SEAMEO Council
President’s Report

By Tony Alabastro

OUTGOING SEAMEO Council (SEAMEC) President, Brother Armin A Luistro, FSC, and Secretary of Education of the Philippines, delivered his report yesterday on "SEAMEO in an emerging Southeast Asian community" before 11 ASEAN education ministers in a closed-door meeting in Brunei.

"SEAMEO units can serve as catalysts in the development of human resources in the region."

"The SEAMEO programme is for the workforce to have skills. If we are not careful, our workforce, who will be valued in 20 years, will be recruited by others with ageing population and there will be brain drain and skills drain in other regions," he said in an interview.

"Population growth in other regions is negative and there is a growing number of ageing people. In 20 to 30 years, ASEAN will have a great number of people in the work force. The ASEAN workforce will be valued in 20 years."

He amplified the Philippines’ invitation for the Regional Consultation Forum in Early Learning Frameworks, Policies and Programmes being organised by SEAMEO INNOTECH in Quezon City on March 28 to 30.

"The Philippines Department of Education is pushing for a universal kindergarten this June. Preschools, which were not regulated, are now under the Department of Education."

"A standardised curriculum targets young boys and girls so they will not go to Grade 1 directly. Without kindergarten experience, pupils drop out. There are 2.4 million kindergarten students or 86 per cent of five-year-olds last year. With universal kindergarten, we aim for 98 per cent going to kindergarten by June," Brother Luistro said.

The 2010 SEAMEO-Australia Press Award was given to Melchior S Defin, a senior writer with QMA7, a leading television broadcast station in the Philippines.

The SEAMEO Songwriting Competition winner was Dr Rey Cristian Cabrero, a professional doctor with a passion for music, for his song, "Building the Future" (SEAMEO Legacy), which was sung in yesterday’s closed door session of the SEAMEO Council meeting.

"Another cross-cutting regional concern is the promotion of the region's culture and traditions and developing Ascencios among the citizens of the region."

"People come to Asia for its diverse culture. Rather than competing with each other, let’s have a nautical highway and a continuity of flights. Our ASEAN future can make our places accessible for others so they can understand us," Luistro said.

Borroo Bulletin Newspaper
28 Jan 2011, page 6