

PRESS RELEASE

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PWU TEAM FINALIST IN UNESCO'S 2005-2006 MONDIALOGO SCHOOL COMPETITION

25 September 2006 — Philippine Ambassador to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO José Abeto Zaide reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs that the Philippine Women's University (PWU) team was selected on 21 September 2006 as a finalist in UNESCO's 2005-2006 *Mondialogo* Competition, the world's largest global contest on intercultural dialogue.

Ambassador Zaide explained that the Competition aims to encourage dialogue between students from different cultures, paired with each other to work across continents on a joint project, in order to develop understanding, tolerance and friendship among peoples with different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

The PWU team qualified among 25 partner teams representing 50 schools from 38 countries. They were selected by a panel of experts and endorsed by the contest's international jury, who met at UNESCO Headquarters on Wednesday, 20 September 2006.

Ambassador Zaide stated that a record 2,537 teams – totalling 35,000 students – took part the contest this year. In the first edition of the contest two years ago, 1,446 teams and 24,000 students participated. A major factor which influenced the selection of the finalist teams was the use of creative and innovative approaches to different topics, in addition to the intensity of dialogue between them.

An exhibition of the projects of the finalist teams is on display at UNESCO Headquarters until 29 September 2006. The announcement of the winners will be made at the *Mondialogo* Symposium in Rome, Italy this November. They will receive cash prizes to be used for the benefit of their schools.

The *Mondialogo* partnership also benefits from the support and advice of a number of international personalities who have agreed to serve as *Mondialogo* Ambassadors. They include the Brazilian author Paulo Coelho and Swedish writer Henning Mankell.

Aside from the Philippines, the finalists come from Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Georgia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, Palestine, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, South Africa, Senegal, Sudan, Turkey, USA, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

Initiated in 2003, the contest is co-sponsored by UNESCO, with the car manufacturing giant DaimlerChrysler.

The Philippines was a finalist in the first edition of the contest held in Barcelona, Spain in 2004. END