

EISENHOWER FELLOWSHIPS – 2009 Multi Nation Program
www.eisenhowerfellowships.org

Miguel Dominguez
Governor, Sarangani Province
Sarangani Province, PHILIPPINES

Miguel Dominguez is the Governor of the Sarangani Province in the Philippines, a largely agricultural part of the country. He initiated the Arms-to-Farms program, which provides farmland to communist insurgents who surrender to the government. To date over 300 former rebels have laid down their arms to participate in this program. During his fellowship, Mr. Dominguez examined issues relating to agricultural technology in order to explore solutions to increase the productivity of low-income farmers. He also addressed issues pertaining to economic development, conflict resolution, emergency preparedness and counter-terrorism.

Meetings at Monsanto and Oklahoma State University provided insights to improved yields of crops and how to obtain food security and self-sufficiency. Discussions at Stanford, Harvard, and MIT demonstrated the growing importance of creating opportunities at the community level to encourage entrepreneurship and thereby reduce poverty. He spoke specifically about poverty alleviation programs in his region at USAID, UNIDO and the Asian Development bank.

Discussions at academic institutions, think tanks and NGOs focusing on terrorism helped Governor Dominguez to view terrorism in a different light than before the start of his program. These discussions enabled him, in his words, to view the “the world terrorism threat from a global perspective that needs local solutions.” Governor Dominguez intends to continue his conversations about terrorism with those he met during his fellowship with an eye towards identifying root causes of the issue in his province and finding a lasting solution. Meetings with scholars around the country around the topic of conflict resolution also encouraged Governor Dominguez to explore other solutions to the violence that has afflicted the Mindanao region of his province.

The topic of emergency management and preparedness was explored on the international, federal and state levels with agencies and organizations such as The Department of Homeland Security, The American Red Cross – St. Louis chapter and the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency. Through these meetings Miguel was able to gain insight into how disasters are planned for and managed in the United States.

Governor Dominguez described his fellowship as “a journey that I and my people will continue in solving problems of poverty, economic disparity, and hope from relationships that I will build to reduce poverty, reduce conflict through economic prosperity and build a more effective state and country.” He plans to create opportunities to connect the Sarangani Province with Oklahoma State University’s agricultural research and programs. He will engage with a project with an organization involved in a carbon sink project that will offset carbon emissions in his province. His discussions on terrorism have encouraged Governor Dominguez to create a center in Mindanao that will focus on providing an opportunity for all parties to the conflict in that region to explore the root causes of the actions that have lead to instability in the region.