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# DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH NEWS

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## Editor's Notes

Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are lauded worldwide for their heroism. The Philippine government, in fact, considers OFWs as a new breed of economic investors in the country. Much has been said about the economic contributions of these modern-day heroes, but it is also equally important to look into the effects that migration has on their children left at home.

On the positive side, it is expected that children of migrant workers have better living conditions than their counterparts from non-OFW families. These children experience more monetary benefits in terms of food, clothing, education, and savings. While some would think children are satisfied with this, our main article reveals otherwise. In fact, there are indications of sadness among these children. Furthermore, children of OFWs put more premium on time and attention given to them by their parents.

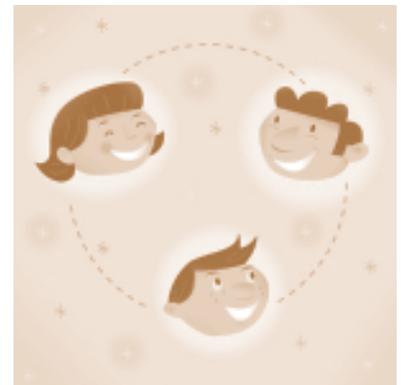
More than their children's need for a better education, which is the main reason for migration, parents should also be made aware of the greater need to address the emotional needs of their children. Regular communication is the key and various institutions such as the government, schools, and social groups have roles to play in addressing key issues affecting the welfare of OFW children. **DRN**

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# OFW children: wanting for more attention

A father, a mother, and their children constitute a family. They harmoniously live together under one roof with the parents providing all the love, attention and the assurance of a better future for their children. This, however, may not be true for all families. For some, because of the worsening economic condition in the Philippines, one or both of the parents have chosen to work overseas.



According to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, as of 2006, there are 8.23 million Filipinos abroad, of whom 3.6 million are permanent migrants, 3.8 million are temporary migrants and 0.87 million are "irregular." Many of them have left their children behind. With only a single parent left with the children or with both parents working overseas, the children may be wanting for affection and time. Worse, they may be prone to emotional and psychological distress.

In a paper, "The Effects of Parents' Migration on the Rights of Children Left Behind," presented by Asia-Pacific Policy Center vice president and executive director Rosemarie Edillon during a recently held United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) Seminar on Public Policies and the Rights of Children, the rights of children—survival, development, protection, and participation—and how they are affected when one or both parents is (are) absent, were the focus of discussion. Specifically highlighted in the study is the role of two important factors: money and time in meeting these rights.

### Money vs. adult attention/time

Edillon said that it is assumed that there is a trade-off between money and adult time when one or both parents work abroad. Simply put, less time spent with children are compensated with more money that their parents send. In addition, children's satisfaction only improved when both money and adult time/attention provided to them increased.

**Table 1. Survey areas**

Municipality	Barangay	Number of household respondent	
		OFW	Non-OFW
Batac	Baay	17	15
	Baligat	13	15
	Palongpong	15	15
	Tabug	15	15
Vintar	Dipilat	15	15
	Lubnac	15	16
	Alejo Malasig	16	15
	Tamdagan	16	20



<http://en.kindermothlife.org>

*When parents migrate, adolescent children seem to be worse off in life. They are also made to assume bigger responsibilities, particularly in taking care of younger siblings.*

The study's panel interviews of children aged 6–8, 9–12, 13–16, and 17 years old from a sample of 248 households of both Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) and non-OFW families were conducted in eight barangays of two municipalities in Ilocos Norte (Table 1).

Results showed that young adolescents, particularly the 13–16 year-old children of OFW families appear to be worse off among the age group of both OFW and non-OFW families mainly because adult attention and money given to them lessen when they reach the said age bracket. Most of these children have younger siblings who receive more time and attention from adults in the household. For some, these 13–16 year-old children also assume responsibilities such as caring for the young since there are fewer older adults in the household.

One of the participants in the seminar, Dr. Maruja Asis, research director of the Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC), stressed the importance of guidance and parenting on the 13–16 age group because it is not just the issue of these children wanting more time or money but it could be that they may be handling bigger responsibilities in the household that their young minds cannot still fully grasp and deliver.

The trade-off, on the other hand, is experienced among the 9–12 age group when more money is provided to them while the attention given by their caregivers lessens as they grow older and are able to take care of themselves.

