

World confab discusses QC drug policy

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte was among the nine city and municipal officials who talked about drug policy during the “High-Level Panel on Health Inequalities,” which signaled the opening of the four-day Fast-Track Cities 2019 Conference at the Barbican Centre in London, England.

“It was a privilege to have been one of the panelists at the high-level discussions on health inequalities and talked about how to ensure we are not leaving anyone behind in providing services to our people, particularly the discriminated and stigmatized,” Belmonte, who is the lone representative of the Philippines and the only Asian mayor, said. She joined Athens Mayor Kostas Bakoyannis, Kingston Deputy Mayor Winston Ennis, Amsterdam Deputy Mayor

Simone Kukenheim, Lisbon

Mayor Fernando Medina,

Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick,

Fulton County Chairman Robb

Pitts, Kiev First Deputy

Mayor Mykola Povoroznyk and Odessa Mayor

Gennadiy Trukhanov as panelists.

Organized by the International

Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC), in collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and other partners, Fast-Track Cities 2019 is the first international gathering of more than 300 cities that are accelerating their responses to HIV, tuberculosis, and viral hepatitis.

The conference aims to highlight successes achieved across the Fast-Track Cities network, address cross-cutting challenges faced by local stakeholders and share best practices in accelerating urban AIDS responses.

”I’m looking forward to this great opportunity to learn from the institutions all over the world in helping address the issue of HIV and to share our insights with the international community,” said Belmonte.

In her stint as vice mayor of Quezon City and presiding officer of the City Council, Belmonte ushered in the passage of an ordinance on age-appropriate HIV education, which she believes is the best way to remove the stigma on HIV/ AIDS victims.

She also initiated a massive education and awareness campaign, especially among high school students, about the dangers of HIV and how to prevent it.