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QUEZON CITY MAYOR BAUTISTA SAYS, “STOP STREET HARSSMENT OF WOMEN IN OUR CITY”

QUEZON CITY – Quezon City Mayor Bautista hosted the Safe Cities Advocacy Expo for government agencies and officials, non-government organizations, embassies, and members of the United Nations and international development community at the Quezon City, City Hall Lobby yesterday.

This was the culminating event for the observance of the 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women nationwide. This year the Quezon City government has partnered with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, or UN Women, **to highlight the issue of street harassment and sexual violence that women experience as they move about in the city** – using public transport, lining up in terminals, going to markets/malls, and even just walking home in their own neighborhoods.

At the event, Mayor Bautista formally opened a photography exhibit presenting scenes from the city in order to portray, **“How safe are women in our city streets?”** The Safe Cities advocacy expo presented various ways to promote the issue including through short films, poetry, music, dance, and a mini-bazaar of goods made by women’s organizations. The Expo was also attended by the head of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID), Mr. Juan Pita, who gave the Key Note speech.

In observance of the 18-day campaign people in the city would have noticed that the Quezon City Monument, “turned orange” every evening from November 25 to December 12. The city also launched city-wide public education campaign “Tunay na lalaki kaba? Dapat ‘di ka Bastos” lamp post banners along major roads such as Quezon Avenue, Timog, Visayas, East, Commonwealth, and the Quezon Memorial Circle, as well as on waiting sheds around the city.

The Safe Cities Metro Manila (SC MM) Programme aims that this event will promote deeper understanding of the lack of security that women feel as they move about in the public spaces, and how everyone in society has a critical role in stopping street harassment and sexual violence against women and girls in our cities.



Whether due to shame or fear, women traditionally ignore and keep silent about catcalls, stalking, repeated harassment for their numbers, male public exposure, rubbing or groping (panghihipo) inside the MRT/ jeepneys, even bearing indecent language being yelled at them by men as they walk by.

This is why **the Quezon City government has partnered with UN Women to implement the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative**. QC is the first city in Metro Manila to join over 24 cities around the world in the programme **to stop street harassment and sexual violence against women in public** spaces with funding from AECID.

During this period, UN Women also launched the hashtag #FreeFromFear as part of the social media campaign to raise awareness that all women have the right to be free from violence AND to be free from fear of violence as they go to work, school, participate in recreation and community life, and enjoy public spaces.

Their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/UNWomenSafeCitiesFreeFromFearCampaign/> features a photo blog and testimonies of women in Metro Manila who have experienced street harassment, a celebrity ‘fan sign’ collage, a community poll, and many more resources on preventing and responding to sexual harassment and violence against women in public spaces.

Visit the page and join the Quezon City government and UN Women in their call – **We want Safe Cities where Women are #FreeFromFear!**