OFW children in the age bracket 6–8 are considered to be the better off since they receive more attention and average money inputs. These younger siblings also take a bigger part of the family budget as well as guidance and care. Data from the study showed that in terms of guidance and care, children of OFW families aged 6–8 seem to be the better off, with 2 in 3 children having regular doctor and dentist visits as opposed to only 1 in 3 children in the 9–12 age bracket, and only 1 in 4 children in the 13–16 age bracket having such visits.

"To provide good education for their children" is the main reason of the OFWs in working overseas. Having a better income only comes second in their goals.

In the aspect of children's satisfaction with the time and money provided to them, results showed that OFW parents and their children give different importance to these inputs. While it is true that children do feel an increased satisfaction with the increase of adult attention and money from their parents, they give varied weights on their importance. More specifically, while the OFW parents give the same level of importance to attention and money, children, on their part, give more premium to attention than to money.

### The migrant scenario

"To provide good education for their children" is the main reason of the OFWs in working overseas. Having a better income only comes second in their goals.

While the above seems to be a common reply among OFW parents, there are differences, though, in the views and consequences of their working overseas between an absentee father and an absentee mother.

An OFW father differs from an OFW mother in his outlook regarding the timeline in working out of the country while 53 percent of OFW mothers prefer long-term engagement abroad. For instance, only 40 percent of OFW fathers wish to work for long years abroad. The Middle East also continues to be the favorite destination of OFW fathers at 54.4 percent while OFW mothers favor East Asia as the main destination at 53.4 percent (Table 2).

It is noteworthy to know that a considerable number of children were not yet born when one of their parents started working abroad and have thus been wanting of their personal care from the start. Seventeen percent were not yet born when their mother first left the country while two thirds have not yet reached seven years old. For the OFW fathers, 60 percent of their children are less than 18 years old while 43 percent were not yet born when they left.

In terms of the effects at home of a father working overseas, less adjustment in caregiving is needed in comparison to the adjustments required when it is the mother who works abroad. After all, a mother usually attends to almost 80 percent of the caregiving needed by her children. Hence, when she is the one working overseas, her role is filled up by other female relatives or older siblings who take the role of caregivers in the family. When it is the father working abroad, the mother takes the role of both the father as head of the family and mother as nurturer of their children.

This then leads to the question on whether there is a difference in the adjustments of female and male children left behind, as raised by Prof. Aurora Javate-De Dios, executive director of Miriam College's Women and Gender Institute, during the open forum of the seminar.

She added that "there are certain risks and vulnerabilities that these children left behind would experience compared to other children who have their parents in their homes." Thus, greater attention should be provided to aid the emotional needs of the

Table 2. Destination of parent overseas Filipino workers, in percent

Father		
Middle East		54.4
Southeast Asia		15.2
Western Europe		13.0
East Asia		10.9
South Asia		2.2
Commonwealth of Independent States		2.2
Southeast Europe		2.2
Mother		
East Asia		53.4
Middle East		16.4
North America		13.7
Western Europe		6.9
Southeast Asia		5.5
Southeast Europe		4.1

School-aged children from OFW families also have a greater capacity to attend school and achieve 93 percent of their potential education compared to the 88 percent of children from non-OFW families of the same age.

children and the psychological and social shocks that the OFW children may experience.

#### **OFW families vs. non-OFW families**

Results from the comparison between the interviewed OFW and non-OFW families showed that the former have a smaller family size with four children as against that of the latter with five children. OFW families also have higher per capita incomes of P20,000.00 and higher per capita expenditures of P16,000.00 based on 2003 prices. Moreover, families with OFW parents only work 65 hours a week in comparison with families with no OFW parent who spend 102 hours a week in work.

School-aged children from OFW families also have a greater capacity to attend school and achieve 93 percent of their potential education compared to the 88 percent of children from non-OFW families of the same age. Education expenditures that include tuition, books, and school supplies of OFW families are almost double that of non-OFW families at P15,400.00 versus P8,200.00. It

may also be inferred that children with OFW parents attend private schools and if they do go to public schools, these children have better supplies of books and notebooks.

More monetary benefits are enjoyed by children of OFW parents as opposed to non-OFW children in terms of food (P7,800 vs. P5,400), clothing (P2,100 vs. P1,100), education (P7,500 vs. P4,400), and bank accounts opened under the name of the children (P1,500 vs. P100).

#### **Results**

Overall outcomes of the study showed that, according to their guardians/caregivers, less than 10 percent of OFW children are said to be “very happy”. Two percent of these children are even considered to be sad and only 25 percent of them considered their relationship with their parents as “very good”. Fifteen percent of children of non-OFW parents, on the other hand, are said to be “very happy” and 33 percent said their relationship with their parents is “very good”.

