



Good News

Updates from Government Agencies

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Building the Nation

BARELY a year into the Aquino administration, gains can already be seen in key sectors such as social welfare, infrastructure development, education, and the peace process.

In this issue of the Good News, we see the reforms of this government already having positive results in the delivery of quality infrastructure throughout the country. In Eastern

EDITORIAL

Metro Manila, for instance, the roadwork improvements are well ahead of schedule in the completion

of a project that is seen to minimize traffic congestion, boost travel efficiency, and even reduce flooding in downstream areas.

In the Visayas, six provinces that comprise Region VI, have completed projects amounting to P2 billion for the construction of roads, bridges, and improvements in their transportation networks.

Long considered a government agency of excess and waste, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) has shown a remarkable commitment in ensuring every peso spent counts.

Strategic partnerships to enhance the Philippine public school sector have also been established. From nourishing students so they can improve school performance to laying the foundations of inclusive education regardless of religion, ethnic group, or disability, the Department of Education is well on its way to realizing its goal of Education for All.

Meanwhile, after a quarter century of armed hostilities in Northern Luzon, the Cordillera People's Liberation Army has finally signed a closure agreement with the government. After only nine months of dialogue, the erstwhile rebel group has finally laid down their arms and is now dedicated to the development of their ancestral lands.

These achievements show the Aquino administration's commitment to building the nation and laying strong foundations for future generations of Filipinos.

Cordillera People's Liberation Army signs closure pact with government

Shifts from armed group to socio-economic organization

AFTER nine months of dialogue, the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA) finally signed this week a closure pact with the Government of the Philippines ending almost a quarter century of hostilities in Northern Luzon, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process reported.

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President Benigno S. Aquino III and Social Welfare and Development Secretary Corazon Juliano-Soliman look on as Mrs. Sharon Hassan Dabbang from Barangay Bangkal, Patikul, Sulu, the two millionth beneficiary of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, signs the Oath of Commitment.

Two-millionth beneficiary of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) registered

THE Aquino administration's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) registered its two-millionth beneficiary who signed an Oath of Commitment in ceremonies held at Malacañan Palace this week.

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14 new bridges completed in Western Visayas

P2-B worth of infrastructure projects completed in Panay Island, Guimaras, and Negros Occidental

FOURTEEN bridge projects in parts of Panay Island and Negros Occidental have already been completed by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), providing a new dimension of development by reinvigorating isolated communities and opening new avenues of economic opportunities.

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14 new bridges...(continued)

In the Province of Antique, the construction of nine single span reinforced concrete deck girder bridges along Aniniy-Tobias Fornier-Hamtic Road were completed:

1. 12.90 meter Igdalaguit Bridge costing P15.863 million;
2. 15.90 meter Bayo Bridge costing P24.969 million;
3. 12.80 meter Butuan Bridge costing P22.846 million;
4. 15.90 meter Siraan Bridge costing P28.908 million;
5. 18.90 meter Dapog Bridge costing P21.694 million;
6. 25.70 meter Panabigan Bridge costing P24.285 million;
7. 20.90 meter Iba Bridge costing P29.507 million;
8. 15.80 meter Bongalonan Bridge costing P30.448 million;
9. 18.70 meter Dapdap Bridge costing P 27.748 million.

Other infrastructure projects in the province already accomplished by the DPWH include the 10.80 meter Bongol Bridge along the Valderama-Bugasong Road costing P19.812 million and the 15.80 meter Bia-an Bridge along Hamtic-Bia-an-Egaña-Sibalom Road costing P30.871 million.

Public Works Secretary Rogelio L. Singson said that the completion of these new bridges replacing old temporary structures would ensure the safe and reliable movement of people, goods, and services in Antique. This will also boost the target program of the DPWH to have permanent bridges along all national highways by the end of the Aquino administration.

In Iloilo, the construction of the 150.30 meter Nichols Bridge along the Alimodian-Sinamay-Sta. Cruz-San Miguel Road to replace the old bridge that collapsed at the height of typhoon Frank in June 2008 has also been completed. The P383.152 million project also involved the concrete

paving of 114.683 meters of approach road "A" and 104.517 meters of approach road "B."

In the same province, the completion of the 54.80 meter Culasi Bridge along the Ajuy-Barotac Road at a cost of P59.560 million replacing the old weakened bridge will now be able to accommodate the current traffic demand. The new 12.80 meter Balua Bridge, which was constructed at a cost of P33.710 million, will ensure smoother travel along Manduriao-San Miguel-Alimodian-Maasin-Cabatuan Road, as well.

The completed bridges are part of the Bridges Construction Project for Rural Development funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency and implemented by the DPWH's President's Bridge Program Office.

All these infrastructure developments are part of the P2 billion worth of infrastructure projects already completed by the DPWH in Western Visayas.

