

# — APO-sponsored conference on CBRT in the Philippines —

**T**he Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP), in partnership with the International School of Sustainable Tourism (ISST) and Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT), with support from the APO, organized a National Conference on Planning and Development of Community-based Rural Tourism (CBRT) at Subic Freeport in Olongapo, 12–14 January 2011. The three-day event was well attended, with over 560 representatives from varied sectors of the tourism industry from around the Philippines there at their own expense to explore how to optimize the utilization and productivity of resources in rural areas.

According to conference Project Manager Tet Serrano, “The overwhelming success of this conference can be attributed to the program design, the timely topics, and the good combination of international and local experts,” which included the TV personality Dyan

Castillejo, host of *Sports Unlimited*, in addition to DOT Secretary Alberto Lim, Department of



Secretary Alberto Lim (2nd from R) receiving a token from DAP President Kalaw (3rd from R) and Dr. Gabor (R) after speaking at the opening of the conference. Photo J. Bernardo/APO

the Interior and Local Government Assistant Secretary Rolando Acosta, Olongapo Mayor Bong Gordon, and DAP President Antonio D. Kalaw, Jr.

International speakers came from Asia and Africa: Vice President Rajendra Narsingh Suwal, KGH Group of Hotels, Resorts and Travels, of Nepal; CEO Mariette Du Toit-Helmbold, Cape Town Tourism, South Africa; Dr. Mei-Hsiu Yeh, Professor, Fu Jen Catholic University, Republic of China; Koo Swee Chiow, an adventurer from Singapore and author of *Dare to Dream*; Consultant Susan Santos de Cárdenas, Sustainable Tourism, Hospitality Event and Marketing Guru, of Japan, and APO Agriculture Department Director Joselito Bernardo. Local speakers included Dr. Mina Gabor, former Secretary of Tourism and President of the ISST; Arthur Sandaga Cortez, Jr., of the Provincial Government of La Union, and Glenda Barreto, Doyenne of Philippine Cuisine.

Topics included the framework for CBRT, successful models in Asia, issues in the development of rural areas as prime tourism destinations, development of CBRT through a stakeholders' approach, Nepal's experience in the management of ecosystems on Mt. Everest, sustainable management of natural resource endowments in rural areas for recreational and adventure tourism, essentials for marketing locales and events, recreational and adventure tourism in the Philippines, models of CBRT in Peru, regional food considerations in tourism, and the role of local governments in the development of CBRT.

The participants recommended that the conference be a biennial event of the DAP and APO. This project could serve as a model for APO-supported in-country projects in other member countries. 🌀