Healthwise, there were hygiene-related problems—skin, scalp, ears, and nose—in 2 out of 3 children of OFW families. It also does not show that the presence of an OFW parent influences better health-seeking behavior. Thus, having an OFW parent does not seem to be an assurance for greater survival of the children.

In the aspect of development, OFW children are more of the achievers with 47 percent receiving academic awards against 32 percent for non-OFW children. For non-academic awards, non-OFW children garnered 12 percent compared to the 25 percent of their counterparts. Non-OFW children are, however, more active in sociocivic organizations at 23 percent against 14 percent for OFW children.

Data from the study also showed no clear danger arising from sleeping patterns and no reported incidents of abuse on the protection rights of the children. There are, how-



*Asia-Pacific Policy Center Vice President and Executive Director Rosemarie Edillon reported that the overall outcomes of the study showed that according to their guardians/caregivers, less than 10 percent of OFW children are “very happy” with their situation.*

ever, problems arising from families that have split up.

It was also shown in the child preferences—overall emotional state, relationship with parent OFW, relationship with siblings, relationship with other household members, health status, school performance, security for the future, extra-curricular activities participation, and participation in decision-making—that only 29 percent of them are happy with their family and participate in family decisions. Nonetheless, 53 percent of these children said they are better off than their counterparts in terms of education (Table 3).

**Table 3. Self-rated living condition of children**

Aspect	% who say they are better off
Health	42
Education	53
Future	39
Happy family life	29
Acceptance by peers	40
Extra-curricular activities	44
Participation in family decisions	29

### Recommendations

Regular communication between OFW children and their parents is made through text messages and phone calls. Edillon said that one of the activities that could enhance the relationship between the migrating parents and their children is by writing letters. She added that the school may help by including this in the children's activities. It is important though that the letters reach their intended recipients.

The school is also a place where values and skills learned at home by the OFW children should be strengthened and improved. With the absence of the parents, guardians/caregivers will also be the school's ally in imparting good values to the children. School officials are also asked to undergo training for them to be able to spot incidents of child abuses. They are called on to administer regular physical and medical exams to school children.

The government is enjoined to promote better health-seeking behaviors among the OFW parents by requiring them to submit medical certificates before their children are accepted in schools. OFW awareness of health and assistance programs from the government is very little and utilized only by 4.2 percent of the OFW population.

The study also looks into the big role of the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas* in providing financial literacy programs for the OFW parents. Other banks are also seen as sources of investment opportunities that could help the OFWs protect the financial security of their families. This would help OFWs to consider insurance coverage and liquid assets aside from investing in new houses which cannot be of much use when economic shocks occur.

While there have been a number of laws enacted to uphold the rights of Filipino migrants, policies to secure the rights of their children left behind continue to be wanting. OFW children experience not only economic problems but also threats of families permanently breaking up due to physical distance. Intervention from the government and other systems such as schools, nongovernment organizations, civic and social groups to address these key issues is long overdue. *CSM*



<http://www2.chandler.k12.az.us>

*One of the activities that could enhance the relationship between the parents and their children is by writing letters.*



## What limits Philippine access to EU markets?

The European Union (EU) is an important market for Philippine exports, absorbing 19.5 percent of the country's agriculture and fisheries exports. Products exported solely to the EU include sardines and coffee extracts. Among the country's major exports, coconut-related products primarily go to the EU market, followed by bananas and pineapples.

While global tariffs have fallen substantially over the years, giving hope to many exporting developing countries that they may finally have better access to developed countries' markets, the imposition of more nontariff measures (NTMs), however, has generally distorted trade and has resulted in almost the same effects as tariffs of higher prices and lower trade volumes.

The Philippines' experience with the consequences of NTMs on its agricultural exports is a case in point.

To analyze the extent to which Philippine exports are subjected to NTMs imposed by the EU, Gloria O. Pasadilla, Senior Research Fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), and Christine Marie M. Liao of the Center for Research and Communication (CRC) conducted a study<sup>1</sup> that estimates the costs associated with the presence of NTMs in trade and how much additional costs are borne by food ex-

porters because of them. In addition, the study traces the Philippine export products specifically affected by NTMs imposed by the EU.

NTMs refer to all measures, other than tariffs, that affect trade. They are instituted for health protection, plant and animal sanitation, and safety reasons by importing countries. NTMs are generally wide-ranging, less transparent than tariffs, more variable and unpredictable in implementation, thereby creating greater trade uncertainty.

