BRIEFING NOTE FOR MR. SELVA RAMACHANDRAN

**UNDP Philippines Resident Representative**

**Meeting:**  Courtesy Call with Secretary Leonor Briones, Department of Education

Will be accompanied by: Undersecretary Nepomuceno Malaluan and Assistant Secretary Salvador Malana

**Date/Time: 18 January 2021**

**Talking Points:**

1. Thank Secretary Briones and the DepEd management for the trust provided by the Department to UNDP for the
	1. Support as Research Reference Group member of DepEd in the conduct of the UNDP-UNICEF *“The Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Households in the National Capital Region of the Philippines”.* In particular, Undersecretary Jesus Mateo and his team provided critical guidance in the conduct of the study.
	2. Implementation of the DepEd-financed, UNDP implemented project *“Development Support Services for the K to 12 Basic Education Program of the Department of Education’*. The project has ended as of July 2020, and project closure related activities are ongoing such as the Project Terminal Evaluation and preparation of the Final Project Report. In particular, Assistant Secretary Alain Pascua provided guidance throughout the implementation of the project.
2. Acknowledge DepEd’s hard work to transition from face-to-face to virtual classes because of COVID-19 pandemic. Inquire any assistance that DepEd may require, such as supporting Last Mile Schools in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.
3. Inform the Secretary that the UNDP-DICT partnership and in coordination with DepEd Information and Communications Technology Services (ICTS), over a thousand un-energized public schools (out of 3,694) will also receive free Wi-Fi services.
4. Recognize DepEd’s commitment to improve digital competencies of teachers, even before the pandemic. Through the UNDP-DepEd partnership, around 316 teachers were trained on digital literacy and Open Educational Resources (OER). Teacher-trainers have cascaded their learnings to 334,894 teachers. Last mile school conferences were undertaken through the project. Webinars reached thousands of viewers from different online platforms. Recognize the need to regularly cascade new information and trainings to more teachers.
5. Mention that, an upcoming engagement with DepEd is a rapid and formative evaluation of the transition to alternative learning modalities during SY 2020-21 in response to COVID-19 is being initiated under the *Strategic M&E Project*, a project led by NEDA in partnership with UNDP. The project team through the NEDA Social Development Staff will touch base with DepEd to begin consultations in firming up the Terms of Reference of the study.
6. Thank Secretary Briones again and convey that UNDP stands ready to provide continuing support to DepEd for potential initiatives to support teachers and learners towards the achievement of SDG 4 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Background information:**

1. **Development Support Services K to 12 Basic Education Program of the Philippines Department of Education**
* To support the K-12 Basic Education Program, DepEd and UNDP entered an agreement in 2016 for the implementation of the DepEd Computerization Program (DCP). Under this partnership, UNDP procured, delivered, and installed ICT packages in public schools using the allocations for DepEd under the General Appropriations Act of 2016.
	+ Resources USD$60,750,267.58 through government financing from DepEd
	+ 4,976 schools and 209 DepEd offices provided with ICT packages
	+ 3,694 un-energized schools were also provided solar power systems
	+ Deliveries were completed in July 2019.
	+ UNDP utilized 2 percent for technical assistance package to support
		- DepEd’s public financial management (PFM) reforms and scaling up of citizen monitoring teams to ensure timely and quality service delivery up to the beneficiary level; and (3) conduct trainings related to project management, open educational resources, monitoring and evaluation.
1. **Initiatives that are potential areas of collaboration with DepEd:**
* **IDEA Digital Learning Platform to enhance DepEd Commons:** UNDP and DepEd ICTS have explored ways to support digital literacy of teachers and learners amidst the pandemic, to improve digital content and K to 12 alignment
* **Procurement of future ICTS equipment with citizens’ participation:** Due to the pandemic, there is higher demand for ICT equipment and solar panels for un-energized schools/communities in GIDAs.
* **Rapid Evaluation Study on Alternative Learning Modalities during COVID-1.** In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Strategic M&E Project is commissioning evaluations relevant to the government’s effort to respond to the pandemic, following the guidance document, “We Recover as One. One of the key subjects identified is the formative evaluation of the transition to distance and blended learning modalities of school children as outlined in the DepEd’s Basic Education – Learning Continuity Plan. This aims to understand how students, teachers, and administrators have prepared for the shift, document practices that may be replicated, and identify emerging issues that should be addressed at the policy level.
* **Setup of a multi-donor participatory governance facility** with DILG and DBM to support CSO empowerment initiatives in the post-Mandanas era.

**Brief Bio of Secretary Leonor “Liling” Briones**

Born on October 16, 1940, Department of Education Secretary Briones is a Filipino academic, economist and civil servant, Professor Emeritus of the University of the Philippines-National College of Public Administration and Governance (UP-NCPAG). She has taught young children in church school and students in undergraduate, masters and doctoral studies. ‘

She has been a resource person in numerous national, regional, and international meetings and for a and addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2005. She combines the roles of distinguished academic and teacher, public official, and social activist.

Secretary Briones has been involved in the administration of academic institutions. She served as Vice-President for Administration and Finance of the University of the Philippines System. She was Chair of the Silliman University Board of Trustees, and Regent and Chair-Designate of the Universidad de Manila before her appointment as Education Secretary.

She has a wealth of experience in administering public institutions including Commission on Audit and served as Treasurer of the Philippines. Furthermore, Secretary Briones is an articulate advocate on economic and social development issues and was a former President of Freedom from Debt Coalition. She then became Lead Convenor of Social Watch Philippines, Coordinator of Social Watch Asia and Social Watch International, who reports to the United Nations on social development issues.

Secretary Briones has been a long-time partner of UNDP, particularly in her role as Lead Convenor for Social Watch, where we jointly established more than 6 Participatory Public Finance Institutes across the country which rolled out capacity building activities in the areas of public finance and participatory governance as part of the UNDP governance hub network.

She obtained her Bachelor in Business Administration, major in Accounting, magna cum laude from Silliman University at the age of 17; Master’s in Public Administration, major in Local Government and Fiscal Administration, Dean’s List from the University of the Philippines; Post Graduate Diploma in Development Administration, major in Public Enterprises, With Distinction from Leeds University England; Certificate in Policy in Public Enterprise from Harvard Institute for International Development, Harvard University; and, Certificate in Innovations in Governance from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Massachusetts. She was also conferred the honorary degrees of Doctor of Public Administration and Doctor of Humane Studies by the Central Philippine University in 2014 and Foundation University in 2017, respectively.

Secretary Briones has received numerous awards in recognition of her sterling performance as a public official such as the Presidential Lingkod ng Bayan Award in 2000 by the Civil Service Commission on its centennial year, the Outstanding Professional Award in Public Administration conferred on her by the University of the Philippines Alumni Association, and the Alumni Achievement Award for Government Service given to her by the NCPAG on its 50th year. She has also been awarded as one of the Outstanding Sillimanian for Public Administration, Outstanding Negrense Award for Government Service, The Bayi Citation Award for Exemplary Women in Politics and Governance in 2011, Distinguished Alumni of the UP Alumni Association in 2013 and Outstanding Citizen of Quezon City in 2015. Recently, she has been recognized as one of UP-NCPAG’s pillars in a library exhibit titled “Leonor Magtolis-Briones: Professor Emeritus, Public Finance Expert, Social Activist and Lingkod Bayan” in honor of her unparalleled contributions as an educator, a champion of fiscal management and social development, and a public servant.