

PRESS RELEASE**Educ leaders, stakeholders convene for Policy Forum on Lifelong Learning**

BY: L-12529 TIME: 5:23

QUEZON CITY, July 13, 2018 – The Department of Education (DepEd), University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU), and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education (SEAMEO) convened key education leaders, policymakers, and other stakeholders for the High Level Policy Forum on Lifelong Learning on June 8 at the SEAMEO Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH) in Diliman, Quezon City.

The policy forum, which carried the theme, "From Agenda to Action: 1st Philippine Forum on Lifelong Learning," aimed to inform participants on the Sustainable Development Goal 4-Education 2030 Framework for Action and the lifelong learning approach to education, and equip them with knowledge on current policies, plans and strategies for lifelong learning, as well as their provision in the specific context of the country and of the region.

It also served as a platform to discuss how policies, plans and strategies for lifelong learning could be developed or strengthened in the country, drawing on examples of effective and relevant policies and practices at national and regional level and a gap analysis. This event also targeted to strengthen partnerships and networks among professionals and organizations involved in lifelong learning, and provide recommendations on how to develop/strengthen lifelong learning policies, plans and strategies.

Present at the event were Undersecretaries Nepomuceno Malaluan, Lorna Dino, and Jesus Mateo, DepEd-International Cooperation Office (ICO) Director Margarita Ballesteros, and other officials and personnel.

Lifelong learning programs

In his speech, Mateo reported the current lifelong learning programs of DepEd including the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) for learners who have difficulty in coping with the requirements of formal education, or who want to upgrade or enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies in order to improve their social, political, and economic wellbeing. Under this are the Alternative Learning System (ALS) and Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs).

"Both are for learners who were not able to complete basic education, but ALS is for those youth beyond the school age, while ADMs are for school-age children," he explained.

Mateo also highlighted the inclusion programs that promote access to culture-sensitive and special educational needs of learners. These are the Indigenous Peoples' Education (IPEd), Special Education (SPED) Program, and Madrasah Education Program (MEP).

He further mentioned that DepEd provides training and development programs for the continuing professional development of teaching and non-teaching personnel through the Human Resource Development Program, and the Learning Action Cells which develop and support successful teachers by nurturing their knowledge,

attitudes, and competencies in terms of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in their work station.

Malaluan likewise shared the Department's new initiatives to complement its other inclusion programs, through the leadership of Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones, the ALS Education and Skills Training (ALS-EST) which is soon to roll out.

"The ALS Education and Skills Training will integrate skills training opportunities in our traditional basic education interventions," the Undersecretary said.

Collective responsibility

Malaluan also noted that partnership with other education stakeholders is a key element to the successful implementation of the Department's various programs and projects that inculcate lifelong learning skills among learners: "This is a collective challenge and effort of the Department, organizations, private industry, international community, as well as many other relevant stakeholders in our respective communities."

Dino seconded the remark in her keynote speech: "We, in DepEd, cannot do this alone. Together, we can do so much."

Representatives and speakers from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM), Knowledge Channel, E-Net Philippines, and Education for Life Foundation, among others, were also present. The forum was also conducted in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Germany and UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education-Bangkok.

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