



NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. Ambassador Kenney Makes Farewell Visit to Mindanao

On January 8, 2010, U.S. Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney visited several U.S. supported initiatives in Zamboanga City and said farewell to the people of Mindanao. Ambassador Kenney visited U.S. military personnel, turned over the Tetuan-Guiwan Footbridge, launched an English proficiency project in new partner colleges and universities, and visited out-of-school-youth participating in a livelihood skills training course.

At Camp Navarro, the U.S. Ambassador thanked the U.S. Military personnel of the U.S. Joint Special Operations Task Force for supporting the Armed Forces of the Philippines in its humanitarian assistance work in the conflict-affected communities of Mindanao, and for helping the AFP create the conditions necessary for peace, stability, and prosperity in the Southern Philippines.

The Tetuan-Guiwan footbridge is USAID's 27th infrastructure project in Zamboanga and will benefit many of the 41,000 residents of the Tetuan-Guiwan and neighboring barangays. The footbridge is one of over 900 USAID-supported Barangay Infrastructure Projects (BIPs). USAID has also financed 43 Regional Impact Projects (RIPs), which benefit the residents of several barangays and/or municipalities. USAID will design and construct up to 870 additional BIPs and RIPs throughout the conflict-affected areas of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago in the next three years.

At Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology, Ambassador Kenney welcomed seven new Mindanao colleges and universities participating in USAID's Job-Enabling English Proficiency Project (JEEP). The Ambassador noted that "many jobs, such as those in business process outsourcing and in the tourism, nursing and maritime sectors, require a high degree of proficiency in the English language."

During her visit to Mindanao, Ambassador Kenney also commended some 35 out-of-school youth participating in a USAID-supported arc-welding course in Tulungatong Barangay for continuing their education and learning new skills. USAID is providing skills training and practical experience in industry and business establishments and assistance to find employment for over 100,000 out-of-school Mindanao children and youth.

Said Ambassador Kenney, "We have been partners with the people of Mindanao for a long time, and we are committed to continue working with you in the years to come."

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