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UNESCO approves Lifelong Learning Center for RP

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its 182nd Executive Board meeting moved for the approval the Center for Lifelong Learning for Sustainable Development to be established in the Philippines. This was reported by the Philippine delegation headed by Secretary of Education Jesli A. Lapus, Ambassadors Rora Navarro-Tolentino and Preciosa Soliven.

This is the culmination of an organized effort from 2005 for the country to take the lead in the development of formal, non-formal and informal education using conventional, innovative, technological and borderless learning systems.

Secretary of Education Jesli A. Lapus, incoming President of the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), who sits in the Executive Board, said that the center is a most important addition to the three existing regional centers in the country – Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH), Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) and Tropical Medicine and Public Health Network (TROPMED).

He said, “The immediate impact of the new center is employment and infrastructure, access to training and resources to build institutions, and increase in the country’s profile and capacity in basic education research”.

At the concluding session, Lapus gave the final remarks of thanks and expression of solidarity before the international education community. The fifteen (15) island states of the Pacific and a number of African countries already expressed interest to be associated with the center. Partnerships will be made with universities, non-governmental entities and the private sector to act as service providers.

UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura fully supported the project which quickly progressed after a favorable feasibility study in March 2008 and support from all Southeast Asian countries. The center will re-orient existing education programs towards sustainable development including environmental protection.

Secretary Lapus said, “The center will serve as the focal point to emphasize the need to learn everyday for the rest of our lives. We need the tools and the skills to survive, to improve our lives and to stay competitive.” He noted that the active participation of the Philippines through strategic interventions has placed the country back in the global map of innovative educational policies.

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