

First OFID Scholarship recipient graduates

BY REEM ALJARBOU

In 2007, OFID instituted an Annual Scholarship Award to support a student from any developing country to pursue higher education in a relevant field of development. This initiative was in line with OFID's continuous support to education, one of the crucial aspects of the Millennium Development Goals. Ms. Leah Manuzon, from the Philippines, was the first recipient of the OFID Scholarship Award. She has just graduated from the University of Southern California (USC), with a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

The OFID Annual Scholarship aims at supporting a highly motivated and academically driven individual, from a developing country to overcome one of the biggest challenges: the cost of advanced academic graduate training. The winner of the OFID Scholarship receives up to US\$100,000 toward the completion of a Master's Degree in a recognized institution of higher learning anywhere in the world.

Ms. Manuzon applied to OFID after being offered a place at USC to pursue a Masters' Degree in Public Administration at the School of Policy, Planning and Development (SPPD). Ms. Manuzon graduated with honors in May 2009. She also made the SPPD's Dean's list by achieving an almost perfect cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.9 (A+). A maximum cumulative GPA is 4.0.

Ms. Manuzon states that "throughout my graduate studies, the OFID scholarship inspired me to perform well. After completing my studies, I was awarded the Dean's Certificate of Merit which is given in recognition of the top 5 percent of the graduating class in the MPA program." She stresses that the OFID Schol-



PHOTO: COURTESY LEAH MANUZON

Ms Manuzon at her commencement ceremony with Dean Jack Knott of the USC School of Policy, Planning and Development.

arship encouraged her not only to complete her studies, but to excel as one of USC's top students as well.

During her studies, Ms. Manuzon conducted research on the Challenges of Public Administration and Analysis of Future Perspectives in the Philippines. Her work was one of the three papers awarded SPPD's highly esteemed *Haynes Outstanding Performance Award*. Ms. Manuzon says, "I share these accomplishments with OFID, for they would not have been possible without the institution's support." She adds, "I would like to thank OFID again for this opportunity. I hope that the institution will continue with this noble endeavour."

OFID strives to support human capacity building in developing countries in various forms. The OFID Scholarship seeks to guide young men and women from developing countries to make a difference within their communities through education. The OFID Scholarship is currently in its third year with winners attending top programs in development-related fields. ■

2009 Scholarship winner announced

The winner of the 2009 OFID Scholarship is Ms. Sameen Shahid from Pakistan, who will read for a Master's in Public Administration in International Development at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Ms. Shahid was selected from a highly competitive field of more than 3,000 applicants. In addition to an outstanding academic record, Ms. Shahid has a strong background in development, having worked for the Poverty Alleviation Fund in Pakistan. She will commence her studies in September this year.

