

PAWD and USAID PWRF-SP partner for water operators' program
by Karlo Ceasar Abarquez



PAWD and USAID PWRF-SP partnership. PAWD President Nestor Villasin (extreme L) and Chairman Edwin Makasiar (3rd from L) sign the MOU for Philippine Water Operators' Partnership with Chief of Party Alma Porciuncula (2nd from L) and Contracting Officer's Technical Representative Mary Joy Jochico (extreme R). Witnesses are (standing from L to R) Davao City WD GM Rodora Gamboa, Immediate Past PAWD President and Metro Cotabato City WD GM Delfin Hilario and Metro Cebu WD GM Armando Paredes.

The Philippine Association of Water Districts (PAWD) and the United States Agency for International Development's Philippine Water Revolving Fund Support Program (USAID PWRF – SP) entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the Philippine Water Operators' Partnership Program during the 1st quarterly meeting of the PAWD Board of Governors and Executive Council meeting held at the LWUA Training Center, Quezon City last March 16, 2010.

Chairman Edwin Makasiar and President Nestor Villasin represented the PAWD while Chief of Party Alma Porciuncula and Contracting Officer's Technical Representative Mary Joy Jochico signed in behalf of the USAID-assisted PWRF-SP.

Both parties entered into an MOU in order to put in place a Water Operators' Partnership program, which has demonstrated success in other Asian countries where it was implemented.

The collaboration aims to achieve the following: 1) create a platform for domestic utilities to foster national peer-to-peer learning partnerships based on mutual benefit and access international expertise and know-how, 2) support the organizational development of PAWD to serve development needs of the industry, 3) raise awareness and interest of utilities to participate in the program and identify potential sources of funding and schemes for twinning arrangements, and 4) strengthen PAWD institutionally to represent and address industry level strategic concerns and issues and to better serve the capacity building requirements of water districts in a sustainable manner.

As members of the water industry, both parties share the common objective of improving the performance of water districts in the country to enable them to reach unserved areas, upgrade the levels of services and ensure reliable and cost efficient operations of water supply and sanitation services.

The Philippine Water Operators' Partnership consists of these four components: twinning, training, knowledge management, and continuous improvement and benchmarking.

Its primary objective is to build the capacities of Philippine water service providers and the industry association through knowledge and experience sharing and mentoring.

The idea of embarking on a Philippine Water Operators' Partnership was inspired by the success of the Water Operator Partnerships (WOP) in Asia, a regional initiative of USAID, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and International Water Association through a common platform called the WaterLinks.