



PGMA unveils P350-million information technology fund to train 50,000 scholars

MANILA, Feb. 11 (*PinoyGlobal*) - President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo unveiled today a P350-million information technology scholarship program to train 40,000-50,000 people for employment in the proposed Philippine Cyber Corridor.

The President announced the putting up of the scholarship program when she graced this morning the 8th e-Services Global Sourcing Conference and Exhibition at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City.

The two-day conference is organized annually by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The theme of this year's conference is "Outsourcing Centers for Excellence."

The 50,000 prospective trainees will join the more than 100,000 IT professionals in the Philippines. The National Outsourcing Association of the United Kingdom has cited the Philippines as the No. 1 Outsourcing Destination of 2007.

The President pointed out that this year's IT trainees would be easily absorbed by the job market as her administration is intent on generating 10 million jobs "all over the economy," seven million jobs of which have already been created during the past seven years.

She recalled that when she assumed the Presidency in 2001, the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry in the country "hardly existed." She said that "we are proud of what we have achieved" and that "we are anxious not to be complacent" as the information technology advances by leaps and bounds, adding that "speed of innovation can be a friend or foe."

The President stressed that a "good public-private service sector partnership" is a must as "change is happening at an accelerated pace."

For his part, Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila pointed out that "if there has been one constant over the years, it has been that the growing opportunities in Philippine BPO keep coming."

Calling the President as "the Philippines' outsourcing czar... whose vision has shaped the growth and prospects of BPO in the Philippines," Favila added that the Chief Executive has "also made BPO a priority sector for promotions in the country's international business trade missions," among other IT initiatives.

The DTI chief also recalled that in 2004, the President signed into law the creation of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) to "take care of the country's IT policy directions and to help transform the Philippines into an IT-enabled government in Asia."

"Considered the premier outsourcing conference in Southeast Asia, the event draws approximately 150 exhibitors, 500 delegates and some 2,000 exhibition visitors every year," Favila said.

The concurrent exhibition features major outsourcing players, support industries, and trade associations. The sectors included in this year's exhibition are "back-office operations, software development, animation, contact centers, data transcription, games development, engineering and design services, government and technology vendors, e-government, e-enablers, media and publications," according to the DTI chief.

It also features "several centers of excellence in BPO such as the Philippines, as well as those in India, Japan, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, Russia, and countries in the Americas," Favila added. #

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