

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **PGMA to DepEd: No frill-grad rites are timely**

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo directed Education Secretary Jesli Lapus to intensify efforts in urging schools to observe simple and austere graduation ceremonies.

“Graduation rites should be lean on cost but long on the imparting of valuable messages,” she stressed. “These events can be memorable, exciting and animated without the baggage of extra cost and excessive spending,” she noted.

She reminded schools at all levels should desist from the practice of having lavish and excessive graduation ceremonies which are paid by collections from students.

In a statement, she said, “Graduation rites should not be exercises in splurging and display of pomp and pageantry but should be Spartan affairs that exhort civic duties, sense of community and personal responsibilities.”

Lapus affirmed, “The true value of your education is in knowing that you now have a bigger role to play in society and in our quest for a better nation for all Filipinos.”

“Graduation is that milestone of an accomplishment. And such success demands our students to accept more responsibilities,” he added.

In a memorandum issued by Malacañang, the President reminded school administrators of their duty to curb excess in very form and guise, especially with the cost being borne by others.

According to the President, “Curbing excess also makes economic sense. Money saved from tempering excess in graduation rites can be used to fund the cost of an elementary student going to high school, a secondary student going to college and a college graduate moving to graduate school.”

Earlier, DepEd issued DepEd Order No.15, s. 2009, which specified its policy on conduct and collection of fees for the graduation rites. It reiterated that public schools must not collect any graduation fees or any kind of contribution for graduation rites.

Teachers and school officials should not engage in the collection of contributions. PTA/PTCAs, however, may solicit voluntary contributions from their members for graduation ceremonies.

DepEd also reminded schools not to require extravagant special attire or extraordinary venue for the ceremonies. Contributions for the annual yearbook must be on a voluntary basis.

With theme, “My Education: My Contribution to the Future (Edukasyon ko, Handog ko sa Kinabukasan),” graduation ceremonies are slated between March 28-April 3, 2009.

DepEd records show that some 1.57 million high school students and 1.97 million elementary pupils will graduate this year.

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**PRESS RELEASE**