

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Exhibit: For Freedom and Social Justice**

*Lessons from the experiences of Germany's oldest political party*

**MANILA, Philippines** – The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), a German political foundation, today launched an exhibit showcasing the development of Germany's oldest political party.

Dubbed "For Freedom and Social Justice," the exhibit features the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), from its origins in the 19th century to its transformation from a workers' party to a "people's party," as well as its continuing adaptation and actualization of the social democratic values and ideas such as freedom, social justice and solidarity.

Gus Cerdena, Program Coordinator of FES, said that the exhibit aims to familiarize the Philippine public with the application of social democratic programs into political practice in Germany.

"The SPD experience brings to the fore the transformative potential of an ideologically-driven political party with a strong membership base and a realistic programmatic platform. From its origins to the present day, the SPD strived to maintain its relevance to the German citizenry not through the expansion of a patronage network but the actualization of its programs rooted on social democratic values. Important lessons can also be derived of how the SPD struggled to live up to its ideals by viewing democracy and social justice as inextricably intertwined," he said.

Guided walkthroughs, as well as side events such as talks, forums, and workshops, are all conducted with the intent of attaining a deeper understanding of Philippine socio-politico-economic realities, and of expanding the appreciation of socialism and social democracy in the Philippine context.

"We are hoping that this exhibit would serve as a tool for political education and to facilitate vibrant political discussions between and among target groups such as students, first time voters, reform-oriented organizations, mass movements, and progressives of all ages," Cerdeña added.

During the launch, long-time SPD member and former official of Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development Wolf Preuss and University of the Philippines Prof. Randy David shared their reflections on the realities and potentials for membership- and program-based political parties in Germany and in the Philippines, respectively.

The exhibit consists of thirty two panels – with various illustrations, photos, charts, and texts – that illustrate the concise chronology of the SPD's development. Each panel highlights the defining moments of the SPD and the ways by which the party has shaped the German nation.

Visitors who possess a level of familiarity in world history will recognize some of the events depicted in the panels. The Industrial Revolution, the First World War, the Great Depression, the Second World War, the existence of East and West Germany during the days of the Cold War, and the subsequent fall of the Berlin Wall are some of the historical episodes familiar to most students of world history.

Still, the exhibit contextualizes these historical themes in order to highlight how the SPD has struggled and transformed from a party of the proletariat to a modern political party of the people.

After the launch, FES plans to bring the exhibit to various schools and universities around the country, starting June until early 2010. The first leg of the exhibit will be held from June 15 – 20 at the De La Salle University (DLSU) in Manila. For more details about the exhibit, please visit the website of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Manila at [www.fes.org.ph](http://www.fes.org.ph). ###

#### **NOTE to Editors:**

*Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), the political legacy of Germany's first democratically elected president Friedrich Ebert, is a political foundation committed to the promotion of democracy, social justice, and international understanding.*

*Since its founding in 1925, it has dedicated itself to the dissemination and advancement of the fundamental values of social democracy in the field of politics, business, and society.*

*FES opened its office in the Philippines in 1964 and has since engaged in various works supportive of civil society groups and social movements to contribute to the ongoing national political, economic and social reform debates for more democracy, broad-based participation in development and governance as well as social justice.*

*Mr. Mirko Herberg is the current FES Manila Resident Representative.*