



## P R E S S   R E L A S E

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### **Philippine Education Secretary Promotes Alternative Learning System, Schools as Zone of Peace at New York Forum**

**New York 28 June 2017** – The Philippine Consulate General organized a Town Hall with Philippine Education Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones as Guest of Honor on 27 June 2017 at the Philippine Center.

In his opening remarks, Deputy Consul General Felipe Cariño said that with 27.7 million learners during the recent Philippine school opening, the Department of Education has been successfully implementing the country's transition to the K to 12 program which aims to align our system with international standards, ensuring wider skills recognition for products of the Philippine education system

Secretary Briones gave a brief presentation on the cornerstone of President Duterte's education agenda; namely, addressing the drug menace in schools, enhancing gender awareness and promoting reproductive health, climate change mitigation and other related issues, and institutionalization of the Alternative Learning Systems (ALS), a flagship project of the administration. On the drug issue, Secretary Briones said that the drug menace affects both educators and learners.

Secretary Briones likewise discussed the adverse effects of climate change on the education system. She shared that in Isabela, a typhoon ravaged the province that resulted in the destruction of multi-million peso school laboratories and facilities. Even as the DepEd's budget has increased, a significant percentage of the budget is allotted to repair and renovation of buildings and mitigating the effects of natural calamities. She added that DepEd is keen on implementing the ALS which is focused on addressing the school dropout rate by finding ways to keep learners enrolled through alternative learning solutions and creative teaching methods.

Also in attendance as panel members were Education Undersecretary Victoria Catibog and Assistant Secretary Nepomuceno Malaluan. The forum was moderated by Deputy Consul General Felipe Cariño.

Filipino community members composed of educators, school administrators, and members of the academe including the first Filipino President of St. Johns University, Dr. Conrado "Bobby" Gempesaw, members of the FilAm Press Club of New York and Silliman University Alumni Association who supported their alumna, Secretary Briones, participated in the event. Finally, the DepEd is keen on implementing the ALS which is focused on addressing the school dropout rate by finding ways to keep learners enrolled through alternative learning solutions and creative teaching methods, Secretary Briones added.

A Q&A followed the presentation where Secretary Briones, Undersecretary Catibog and Assistant Secretary Malaluan addressed questions that included meeting targets for building classrooms, the state of K to 12 implementation, the low enrolment in Arts and Sports tracks

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in schools, the increase in demand for teachers in the US in the coming years, and the state of Special Education in the Philippines.

Secretary Briones and her delegation are in New York to attend meetings on High-Level Action Event on Education at the United Nations.- **END**



(r-l seated) Assistant Secretary Nepomuceno Malaluan, DepEd Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones, Deputy Consul General Felipe F. Cariño, Undersecretary Victoria Catibog, and Consul Arman Talbo (5<sup>th</sup> from left, 2<sup>nd</sup> row) join community members for a photo opportunity after the forum that featured updates on the Philippines' Department of Education by DepEd officials.



Secretary Briones underscored that while government had increased wages and benefits of public school teachers, it is focused on upgrading skills and ensuring a safe environment free from the drug menace for teachers and learners alike.



Deputy Consul General Felipe Cariño III (first from left) and Secretary Briones (3<sup>rd</sup> from left, seated) join members of the Association of Fil-Am Teachers of America led by Dr. Roxanne Cajigas (4<sup>th</sup> from left)

(Photos courtesy of Mr. Eric Silao)