

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 19, 2007

UN cites DepEd on campaign against poverty

The Department of Education (DepEd) received a commendation from the United Nations for helping set a new Guinness World Record of 43,716,440 for the most number of people ever to mobilize against poverty in a 24-hour period.

Salil Shetty, director of the United Nations Millennium Campaign and Nileema Noble, UN resident coordinator in the Philippines lauded the Department for participating in the event to end poverty and inequality and living up to the promise of achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG), as part of a global movement of likeminded citizens.

"We are one with the UN in the effort of alleviating poverty, in particular in achieving universal primary education," Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus said.

Of the 7.1 million Filipinos who supported the movement, 2.8 million or 39.44 percent was mobilized by the DepEd. The number of Filipinos who stood up for the campaign accounted for 16 percent of the 43.7 million people who participated from 127 countries around the world.

The Philippines ranked second in Asia and the Pacific in the Guinness World Record in the Stand Up and Speak Out Movement to fight poverty and achieve the MDG set by the UN.

On behalf of the UN team in the Philippines, Noble expressed appreciation for the tremendous show of support and commitment to the UN October Month celebration which was highlighted by the 2007 Stand Up, Speak Out campaign on October 17.

"Filipinos from all walks of life came together to make their voices heard and urged leaders to act and fight poverty to in order to keep their promise of meeting the MDG by 2015," Noble said in a statement.

The MDG has eight goals: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.

These goals form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

In a recent mid-term MDG progress report, the Philippines noted significant gains in meeting the MDG challenge provided that measures to overcome poverty are sustained. The same report said that in order to address hunger and nutrition, cohort survival rate, maternal mortality and access to reproductive health services there is a need for more resources and an accelerated implementation of interventions both at the national and local levels.

END