergarten children in S.Y. 2011-2012**

Pushing for universal kindergarten in all public schools, the Department of Education goes full throttle to reach more than half a million school-aged children who were left unserved in May 2010.

“This new year, we are renewing our commitment to reach all children of school age as part of our intensified efforts towards achieving the Education For All (EFA) commitment,” said Education Secretary Armin Luistro.

With the increased 2011 DepEd allocation, part of the thrust of the department is to implement the universal public kindergarten program for 5-year olds to give new entrants to basic education the proper preparation on the rigors of schooling. In line with this, the department is set to undertake a ground mapping of all school-aged children by way of pre-registration all over the country starting January 15.

“The pre-registration will not only allow us to determine the interventions needed to ensure that the EFA commitment is within the department’s reach, but it will also enable us to have a wider reach of children who are deprived of basic education,” added Luistro.

From the 1,914,137 who were reached in 2010 in both public and private schools, DepEd targets to raise the number of preschool children it will serve to almost 2.5M or a 21 percent increase in 2011.

Among the steps involved to achieve its target increase, the department intends to add more preschool teachers. Currently, there are 29,615 preschool teachers in the country. From that number, only 2,299 teachers hold permanent items and the rest are on contract of service status. In 2011, DepEd targets to open more than 700 permanent teaching positions and accommodate more than 10,000 teachers through contract of service.

DepEd has a total of 29,615 pre-school classrooms to date. In anticipation of an increase in population, the department appeals to donors and other education stakeholders to provide financial support in the construction of more classrooms for kindergarten.

“A lot of challenging tasks are ahead of us. We should address all aspects of the essential learning inputs so we can catch up. We know that we cannot hurdle all these alone. We need everyone’s support, specifically the private sector and other community stakeholders, to upgrade the quality of the public school system in our country,” noted Luistro.

**END**

PRESS RELEASE