

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Lapus urges SEA youth to pursue 'multiple pathways' to education

Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Jesli Lapus recently challenged youth delegates from Southeast Asia to support the region's alternative learning programs such as technical-vocational education. He said this would strengthen the region's commitment to Education for All (EFA), as prescribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The DepEd Chief told some 170 delegates of the 11th International Conference on "Transitions for Youth Success: Creating Pathways for Work and Life" that "with 57 out of 100 students dropping out of school, educational programs can no longer be delivered on a business-as-usual strategy. The Philippine Department of Education has adopted a more aggressive stance by offering alternative delivery programs and promoting alternative learning systems for all kinds of learners."

He also stressed that with the challenges of providing education for all in the region, "the EFA goal should not be seen as 'schooling-for-all'. Instead, learning opportunities outside school should be made available to both in- and out-of-school youth learners who are interested to get an education."

In response to the global call for more alternative learning strategies and solutions to address the drop-out rate in schools, DepEd is annually administering the National Career Assessment Exam (NCAE) that measures not only a learner's academic ability, but also technical-vocational and entrepreneurial aptitude.

Through NCAE, students realize that college is not the only option after secondary school. "There is a need to change the prevailing mindset – especially in Filipino families – where college diplomas are touted as the sole way to success," said Lapus.

The conference was held at the SEAMEO-INNOTECH from November 25-27, 2008. It aimed to provide the Southeast Asian youth with a broad range of educational and learning pathways. It also provided a forum for discussion on existing government policies that promote non-formal learning alternatives.

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