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APRIL 16, 2009

## Philippines to host SEAMEO and ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting

The Philippines will host of the 45<sup>th</sup> Conference of the South East Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Council and of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers of Education (ASEM) early next year in Cebu City.

This came at the heels of the unanimous election of DepEd Secretary Jesli A. Lapus as Incoming President of both SEAMEO Council and ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting early this month at the annual conference of both bodies in Phuket, Thailand.

The annual SEAMEO Council Conference is the largest gathering of education leaders in the Asia-Pacific region. It is attended by the Ministers of Education and senior officials of Member Countries, representatives of Associate Member Countries, Affiliate Members, SEAMEO Centre Directors, Secretariat, and officials and observers from donor governments and international organizations.

“We look forward to their visit to the country,” Lapus said.

Lapus pointed out that the decision to hold the conference in the Philippines is a clear vote of confidence on the reforms and innovations introduced by the Department of Education. “Their forthcoming visit to the country shows that we have best practices to share with the international community.

Lapus added: “Our neighbors in the region have taken notice of the strides we have made in improving access to and quality of basic education in the last three years.”

The Philippines is working closely with SEAMEO and its fifteen regional centers across the region, as well as through the cooperation developed under the ASEAN framework.

The Philippines has been an active member of SEAMEO since its foundation in 1965 and is host to three of the organization’s most respected regional centers, SEAMEO INNOTECH in Quezon City, SEAMEO SEARCA in Laguna, and SEAMEO TROPMED in Manila. It is a chartered international organization whose purpose is to promote cooperation in education, science and culture in the Southeast Asian region.

His election to head SEAMEO is not Lapus’ first leadership role in the international arena. Lapus is Executive Board Member of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) based in Paris, France. He was also elected vice president of the 34th UNESCO General Conference, which gave the country a chance to press forward issues facing Philippine public education to the international agenda. **END**

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