



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **U.S. AMBASSADOR URGES FILIPINOS TO TAKE THE WAR AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO THE NEXT LEVEL**

U.S. Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr., in his keynote address today at the Local Government Unit Forum on Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Cebu City, applauded those who are on the frontlines in the fight against human trafficking and urged them to take the “war on trafficking” to the next level.

“Today, I challenge you to redouble your efforts to combat trafficking in persons, to ensure vulnerable members of society are not preyed upon, and to bring predators to justice. If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a whole community to fight modern-day slavery,” he said.

Ambassador Thomas said the U.S. Embassy takes pride in its work with Philippine partners to intensify anti-trafficking efforts, noting that the U.S. Government has provided almost 300 million pesos to anti-trafficking initiatives in the Philippines since 2005, including 76 million pesos in 2009.

“We want this support to continue,” he added, emphasizing that “fighting human trafficking is not a static exercise – the global community has to do more every year, and change our tactics as traffickers change theirs.” He said that the Philippine trafficking law passed last year should be implemented and improved this year.

During the forum organized by the International Justice Mission (IJM) in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy, representatives from the Cebu City Prosecutor’s Office, the Philippine National Police, NGOs, and the Departments of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Labor and Employment, Health, and Tourism discussed efforts to rescue victims of human trafficking and to prosecute offenders.

While in Cebu, Ambassador Thomas visited the Home for Girls and The Haven, shelters for at-risk girls and victims of trafficking operated and maintained by the local DSWD.

Ambassador Thomas also visited the U.S. Consular Agency and toured Lexmark International Philippines, a U.S. company located on Mactan Island.

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