



STATEMENTS 2011

Message at the Turn-over of the birthing station in Mulanay

**By Mr Lawrence Jeff Johnson
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Mulanay, Quezon, Philippines**

- Governor Suarez
- Mr Cafugauan, Assistant Secretary, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
- Mayor Ojeda of Mulanay
- Dr Taleon of the Department of Health, Region IV-A and Dr Tullas of the Provincial Health Office
- Colleagues from the UN:
 - UNFPA officials led by Ms Daniels, Country Representative and
 - FAO officials led by Mr Portugal, Assistant Representative in the Philippines
- Community leaders and partners
- Members of the press
- Ladies and gentlemen, *magandang hapon sa inyong lahat* (Good afternoon to all of you)!

It is a pleasure to be with you today for the turn-over ceremony of the Mulanay Birthing Station.

The Mulanay Birthing Station is a support component under the maternal and child health care of the Inter-Agency Programme to Nurture Peace, Security and Decent Work through Local Economic Development in Bondoc Peninsula or commonly referred to as “Bondoc LED”. The project is funded by the Government of Japan through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

Bondoc LED seeks to contribute to addressing the root causes of poverty and conflict in Bondoc Peninsula. In 2007, the National Statistics Office revealed that over 750,000 out of the 1.6 million people are living below or near the poverty line in Quezon Province. Bondoc LED also seeks contribute to the overall peace and development programme of the government through the “Peaceful and Productive Communities”.

The ILO supports the country’s goal of achieving inclusive growth and reducing poverty through decent and productive work as contribution to the Philippine Jobs Pact.

For the poor, labour is often the only asset they have, to improve their lives and support their families. Most people do not have the option of joining the ranks of the unemployed, so they end up in vulnerable forms of employment. They are left with little choice but to accept or create whatever work is available just so they and their loved ones can survive another day.

To help reduce poverty and promote peace, the United Nations agencies in the Philippines worked with the community, the government along with project partners and health workers.

In building the Mulanay Birthing Station, the UN brought forth its expertise and tried to deliver as one. We combined our strengths and resources to help families and communities. We worked together to support the province and the country in delivering basic services and meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

Let us thank the United Nations Population Fund and Food and Agriculture Organization, not just for being here today but for their collaborative role!

The ILO used community contracting scheme in the construction of this birthing station, which helped in generating local employment, upgrading construction skills, and enhancing community participation.

In fact, the construction of the Mulanay Birthing Station generated over 700 workdays for local communities. It also helped in strengthening the Barangay Health Workers association. So with due respect, allow me to acknowledge and congratulate the women leaders of the association through the leadership of Ms Leonida Manalo.

The Bondoc Peninsula is essentially an agricultural province. The FAO, as our lead partner, helped improve farming and fishing communities.

The UNFPA responded positively by providing specialized equipment to the birthing station, delivering reproductive health commodities, and supporting future training for local health workers on reproductive health.

As we officially turn-over the Mulanay Birthing Station, we kindly ask you, our partners to please make use of this birthing facility, strive to maintain its structure and keep in good condition. For beyond its structure, the birthing station will not only give new life but also new hope for a better tomorrow.

The maternal and child health care is just one of the components of the Bondoc LED project. By capitalizing on our expertise and experiences, we will do our best to integrate other crucial components towards decent and productive work.

Specifically, we will support families and communities in Bondoc Peninsula through skills training, entrepreneurship development, multi-sector dialogue and promotion of social protection.

Everyone has made important contributions in building the Mulanay Birthing Station, but we recognize that there will be issues and challenges ahead. As we move forward with the Bondoc LED project, we believe that we can further strengthen our partnership and broaden our capacity to support families and communities.

Safe maternity along with the health and well-being of women and their babies is at the core of life itself. It is also central to ensuring decent and productive work and enabling people to rise above poverty!

Together let us continue to work towards ending poverty and building peace in Bondoc Peninsula.

Thank you and Mabuhay!