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PRESS RELEASE

DepEd joins International Holocaust Remembrance Day, highlights importance of cultivating value of social justice

PASIG CITY, January 27, 2023— The Department of Education (DepEd) underscored the importance of the culture of social justice and diversity during the International Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony on January 26.

"The Holocaust saw the systemic oppression and persecution of six million Jewish victims and millions of others. The atrocity committed by the Nazi regime and their collaborators is beyond comprehension. Still, we must remember, and we must not forget, the names and the faces of the victims, the families torn apart, and the communities destroyed. We must remember so we may never forget the dangers of hate and intolerance," Vice President and Secretary Sara Z. Duterte said in her message.

"We are responsible for ensuring that the lessons of the Holocaust and the stories of the survivors are passed on to future generations so that it will never happen again. We must ensure that these stories are not lost so we can learn from them and prevent other atrocities from happening again," she added.

Spearheaded by the International Cooperation Office (ICO), the event was attended by DepEd Executive Committee, the United Nations delegation represented by the Department of Foreign Affairs-United Nations and International Organization Assistant Secretary Kira Danganan-Azucena, the Israel Embassy headed by Ambassador Ilan Fluss, and the Department of Foreign Affairs represented by Assistant Secretary Mardomel Melicor of the Middle East and African Affairs.

Additionally, Undersecretary for Curriculum and Teaching Gina O. Gonong highlighted the lessons imparted by the Holocaust. "This unfortunate event inspires us to produce peace-loving and peace-building learners and strive to transform our schools into safe spaces for everyone where keep our human values alive," Usec Gonong said.

DepEd also recognized the need to continue to promote Holocaust education across all schools in the country and to persuade other DepEd field offices to join these kinds of commemoration events. The Department also used this day to reaffirm its commitment to encouraging its teachers and learners to be advocates for social justice and respect for human rights.

The DepEd Secretary also cited the late President Manuel Quezon's Open-Door Policy that enabled thousands of Jewish refugees to seek temporary refuge in the Philippines, which embodies the Filipinos' kindheartedness.

Led by VP Secretary Duterte and the various partners in attendance, six candles were lit to remember the six million Jews that were victims of the Holocaust. A prayer was also offered before the ceremonial candle lighting.

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