

MESSAGE OF MINISTER MOHAGHER IQBAL
Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education

**2019 Regional Technical Vocational Education and
Training (TVET) Forum**

8:00 AM, November 18, 2019, Cotabato City

Asalaamu Alaikum warakmatulahi taala wa barakatuh. May Peace and Mercy and Blessings of Allah be Upon You.

On behalf of the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education, I welcome you all to this event that seeks to establish significant partnerships among key stakeholders that will enhance our ability to provide educational services to our people, especially in areas long affected by the armed conflict.

At present, the Education Ministry is working steadily to set the foundation that would expedite the creation of a “complete and integrated system of quality education” in the Bangsamoro. As mandated by Article 9 of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, the BARMM through the Education Ministry shall establish an educational system that exemplifies a high standard with a balanced, comprehensive, and inclusive academic program supported by robust infrastructure, including better school facilities and competent teachers and education managers. Included in our mandate is to improve or strengthen the “vocational, technical, non-formal, and special education” in the Bangsamoro.

Through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Education Ministry advocates for the strategic cooperation of public and private technical education and professional training institutions. All skills development institutions must understand the existing context in the Bangsamoro as well as the needs of the population in terms of vocational training. Furthermore, TVE institutions should be aware and must follow prevailing protocols and standard operating procedures. TESDA can provide you the necessary support in this regard.

I want to emphasize that the Education Ministry aims to produce, at least, one professional in every family in the Bangsamoro. We hope our children will become responsible, productive, and respectable members of the Bangsamoro workforce, regardless if they graduated from a traditional academic institution or a technical training center. Hence, all professional vocational education and skills training institutions in the BARMM should improve their curriculum and update their training programs to ensure employability.

By recognizing and encouraging the complementary roles of public and private TVE institutions, we hope to provide vocational students the opportunity to reach the highest level of competency in their chosen technical expertise. We also want to deal with the perception that professional training is of lesser quality than traditional academic education. We will see to it that every trainee shall be a "jack of all trades" and not a "master of none."

As I mentioned earlier, improving the educational system in Bangsamoro is the top priority of the BARMM. I am, therefore, pleased to share with you that we are in the process of drafting the Bangsamoro Education Code, which is one of the priority bills in the BOL. Generally, the Education Code shall govern the education system in the Bangsamoro and set the strategic direction for the implementation of a balanced, accessible, and high standard educational structure. It shall underline the mandate, responsibilities, and relationship of the BARMM, local government, the private sector, and all stakeholders to develop accessible and quality education in the Bangsamoro.

As far as technical and vocational education, we shall include pertinent policy provisions and enabling clauses in the code that would create higher esteem for the vocational curriculum and promote professional training as a viable option for our young people and other potential learners. I want to reiterate that a skills development program still counts as proper education, and I am confident it will allow graduates to fully participate in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of the Bangsamoro and effectively contribute to our nation's long-term development and prosperity.

Before I conclude my keynote message, I want to assure all of you that meaningful change is coming in the BARMM, *Insha' Allah*. The majority of the improvements are yet to be felt, but it began with the resolute commitment to pursue Moral Governance in the Bangsamoro. The Ministry of Basic Higher and Technical Education has already introduced crucial reforms. Our good intentions are felt and demonstrated in the hiring of teachers, the bidding process for the construction of classrooms, reshuffling of school division superintendents, increasing the salaries of contractual employees, and the BARMM's participation in the 2019 *Palarong Pambansa*. We will not squander the goodwill, respect, and trust gained from our early endeavors, and we will continue to serve the children and people of the Bangsamoro with the same vigor and commitment.

I want to thank TESDA-BARMM Officer in Charge Ruby Andong and her team for making this forum possible. Moreover, I want to thank all of you for participating in this activity, which I shall take as a sign that you are serious in promoting quality skills development in the Bangsamoro region. Therefore, the Education Ministry looks forward to meaningful collaboration with all TVET stakeholders.

Magandang umaga sa ating lahat at maraming salamat po!



MBHTE