



Paglaum

HOPE FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

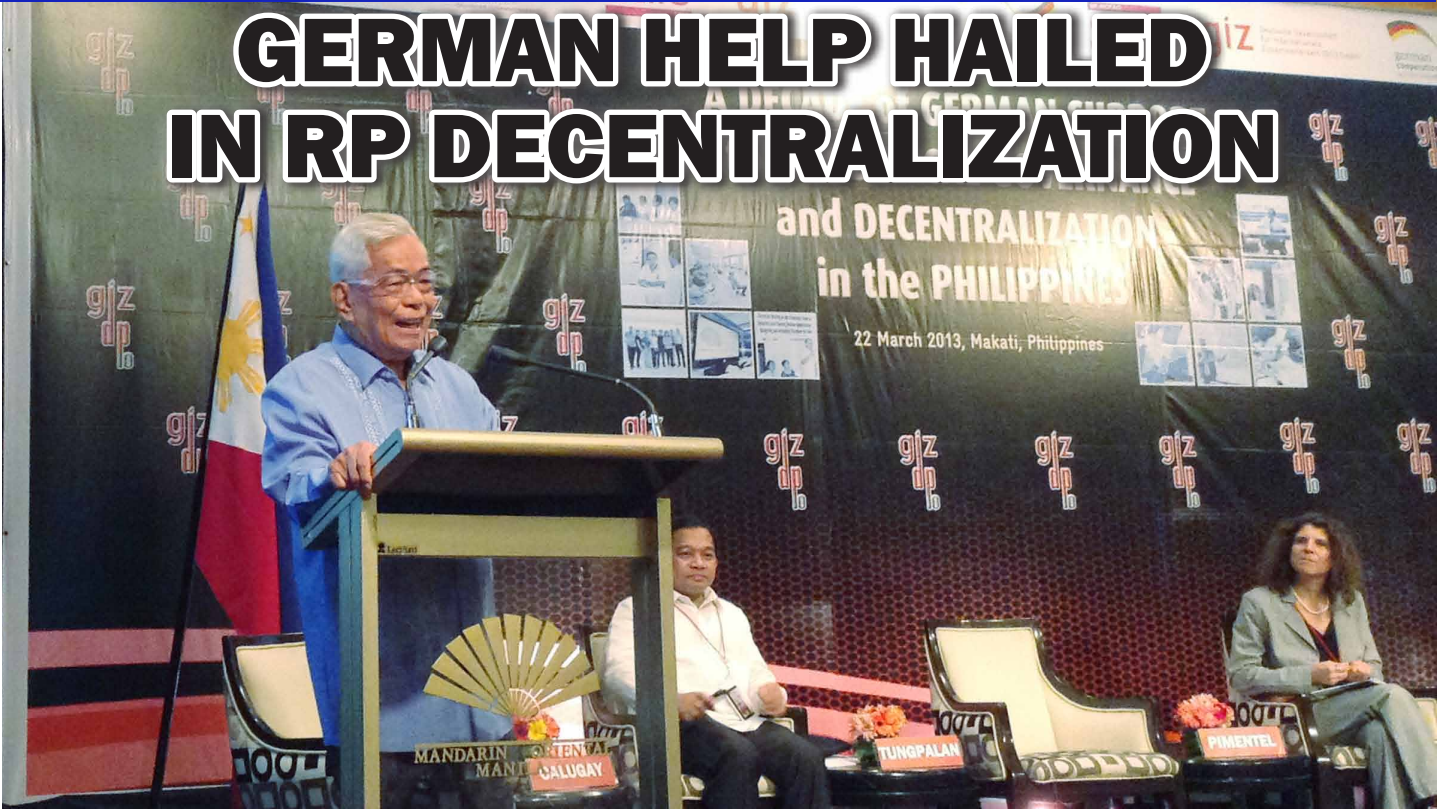


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GERMAN HELP HAILED IN RP DECENTRALIZATION



By Clarisse Aquino

Former Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr., hailed the efforts of the German Development Cooperation in promoting decentralization in the Philippines, for which the people should be thankful.

Pimentel, who is the chair of the Pimentel Institute for Leadership and Governance (PILG) and the Pimentel Center for Local Governance (PCLG), delivered the keynote address during the International Conference of the Decentralization Program of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) held last March 22 at the Mandarin Hotel.

The international conference was the culminating event of the programs

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Word from the Center

WHAT A POPE!

Days before he was enthroned as the head of over a billion Catholics the world over, the then Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio said in a speech to the College of Cardinals that: "The evils that, over time, happen in ecclesial institutions, have their root in self-referentiality and a kind of theological narcissism."

Impressed by his deep understanding of the role of the Church in the modern world, and his fitness for the office as the Bishop of Rome, the Cardinals voted him head of the Church on March 13, 2013.

Francis I, the new Pope, has since then electrified the world.

No one predicted that he would decline the trappings of the pontificate, like wearing the *mozetta*, the fur-lined cape, and the red shoes, that popes before him had worn in papal installations. Or staying in the ornate papal residence within the Vatican.

If there is one trait, then, that seems to inhere in the person of the new pope, it is humility.

That facet of his person-

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DOT HEAD KEYNOTES GRADUATION RITES

By Jay Dejaresco

Department of Tourism Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez, Jr. keynoted the ceremonies of 254 graduates of the Masters in Development Management and Governance, at the University of Makati last March 13.

