

**Talking Points
For
Gloria D. Steele, USAID Mission Director
For the
Mindanao Educators Congress
March 28, 2011**

Greetings to Secretary Luistro, other DepEd officials, and Mindanao's educators on this 6th Congress. Our greetings too to the local officials present, including Governor Arthur Pingoy (South Cotabato) and Mayor Peter Miguel (Koronadal City).

USAID wishes you a successful Congress along your good theme of *Winning the Future for the Mindanao Learners*.

Message:

The purpose of this gathering is to share ideas for ensuring positive learning outcomes for all children, particularly the underserved and marginalized. As we look at problems, we seek results--to develop effective strategies and interventions on improving learning for children. Most countries including the Philippines have made great progress in getting children in school. However, improvement is needed in ensuring that those who stay in the school will receive quality of the education.

A child in school, without a motivated, qualified teacher and learning materials, has very little chance of learning. So our emphasis has to be on giving schools, school administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders, local government through the local school board, and the children themselves the tools to ensure that children learn

- USAID is one of the global leaders in international educational programming, with active programs that support basic education in 56 countries (including the Philippines); and an additional 67 higher education partnerships in many other countries.

- USAID's approach is two-fold: a) to build strategic alliances; and b) to apply the latest, most innovative tools to solve problems in education that can be supported by evidence.
- In the Philippines, USAID's investments in education in the past 6 years, have been guided by this strategy—strengthen the capacity of community and local government units in education governance, training teachers and provision of learning materials, and training out of school youths.
- This investment has also been largely focused on Mindanao, particularly the poorest and most conflict-affected communities in the ARMM, and in parts of Regions 9 and 12. We have been re-tooling about 25,000 Mindanao teachers through training and provision of learning materials, focused on the core subjects of math and science, and on English, aligned with the Philippine Government's priorities.
- We have also provided learning and livelihood opportunities for more than 100,000 out-of-school youth, as high dropout is an endemic problem in these poor and conflict-affected communities. And we've also been building alliances and strengthening the capacity of local governments, PTAs, civil society groups, private business groups and the like to help improve learning outcomes in their own schools and communities.
- USAID has just reviewed, refined and adopted its global education strategy, and the main goals are three-fold:
 - Goal 1: Improve reading skills for 100 million children globally by 2015;
 - Goal 2: Improved ability of tertiary and workforce development programs to generate workforce skills relevant to a country's development goals; and
 - Goal 3: Increased equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments, with a target of 15 million learners by 2015

In closing, as USAID celebrates its 50th year presence in the country, USAID looks forward to continue the partnership with the Philippines--

particularly the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, and the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) -- in achieving your education goals. USAID will continue to forge partnerships with the Philippine government and work together to sustain and consolidate our gains to achieve our common development objectives. We look forward to the recommendations of this Congress on how we can move forward in this common objective.

Thank you for inviting USAID to be a part of this Congress. We wish you success in your deliberations.