



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# PRESS RELEASE

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### **PUNO: PROSPERIDAD EPITOMIZES PROSPERITY AMID UNITY**

PROSPERIDAD, Agusan del Sur—Secretary Ronnie Puno of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) has said that the progressive town of Prosperidad epitomizes the prosperity that the entire country can attain on the back of the unity that local executives need to spell sustained growth and lasting peace for their respective localities.

Puno said that Agusan del Sur has achieved economic progress because of its hardworking executives and people who have remained united to ensure a conflict-free environment in the province that is conducive to peace and development.

“Prosperidad is synonymous with growth and development,” Puno said during his recent visit to this capital town on the occasion of its Naliyagan Festival.

“*May katwiran* (There is a reason) why this town is called Prosperidad in the great province of Agusan del Sur,” he said. “It’s because as you look around you, you see the enterprising people who live here. Everybody is engaged, *masisipag lahat* (everybody is hardworking), everybody is engaged in doing some productive endeavor.”

Puno noted that if the United States of America had a town called Hope where former President Bill Clinton was born, then the Philippines has Prosperidad as its counterpart.

Unlike in the US where the number of jobless people multiply each day that passes, the Philippines is relatively doing very well as a result of the economic reforms put in place by President Arroyo, which has helped shield the country from the worst effects of the global financial contagion that has affected two-thirds of the world’s economies.

“*Kumpara natin sa ibang bansa, sa tingin ko* (Compared to other countries I think) we are doing very well,” Puno said. “*Sipagan lang natin* (Let’s just work hard), I think we are going to survive the economic hardships of the next year or two years.”

In his visit to Prosperidad, Puno led a flag-raising ceremony at the Rizal Monument along with Agusan del Sur Gov. Maria Valentina Plaza, and her mother former Governor Valentina Plaza and the incumbent governor’s brother, Eddie Bong Plaza, who has also served as governor. The ceremony was followed by the opening of the Bai Naliyagan or Naliyagan Festival, which highlighted the 42<sup>nd</sup> founding anniversary of Agusan del Sur.

The province of Agusan del Sur was established in 1967 under Republic Act No. 4969 providing for the division of the province of Agusan into Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur. About three years later, the first set of provincial officials assumed office after the provincial elections held in November 1969.

RA 4969 also established Prosperidad as the capital of Agusan del Sur.

Puno noted that among the secrets of the success of Agusan del Sur is the unity of its people and support behind the provincial government's development agenda, as well as its reputation for being one of the most peaceful provinces in Mindanao.

He said that in almost all of the DILG's foreign-funded initiatives, Agusan del Sur—Caraga region's only first-class province—always figures as one of the top beneficiaries because of its high capacity level to effectively implement development projects.

“You can continue as an example for other provinces in Mindanao, show them that when there is a will, there is always a way and when you decide to dedicate yourselves to progress, to the development of the province, that it will actually happen,” Puno said.