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## Spanish Gov't turns-over school buildings to DepEd

Education Secretary Jesli Lopus and Spanish Ambassador Luis Arias led the turn-over ceremonies of school buildings constructed under the Improvement of the Quality of Primary Education (IQPE) Project of the Government of Spain in Nabua, Camarines Sur.

Lopus said the new structures, which can withstand severe weather condition, are part of the bilateral agreement, which aims to contribute to the improvement of access to quality education in the Bicol region and CARAGA.

"This type of building is what we especially need here given the situation of Bicol, which is prone to strong typhoons," Lopus added. "These buildings can be both a learning center and a place of refuge in times of calamities."

Lopus emphasized that the school buildings were constructed using the Principal-Led School Building Program, thus highlighting DepEd's commitment to School-Based Management (SBM), which is to empower school heads in decision-making and in efficiently managing schools.

The support of the Spanish government coursed through the Agencia Espanola de Cooperacion Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID). It also includes improvement of reading proficiency of learners as well as school planning and operational efficiency.

Specifically, selected schools and divisions in Bicol and Caraga are set to receive beginning reading materials, reading standards and assessment tools, SBM grants worth PhP50,000 and training programs on reading proficiency under the Every Child a Reader Program and School Improvement Plan preparation, implementation and monitoring.

AECID has earmarked a total of 2.7 million euros or P179 million for the three-phase project which is set to tentatively terminate in 2010.

The new classrooms, together with the learning tools, improved teaching strategies and strengthened management capabilities, are expected to jumpstart the attainment of quality education for Filipino school children.

"With assistance from our Spanish friends, we hope to produce independent learners who are ready for the rigors of high school, and eventually, for real life," Lopus stressed.

The GOS-IQPE project constructed three school buildings in Albay, one in Sorsogon, and one in Camarines Sur at Malawag Elementary School in Nabua, the venue of the event.

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