NTMs are classified into various types, namely: (1) price control measures; (2) finance measures; (3) automatic licensing measures; (4) quantity control measures; (5) monopolistic measures; and (6) technical measures which include sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS), and technical barriers to trade.

Citing studies conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the US International Trade Commission, the authors said that those classified under technical barriers to trade, customs and administrative procedures, and sanitary and phytosanitary measures are the most commonly imposed NTMs and have directly affected the different countries' exports to foreign markets. These technical barriers are in the form of standards, testing, certification, and labeling.

Philippine products exported to the EU face different NTMs. According to UNCTAD's Trade Analysis and Information System (TRAINS) database, 59 out of 163 commodities or 6.6 percent of Philippine agricultural exports are affected by NTMs imposed by the

<sup>1</sup> PIDS Discussion Paper Series No. 2007-15 titled "Market Access Limitations of the Philippines in the EU Market." A shorter version of this paper also appeared as PIDS Policy Notes 2007-10 titled "Nontariff Measures Faced by Philippine Agricultural Exporters."

EU. Bananas, tunas, and sweet biscuits are among the commodities that face testing for authorization, prior surveillance, product characteristic, and labeling requirements.

To better understand the implications of NTMs on actual exporting firms, the authors interviewed some exporters of selected agricultural products. Exporters of canned tuna found it difficult to comply with the EU's requirement of reducing the maximum residue limit of lead in tuna from the 0.5 ppm limit to 0.2 ppm. Noodle exporters, on the other hand, have also been forced to alter their production practices and ingredient use because certain chemicals in food coloring traditionally used in the Philippines are banned in the EU. Wood packaging also faced an additional requirement such as fumigation prior to shipment. Furthermore, a company's shipment could also be detained for not containing an exact address in its label.

To assure foreign countries that their products meet specific requirements, exporting companies must submit certain certifications prior to engaging in trade. Majority of these certifications are traditionally issued by the appropriate bureaus under the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Health. Examples of certifications are Phytosanitary Certificate and Official Meat Inspection Certificate (OMIC).

For example, an exporter of processed meat products incurs an additional 2.4 percent in costs per shipment for obtaining certifications for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point, OMIC, and International Veterinary Certificate. Fish exporters, for their part, face laboratory testing costs for health certificate processing which can amount to about PHP720,000 per container. Meanwhile, a mango exporter tags quality control and laboratory testing as representing five percent of its production costs.

Additional hidden costs are incurred by these companies on capital expenditures for upgrading their facilities to satisfy health and standard requirements. The authors also mentioned "trade facilitating" expenses incurred by exporters which come in the form

of tips and outright bribes to accelerate processing.

While the old hands in exporting have been able to cope with these limitations saying that the profits from exporting still outweigh the costs, smaller firms are being marginalized or even completely unable to gain market access. This is a glaring problem in that out of the 22,500 food and beverage processors in the Philippines, 99 percent are cottage and small and medium enterprises. Hence, they are unable to afford the technological and manpower requirements of compliance.

Additionally, there are problems that result from the inadequacy of infrastructures, both technical (lack of internationally accredited laboratories, electronic system of certification and tracking, and capacity for risk assessment) and legal (bureaucratic red tape and outdated laws on international trade).

Despite these problems, the authors see hope in the potential of the country's capacity to export quality products and had given several recommendations to improve the export industry, especially for agricultural products that are shipped to places like the EU with strict NTM regulations. To wit:



[www.progeco.fr/fumigation\\_uk.htm](http://www.progeco.fr/fumigation_uk.htm)

*Wood packaging materials also face an additional requirement such as fumigation prior to shipment. The process must be certified by the Bureau of Plant Industry.*

## Philippines' auto parts industry needs active government support

Firms engaging in the assembly of automotive parts and components continuously search for internal ways and exert effort to improve their competitiveness. This, according to the study "Assessing the Competitiveness of the Philippine Auto Parts Industry" conducted by Rafaelita M. Aldaba, Senior Research Fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), needs to be complemented with active government support.

Aldaba's paper described the major government policies formulated through the years that were meant to promote the growth and development of the automotive industry such as the adoption of local content requirements and imposition of high tariffs coupled with restrictions on the importation of motor vehicles.

When the industry faced increasing pressure to improve competitiveness brought about by globalization, however, several reforms were implemented to liberalize and deregulate the industry. These included the opening of the assembly sector to accommodate new players, removal of previous restrictions on the number of models that could be assembled, and the allowing of the importation of all types of motor vehicles.

