



**Philippines Against Child Trafficking
The National Secretariat**

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For immediate release

Schools, barangays lead the campaign against trafficking

Quezon City, 1 December 2011 - More than 16,000 students and barangay officials and residents are expected to participate in the week-long nationwide commemoration of the International Day Against Trafficking to be held from December 5-12, 2011.

The school and barangay activities are spearheaded by the Philippines Against Child Trafficking (PACT)) in partnership with the Inter Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT). PACT, together with its 43 chapters all over the Philippines coined the theme “Komunidad Palakasin, Child Trafficking Sugpuin,” for this year’s commemoration of the Day Against Trafficking.

According to Maria Salome Ujano, national coordinator of PACT, children are often at the risk of being exploited because of circumstances in the community. Ujano explained that the majority of child trafficking cases reported to PACT involved children who were trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced labor. The victims were mostly poor, came from remote and underdeveloped communities with limited economic opportunities, and had no knowledge of their rights or of the laws.

“Trafficking lurks in our family, our schools and our community, when there are no income opportunities and people live in poverty, when men consider it their privilege to buy children and women for sex and when people especially children are sold for exploitative labor, when people are ignorant of their rights and of laws that affect them and when government does not establish mechanisms to effectively implement the law,” Ujano added.

Also vulnerable are children who are living in abusive or violent families. She also warned children and their parents to be cautious in using the internet and other modern technology which traffickers may use this to lure or deceive their victims.



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PACT called on communities to play a more active role in the campaign against child trafficking by conducting awareness raising activities in the barangays, schools, churches, factories, and streets and wherever there are people who may be possible targets of traffickers.

The December 12 International Day Against Trafficking is held annually in observance of the signing by majority of the countries of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, also known as the Palermo Protocol.

PACT issued the following calls to prevent trafficking:

To Parents - to fill their homes with love and support their children's needs especially ensuring their children's education. If parents need to migrate for work, they must ensure that their children are under the care of trusted and responsible adult caregivers.

To Schools - to discuss the issue of child trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation among their students so they can protect themselves against traffickers. They also encouraged schools to provide scholarships opportunities for children so that can continue their education uninterrupted.

To Barangays – to raise the consciousness of parents on the issue, support local livelihood opportunities so that their children will not be forced to find work. They should mandate recruiters to register with the barangay and monitor recruitment activities in the community and activate their Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) or the Barangay VAW desk for the implementation of programs for children and against all forms of violence, respectively.

For additional details and inquiries, contact:

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