USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program

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PHILIPPINES: USAID Strengthens Sustainability of Mindanao's Island Economy Through Partnership With Fisheries Federation

USAID is helping some of Mindanao's key industries to become more competitive by working with business support organizations such as chambers of commerce and industry federations. One of these groups, the Socsksargen Federation of Fishing Associations and Allied Industries, Inc., has worked with USAID, through its Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program, to ensure that harvests of marine resources remain within sustainable levels, while providing optimal long-term economic benefits. With support from USAID, the Federation held the 13th National Tuna Congress on September 1-2, 2011, under the theme, "Caring for the Future: a Shared Commitment." Participants included fisheries and mariculture firms, investors, environmentalists, and senior officials of Pacific island-nations.

Left photo: *USAID Deputy Mission Director Reed Aeschliman and Maria Rendon, Chief of USAID's Office of Economic Development and Governance, walk through the fishport in General Santos City. This southern Mindanao port is the heart of the Philippines' tuna industry, which provides more than 120,000 jobs.* **Center:** *At the 13th National Tuna Congress, Deputy Director Reed receives a plaque of appreciation for USAID's assistance to the industry. Presenting the award are* (l-r): *Marfin Tan, former president of the Socsksargen Federation of Fishing Associations and Allied Industries, Inc.; Joaquin Lu, current president of the Federation; and General Santos City Mayor Darlene Antonino-Custodio.* **Right:** *Deputy Director Reed presents one of the students who won in the tuna culinary competition with his winner's certificate.*

GEM Program is funded by the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented in partnership with the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA)
General Contractor: The Louis Berger Group, Inc.