Regional Director Evelyn T. Barroso said that the completed projects during the first half of year 2011 include repair and rehabilitation of roads, de-clogging of canals and drainage systems, and construction of bridges, multi-purpose buildings, and health centers.

Negros Occidental, which has five district engineering offices, has the biggest share of the budget with P1.22 Billion for the construction of roads and bridges, followed by the Province of Antique with P825.4 million; Iloilo City and Iloilo Province with 551.3 million; Island Province of Guimaras with P48 million; and Capiz Province with P18.7 million. **GN**

Two-millionth...(continued)

The two-millionth 4Ps beneficiary, Mrs. Sharon Hassan Dabbang from Patikul, Sulu, signed an Oath of Commitment upon her registration into the program to signify her duty to comply with the conditionalities that are anchored on health and education.

Signifying the co-responsibility between government and the beneficiaries, the Oath of Commitment, strengthens their commitment to invest in human capital and improve the lives of family-beneficiaries and their children.

The milestone event witnessed by President Benigno S. Aquino III and Social Welfare Secretary Corazon J. Soliman was part of the culminating activity of the National Forum

of Parent Leaders which brought together 95 Parent Leaders from the 79 provinces covered by the 4Ps.

In his speech, President Aquino praised the success of the 4Ps and said, "Binibigyan kayo ng CCT ng tiket para makasama sa pag-arangkada ng ating ekonomiya, na sa bawat numerong indikasyon ng pag-unlad, katumbas ito ng maraming bilang ng trabaho, na makapagtatapos ng pag-aaral, at makapagpapagamot sa ospital."

4Ps is a Conditional Cash Transfer program that aims to improve the lives of its beneficiaries by investing in human capital, such as ensuring that children of poor families are given an equal chance to go to school and become productive citizens in the future. **GN**



Cordillera People's...(continued)

Witnessed by President Benigno S. Aquino III, the closure pact was signed by CPLA Chairman Arsenio Humiding and Marcelina Bahatan, president of the Cordillera Bodong Administration (CBA), CPLA's political wing, on behalf of the erstwhile rebel group. Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Quintos-Deles represented the government as its signatory.

Others who signed the closure agreement were Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, National Security Adviser Cesar Garcia Jr., Social Welfare and Development Secretary Corazon J. Soliman, Ifugao Rep. Teddy Brawner Baguilat (LP), and Apayao Governor Elias C. Bulut Jr. (NPC).

Local government officials from the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), CPLA zone commanders, and officers of the CBA also witnessed the historic event.

Established in 1986, the CPLC as a splinter group of the New People's Army, is now committed in their transformation into a socio-economic organization to advance peace and development in Cordilleran communities.

"From an armed group, we will now be a potent force that will drive development and economic growth in our communities," Humiding said.

The closure agreement provides for community-identified projects, livelihood and employment support for CPLA members, sub-regional development projects, legacy documentation and final disposition of arms and forces, all leading towards the group's development into an unarmed, socio-economic organization.

Deles said that while the government pursues peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front, the event will draw attention to the present administration's efforts to end all armed conflicts before 2016.

"This is highly symbolic considering that the peace process with the CPLA started under the administration of President Cory Aquino," Deles said.

The peace adviser is optimistic that the agreement will help promote development in CAR. "This would make it easier for us to facilitate support from all stakeholders, including the civil society groups, the private sectors, the local government units, and the donor communities," she added.

On the disposition of arms and forces of 1,200 CPLA members, she said that both parties will pursue a process

that will be mutually agreed upon. This will involve an integration program with possible employment in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as forest guards or ranges or other government agencies in need of personnel. Qualified members may also be integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

For his part, President Aquino in his speech said, "Nagbubukas po ng bagong pinto ang kasunduang ito: ngayon, mabibigyan na natin ng malinaw na proposisyon ang CPLA upang makibahagi sa pagbabago at sa pagsusulong sa ekonomiya ng bansa; bubukas na ang pinto upang maging isang ganap nang organisasyon ang CPLA at tunay na kabahagi ng lipunan."

PAMANA

Aside from the goal of reaching a just and peaceful settlement with armed groups, a complimentary developmental track has also been put up by the government. The Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (Peaceful and Resilient Communities) or PAMANA program serves to help win the peace in various communities nationwide through livelihood projects and technical assistance initiatives.

"There are seven PAMANA zones, and one of them is in the Cordilleras. PAMANA will assist the CPLA in their plans of achieving security and development in the area," Deles said.

