



## Philippines: More Opportunities for Citizen Participation in Promoting Good Governance

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Citizens and civil society groups have greater opportunities for engaging government on matters affecting their daily lives using the internet. They can also serve as watchdogs in the implementation of the governments major programs and projects like the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program. These are among the highlights of the discussions during the first day of a forum of the Knowledge for Development Centers (KDCs) held April 23 to 25 at the World Bank Group office in the Fort Bonifacio Global City. KDCs comprise 15 universities, policy and research institutions in the Philippines that promote knowledge sharing about development issues, in partnership with the World Bank Group. The forum is supported by the Government of Australia through the Australia-World Bank Philippines Development Trust Fund. "The government plans to roll out a National Feedback Mechanism soon, said Secretary Edwin Lacierda, Presidential Spokesperson of the Office of the President, who was among the main speakers during the forum. "Envisioned as a link between government and civil society, it will serve as an online platform where citizens will be able to engage government by launching petitions or making queries online. Secretary Lacierda said that the new online platform is part of the governments commitment to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) launched globally in 2011. The Philippines is one of eight founding members alongside Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Secretary Lacierda said the OGP is a global effort to secure commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. He said that since 2011, the government has launched several online portals including the Official Gazette by the Office of Press Secretary, Budget ng Bayan by Department of Budget and Management, and Open Data to make public documents and information that affect peoples lives available to the general public. The new platform, Secretary Lacierda said, will provide avenues for citizens to contribute to policy making and monitor the implementation of the countrys major programs and projects. "Citizens play an enormous role in checking government activities. With a structured avenue for communication, organizations (and citizens groups) will find it easier to work with government toward our common goal of improving our country, said Secretary Lacierda. Undersecretary Parisya H. Taradji of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) encouraged civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sectors to partner with the government in implementing the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program to maximize the synergy of public and private efforts towards improving the lives of Filipinos. Pantawid Pamilya is the Philippines' conditional cash transfer (CCT) program that provides modest cash grants so that poor households can invest in the education and health of their children zero - 18 years. It also promotes access to maternal care services for pregnant beneficiary mothers. As of April this year, CCT covers close to 4 million poor household beneficiaries or about 20 million people nationwide, which makes it the 2nd largest CCT in the world. Undersecretary Taradji also said that these citizens group can extend technical assistance in the training of Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries through Family Development Session (FDS), provide feedback in the implementation of the project, or directly help in the implementation of other poverty reduction programs. More than 800 CSOs nationwide are already working with DSWD through these various forms of engagement, she said. This years meeting of KDCs is focused on how these universities and think tanks can participate in the government and the World Banks development programs in various capacities as service providers, community organizers, trainers, monitors and evaluators. "The World Bank firmly believes in the role of partnerships in tackling development challenges and promoting good governance. Partnerships with the government, civil society groups, citizens groups, peoples organizations, academe and development partners make us more effective in our efforts to support the countrys agenda for achieving more inclusive growth, said World Bank Country Director Motoo Konishi, in his opening remarks. The KDCs nationwide include Asian Institute of Management in Makati; Ateneo de Naga University in Naga; Central Philippine University in Iloilo; Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department at the House of Representatives; National Economic Development Authority; Notre Dame University in Cotabato; Palawan State University in Palawan; the Philippine Institute for Development Studies; Saint Paul University Philippines in Tuguegarao; Silliman University in Dumaguete; University of the Philippines School of Economics in Quezon City; University of the Philippines Los Banos in Laguna; the University of San Carlos in Cebu; University of Southeastern Philippines in Davao, and the World Bank Office Manila. The World Bank 1818 H Street, NW DC 20433 Washington USA Telephone: (202) 473-1000 Telefax: (202) 477-6391 Mail: [investigations\\_hotline@worldbank.org](mailto:investigations_hotline@worldbank.org) URL: <http://www.worldbank.org/>   width="1" height="1">

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