The Masters in Development Management and Governance program is a customized

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closing this year.

The theme of the conference is “10 Years of German Support to Good Local Governance and decentralization of in the Philippines.”

Pimentel in his speech cited the efforts of the German Development Cooperation, describing it as relentless and fruitful.

“Decentralization has brought the government closer to the people,” Pimentel explained.

With and effective decentralization system, the people are empowered to modernize and develop their communities through the local government units, Pimentel said.

At the same time, the event was an occasion for the participants to hear from the former senator--acknowledged as the prime mover of decentralization in the Philippines-- his thoughts about the future of decentralization in the country.

As Senator in 1991, Pimentel steered the pas-



Prof. Nene Pimentel of the Pimentel Institute for Leadership and Governance (PILG) cited the contributions of the German Development Cooperation in strengthening local government and decentralization in the Philippines, when he keynoted it international conference last March 22.

sage of the principal piece of legislation that ushered greater autonomy of local governments through the enactment of the Local Government Code.

Pimentel cited the need to expand the powers of local governments.

This can be done by amending certain provisions of the local government code, particularly those in matters of funding local governments.

There is also a need to

limit the intrusion of the national government in local government affairs, Pimentel said.

Ultimately, Pimentel emphasized, the thrust is to shift towards a federal system of government in the country.

Under the federal system, local government units will enjoy devolved, not merely decentralized, powers, Pimentel said.

Through federalization, development, not merely

modernization will then be more attainable by our people, he added.

The international conference also reflected on the successes and lessons learned for the GIZ-DP, local governance, inter-governmental relations and donor support in the Philippines.


This was achieved by inviting other speakers who shared their thoughts and inputs during the conference.



Prof. Nene Pimentel Jr. speaks before the members of the Philippine Business for Education during its annual membership meeting last March 14 at the Dusit Thani Hotel in Makati. The occasion was a Forum on Decentralizing Philippine Education. Also present were Senator Edgardo Angara, and business leaders Washington Sycip and Alberto Del Rosario of the Makati Business Club. PILG Fellow Alex Brillantes, also of the University of the Philippines was also among the speakers.



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ality came out very clearly not only in the first words he uttered as the Bishop of Rome when he briefly spoke at the balcony fronting St. Peter's Square before the milling crowd of thousands ("Please pray for me"), but more so in his acts as he began to perform his papal duties.

It is reported that the new Pope, for instance, takes ordinary vehicles to travel within the Vatican instead of the bullet-proof limousine that was manufactured soon after the assassination attempt on the life of the dearly beloved Pope John Paul II that happened some 22 years ago on May 13, 1981.

In our view, however, the most touching act, thus far displayed by the new pope, was the way he reenacted the washing of the feet of the Lord's disciples on March 28, 2013.

Rather than limit the 'disciples' to an all-male cast according to tradition, he included two women, one of whom was a Muslim!

In effect, the new pope was signalling that in his stint as head of the Church, women would be treated as men's equals, even, perhaps, in the ordination of its ministers. That may or may not come to pass in our life-time. But of greater and more immediate significance to us, who live in a country that has a sizable Muslim population, is the core message that he apparently wanted to send to us, Christians: that in the exercise of our beliefs, we must be inclusive, not exclusive, of other faiths.

If that wasn't a staggering revival of a dramatic trend in the Catholic Church some years back, it's hard to say what is.

To us, ordinary lay people, we can only pray that the example shown by Pope Francis I won't be lost among our bishops, priests, and lay leaders so that the work of spreading the word of the Lord for the salvation of mankind may be fulfilled with more concrete love, and with less rhetoric.

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degree program offered through the partnership between the University of Makati and Councilors League (PCL).

The program is geared towards capacity building for local governance where Local officials who attended seminars organized/sponsored by the partnership earn for its participants academic credits leading to full masters degree.

This year 254 graduates, coming from different parts of the country, have successfully completed all the academic requirements necessary to attain their respective degrees.

Highlighting the graduation ceremonies were Prof. Tomas B. Lopez University of Makati President

Executive Vice President Dr. Edita I. Chan, Vice President for Administration & Finance Prof. Raymundo Arcega, Dr. Dalisay Brawner Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the deans and faculty of the University.

A main component of the program enhances the knowledge of the participants in the field of local governance.

During their academic tenure the participants learn first hand from the experts in the field, like former Senator Aquilino Nene



DOT Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez, JR.

Pimentel Jr., the author of the Local Government Code, the law governing the affairs of local governments in the country.

Meanwhile, Secretary Jimenez, the guest speaker said he hopes to build enough energy around tourism to give the Philippines the global attention it deserves.

Jimenez said he looks forward to meeting our target of 10 million foreign tourist arrivals by 2016, and seeing tourism finally take its place as a key driver of socio-economic progress in the country, to make it "more fun" for all.

In keeping with his commitment to make tourism the "people's business," Secretary Jimenez vowed to transform the department into a primary selling unit with the ultimate goal of not only improving statistics, but also ensuring that every endeavor would be fulfilling and profitable for Filipinos.

RECENT PICTORIAL EVENTS



Climate change committee regular meeting. (March 6)



Visiting barangay officials from Municipality of Malinao, Lago and Tangalan, Province of Aklan. (March 6)



Visiting barangay officials from Municipality of Kalibo and Makato, Province of Aklan. (March 20)



Visiting barangay officials from Municipality of Libaco, Province of Aklan. (March 27)