The Philippine automotive industry consists of two major sectors: the automotive assembly and the manufacture of parts and components. The assembly sector has 14 car assemblers and 21 commercial vehicle assemblers. It is dominated by five Japanese manufacturers, namely: Toyota Motor, Honda Cars, Mitsubishi Motors, Isuzu Motors, and Nissan Motors. In 2002, this sector posted around

PhP40 billion in total investments and employed 15,000 workers.

The parts and components sector, on the other hand, is composed of 256 companies producing different parts and components made of metals, plastic, rubber, and composite materials. More than half of these companies are considered small and medium enterprises (SMEs). These small firms have varying capabilities and some real quality problems. They have also failed to develop due to insufficient capital and technology.

The major players in this sector are Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing Corp., United Technologies Automotive Phils., Temic Automotive Inc., Honda Engine Manufacturing Phils., Fujitsu Ten Corp. of the Phils., and Aichi Forging Co., Inc. Total investments amounted to PhP27 billion in 1999 and PhP28 billion in 2001. The sector employed 33,000 workers in 2002.

In her paper, Aldaba discussed the issues and problems confronting the industry. According to her, after almost three decades of import substitution which was centered on the local content policy, a large part of the industry still remains underdeveloped. She added that at best, the local content program of the government only had a limited impact on the growth and development of the industry. For one, the local automotive sector has barely 10 to 15 percent locally produced parts and the assemblers must rely on imports for the remaining 85 percent.

The author cited a number of reasons for the failure of the local content program, including: a) reluctance of multinational com-



The automotive industry is a highly global industry; it is technology driven; competition is intense, and only the best survive.

panies to outsource components manufacturing to local Filipino firms; b) lack of domestic firms that could meet the standards of the contractor-assembler in the short-term; and c) adoption of inconsistent policies in the industry.

The author also identified the existence of a few firms (mostly foreign-affiliated ones) that have access to the best industry practices and state-of-the-art equipment and technology. This creates a dichotomy between large and small firms in terms of equipment and technology, capital, productivity, and worker skills.

Aldaba sees the unavailability of raw materials in the local market, labor strikes and radical unions, high cost of electricity, weak domestic demand due to the failure of the economy to recover from the 1997 financial crisis, and the increasing presence of smuggled used imported vehicles as well as smuggled and counterfeit auto parts and components as major challenges. While the industry considers the skilled labor force as its major strength, the above mentioned problems cause firms to operate at an average of only 60 percent of their total capacity.

The author emphasized that the automotive industry is a highly global industry; it is technology driven; competition is intense, and only the best survive. Given the current state of small and medium manufacturers, making them internationally competitive is a major challenge.

Facing international competition will be difficult as domestic firms can no longer rely on protective government policies. Less competitive firms will have to contend with reduced market shares and eventually bankruptcy. The few remaining competitive ones, on the other hand, need to define their strategies and the market position that they want to pursue. Given the firms' limited technology and research and development capabil-

ity, finding technologically fit foreign partners will also be important. While industry players have already identified internal and external constraints in improving their competitiveness, they are also relying on government support to help them out.

Foremost is the designing of market expansion policies that would stimulate the demand for domestically assembled vehicles. The government can also help by providing support in finding markets abroad as well as in linking them with multinational companies.

Furthermore, the author takes note of the need for government action in addressing human resource development and labor policy issues that increase firms' costs as well as in putting a stop to the smuggling of used imported vehicles, especially in free port zones. Immediate tariff reduction is also an important solution to address distortions in those sectors where the tariffs on their major raw materials are greater than the tariffs on their finished goods.

Lastly, it is also important for the government to improve infrastructure provision particularly utilities like power and ports operation to help firms bring down their operating/overhead costs. **ALO**



*While Filipino workers are regarded as highly skilled, this is not sufficient to make the automotive parts industry internationally competitive.*

## Cebu to benefit from JPEPA



As the Senate is in the process of considering whether to ratify the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) or not, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), the Philippine APEC Study Center Network (PASCN) and the University of San Carlos (USC) in Cebu held a forum clarifying the issues on the controversial agreement last February 28.

Themed as “JPEPA in Focus,” the forum, which was held at the USC main campus’ Bottenbruch Hall, explored both the prospects and challenges of having an economic partnership agreement (EPA) with Japan.

