

UNESCO chief in Santo Tomas Universtiy, the Philippines



MANILA, Philippines – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Director-General Irina Bokova has arrived in Manila for an official visit in which she would meet with key government officials and receive an award from the University of Sto. Tomas, the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Bokova was welcomed at the airport Wednesday night by Foreign Affairs undersecretary for Policy Erlinda F. Basilio, the DFA said.

Director-General Bokova's visit to the Philippines will be held under the theme "Interfaith dialogue, education and building a culture of peace in fighting poverty," the DFA said.

During her visit, which will end on March 26, Bokova will meet with key Cabinet officials of the government, including senior officials of the DFA, and conduct dialogues with educators and leaders of educational institutions, it said.

This Friday (March 25), Bokova will be awarded the Quadricentennial Golden Cross by UST Rector Rolando Dela Rosa, it said.

The award is the highest award granted by UST and is given to persons who excel in the promotion of the arts, humanities and the sciences, or who have distinguished themselves by their total commitment to the service of humankind, it said.

Director-General Bokova will also have an aerial tour of the Banaue Rice Terraces, along with a dialogue with local government officials and the community, it said.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert F. Del Rosario will also host a dinner in her honor.

Director-General Bokova was formerly Bulgarian Ambassador to France and Monaco, Personal Representative of the Bulgarian President to the "Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie" and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO from 2005 to 2009, the DFA said.

In 2009, Bokova was elected Director-General of the UNESCO, and was the first woman to hold the position.

Director-General Bokova also served as Bulgaria's representative to the United Nations and as her country's Secretary of State for European Integration and Foreign Minister.

As Founder and Chairperson of the European Policy Forum, Bokova worked to overcome divisions in Europe and promote the values of dialogue, diversity, human dignity and rights.

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