



P N P News Release

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FILIPINOS NOT THE WORLD'S THIRD BIGGEST SHABU USERS - PDEA

The Filipinos are not the world's third biggest users of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) like shabu contrary to reports.

Undersecretary Anselmo s. Avenido Jr., Director General of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), issued this statement to refute the recent media reports that according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) the Philippines is ranked No. 3 among the world's biggest ATS users.

Thailand and Australia are named first and second, respectively, in the UNODC report.

"The UNODC report is incomplete and outdated and the media reports have failed to state this true picture," Avenido said.

The PDEA chief said that this latest UNODC report, which is dated 2003 and released only last month, used data that pertained to the years 1999 to 2001 only, or at least two years late, and the report covers only 16 selected countries.

According to Avenido, "this UNODC report analyzes two areas: (1) the percentage of drug users vis-à-vis the population of the country which indicates drug consumption, and (2) the volume of drugs seized in the country. For the first area, the data covered 2001. The Philippines is ranked No. 4 in the first area following New Zealand, while it is ranked No. 3 in the second area".

"These figures alone do not justify the No. 3 ranking of the Philippines in ATS consumption worldwide because there are no comparative

figures from the several other countries not mentioned in the report," Avenido pointed out.

"So you can see that the UNODC report is not as comprehensive as it appears, and the report is based on earlier data and statistics two or three years old," Avenido said.

However, he admitted that the report shows the seriousness of the drug problem in year 2000 even before the Arroyo administration came in and the national anti-drug campaign started to bear fruit in 2001 in terms of volume of drugs seized.

Lately, the President ordered an intensified three-month campaign that resulted in the following significant achievements: dismantling of seven clandestine shabu laboratories and four warehouses containing precursors and essential chemicals for the manufacture of shabu; neutralization of 150 big fishes engaged in the illegal drug trade; neutralization of 87 earlier identified local drug groups, 38 newly identified local drug groups and four transnational drug groups; arrest of 12,619 drug personalities; and eradication of 42 marijuana plantation sites.

Avenido said that after the three-month (July to September) intensified national anti-drug campaign, the law enforcement agencies led by the PDEA will continue the war against drugs without let-up and with more vigor. New targets have been set for the period up to the end of the year and for next year.

"There's still so much to be done, and we encourage all sectors of our society to join in this noble national endeavor with the end-in-view of achieving the vision of a Drug-Free Philippines by the year 2000 or even earlier," Avenido stressed.