In his opening statement, PIDS President Josef Yap challenged some of the arguments raised against the JPEPA. According to him, most of the negative publicity against JPEPA have been disproved such as the notion that

JPEPA will destroy the economy, allow importation of toxic waste, allow Japanese vessels to fish in Philippine waters without constraint, and adversely affect the agriculture and automobile sectors.

Dr. Yap emphasized that JPEPA will have a positive impact on gross domestic product (GDP), job creation, and poverty alleviation as a result of greater access to the Japanese market in terms of trade and movement of natural persons, increased Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI), rising incomes, and declining prices.

Dr. Erlinda Medalla, PASCN project director, meanwhile, said that JPEPA is not just a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). It also includes cooperation and technical assistance and capability building provisions. She also noted that the JPEPA cements the country’s long-standing good relationship with Japan and at the same time strengthens its linkages with East Asia.

JPEPA, she said, is a signaling mechanism that the Philippines is on board with building an East Asian community and its vision of shared prosperity, peace, and stability.

Cebu, on the other hand, stands to gain from the JPEPA, according to Dr. Victorina Zosa, Research Director of the USC, who pointed out that based on her study, “Philippine-Japan Economic Linkage: A Case Study of Cebu,” 60 percent of locators in Cebu’s economic zones as of 2003 are Japanese firms. In that same year, she added, Japan also accounted for 56 percent of all official development assistance poured into Central Visayas. Given these, it is anticipated that most likely, the JPEPA will further contribute to Cebu’s overall economy. **GGM**



*Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) President Dr. Josef T. Yap emphasized the positive impact of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) on the country's gross domestic product, job creation, and poverty alleviation.*

## PIDS roundup: from Cagayan to Mindanao

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) opened its 9<sup>th</sup> PIDS Corner; this time at the Cagayan State University (CSU) in Tuguegarao on April 2, 2008. Established in 1978, CSU is composed of seven campuses and is considered as the best academic institution in the province that provides professional and technical training in the arts, sciences, humanities, and technology.

Dr. Roger P. Perez, president of the CSU, welcomed the partnership with PIDS as the University's symbol of support for the Institute's goals and objectives in providing socioeconomic research for the development of the country.

PIDS President Dr. Josef T. Yap on his part, expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome extended by the University and is honored by the importance it is giving to the

Institute's policy research outputs. The inauguration was also attended by Dr. Lina M. Garan, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Ms. Benita Cabaddu, chief librarian of CSU, professors, support staff, and students of the university.

Meanwhile, last February 22, the PIDS received a certificate of appreciation from the University of the Philippines (UP) Mindanao as an acknowledgment for its generous support to the University all these years. The awarding was done during the Testimonial Dinner honoring UP Mindanao Prime Movers and Donors in celebration of the Centennial Year of UP.

UP President Emerlinda Roman lighted the Centennial Flame of UP Mindanao which served as the start of the centennial celebration in the campus. Other UP Alumni and officials also graced the event. CSM



*Dr. Roger P. Perez, president of Cagayan State University, and PIDS President Dr. Josef T. Yap sign the Memorandum of Agreement formalizing the opening of the PIDS Corner in the University.*



*The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) is acknowledged by the University of the Philippines Mindanao for its generous support to the University.*

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*What limits...from p. 7*  
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- a) Redefine the roles and responsibilities of the different government agencies in terms of standards testing, quality control, and the like to eliminate duplication and overlapping. Furthermore, the industry will benefit from the rationalization of the laboratory system, integration of standard-setting bodies, and prompt harmonization of processes and administrative details;
- b) Develop the capacity of agencies involved in terms of research and development, training, and extension;
- c) Facilitate the accreditation of more laboratories and the upgrading of existing satellite laboratories;
- d) Improve the information technology infrastructure to enable electronic certification and traceability of products. There is also a need to construct databases of laboratory results, existence of pests and microorganisms, and requirements of importing countries;
- e) Enhance support for the development of knowledge and technological tools, technology transfer, and provision of scholarships or training of experts; and
- f) Modernize machineries in satellite laboratories and prioritize strategically located laboratories in the regions in terms of ISO compliance and capacity building.
- Other recommendations cited the need to conduct information dissemination activities among the public and private sectors on new standards, health requirements, regulatory practices, and necessary responses; develop necessary treatment facilities by a consortium of small companies; and establish cooperation between universities and firms that may lead to technological breakthroughs. Above all these, the authors emphasized the need for political will and genuine leadership to establish such reforms that would definitely benefit the whole export industry of the country. *ALO*

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