With the closure agreement with the CPLA and with the PAMANA initiatives in CAR, the region is well on its way to a prosperous start with combined efforts of the government and the different communities in the area. **GN**



President Aquino presents a capiz sculpture to Chairman Arsenio Humiding and Marcelina Bahatan, President of CPLA's political wing. (Malacañang Photo Bureau)



Roadworks improvement in Eastern Metro Manila ahead of schedule

A solution to daily traffic congestion in the area - Singson

MORE than half of government’s targeted road improvement works from Marikina City to Antipolo City has already been completed, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported this week.

In a report, the DPWH said that the contractor, Hunan Road and Bridge Corporation, has already exceeded the scheduled accomplishment for the project by completing 52 percent of its commissioned roadworks. This was achieved by doubling efforts in its road capacity improvement work contract at the 4.4 kilometer Evangelista Street to Masingag Section.

Expected to be completed by January 2012, the P969 million project is a component of the NRIMP (National Roads Improvement and Management Program) Phase 2 funded by the Philippine government and the World Bank.

Secretary Singson said the improvement of the carriageway of Marcos Highway, through a combination of portland concrete cement paving and asphalt overlay, will provide a solution to the pressing problem of daily traffic congestion in Eastern Metro Manila.

“The public will have better opportunities for access to public transport facilities with improved traffic management through the installation of road signs and added safety features,” Singson added.

Among the engineering interventions adopted by the DPWH to improve the existing transport network of Marcos Highway is the provision for a public utility vehicle lane. According to the DPWH, this will not only improve traffic but also minimize flooding as it will improve the discharge volume of rain or flood water from Cainta and Antipolo City down to the Marikina River outfall.

The project has also adopted environment-friendly measures such as two-meter wide bike lanes on the north and south side as well as one-meter planting strip, landscaping for the planting of shrubs, and retaining wall structures. **GN**

Private business to feed over 700 malnourished public school students

SOME 780 undernourished pupils from five selected public elementary schools across the country are set to benefit from a supplemental feeding and nutrition program by the Department of Education in partnership with condiments manufacturer Nutri-Asia, Inc.

Education Secretary Armin Luistro said the feeding program offered by Nutri-Asia would result to improved school attendance and better school performance for students who often go to school on an empty stomach.

“There is a direct correlation between learning and nutrition as evidenced by many studies and actual situation we observe in public schools,” added Luistro.

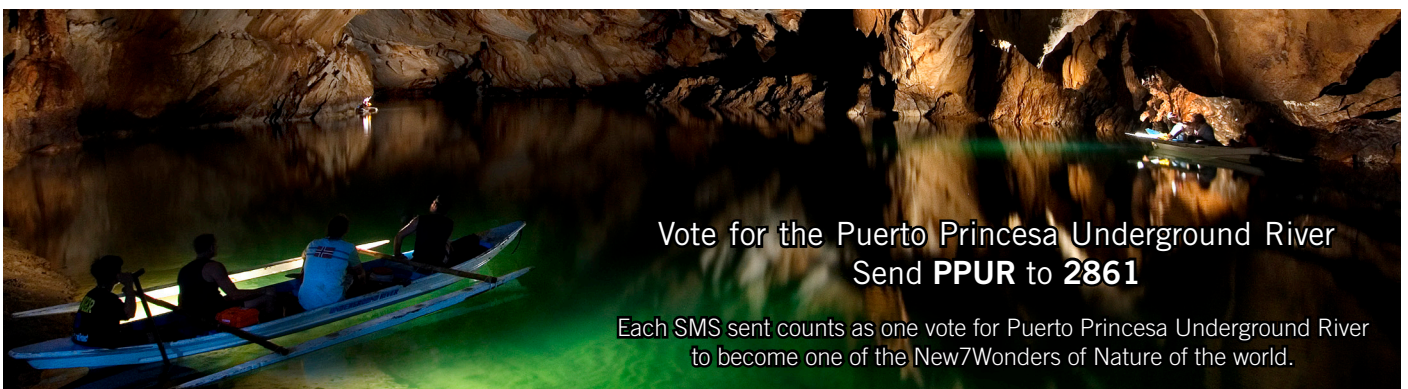
Students who are poorly nourished have a hard time focusing on the lesson, and eventually resort to absenteeism and dropping out of the rolls.

The supplemental feeding and nutrition program will be implemented within a period of six consecutive months to fight malnutrition and nourish back to health undernourished pupils. The program beneficiaries are Bagong Ilog Elementary School in Bagong Ilog, Pasig, Banay-banay Elementary School in Cabuyao, Laguna and Lias Elementary School in Marilao, Bulacan.

The same program will also be replicated in Subangdaku Elementary School in Mandaue City, Cebu and Quimpo Elementary School in Davao City.

The Nutri-Asia Gabay Kalusugan feeding and nutrition program falls under the Adopt-a-School Program of DepEd where the private sector is enjoined to help fill the gaps in education resources.

The feeding program will also enlist the participation of the parents who will cook and serve the food to the students. **GN**



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