

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

BARMM Regional Students' Summit
1:00 PM, 15 November 2019
MSU Dimaporo Gymnasium, Marawi City

Asalaamu Alaikum warakmatulahi taala wa barakatuh.

(Salutations) Esteemed guests, ladies, and gentlemen: Good afternoon!

I consider it an honor to provide an inspirational message or impart some insights to our students and young people. In essence, I am allowed to play a part in your advancement and maturity as future leaders of this region and this nation. I consider this as one of the privileges of serving as Minister of Basic Higher and Technical Education. I, therefore, want to thank the organizers of this summit, including our partner, the Commission on Higher Education Regional Office IX, Zamboanga Peninsula, for your kind invitation to speak on behalf of the Education Ministry and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

I cannot underscore the importance of education in our lives and the development of the Bangsamoro. For the BARMM, education is a fundamental right of every person in the Bangsamoro. Furthermore, learning or seeking knowledge is an integral part of every Muslim's being. As Muslims, we see to it that education is our passport for success in the temporal world and in the Day Hereafter. In short of this, success is not ours.

In fact, the first word revealed to Prophet Mohammad (SAW) as appearing in the Quran is: "Iqra," which means "read" – which is knowledge. The Prophet Mohammad (SAW) also said: (1) "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave"; and (2) "Seek knowledge even up to the point of going to China." In other words, we should endeavor to improve ourselves through education. There is no way but to go up and not downward or backward.

Since Education is a priority of the BARMM – as stipulated in the Bangsamoro Organic Law, specifically Article 9 – we in the Education Ministry are working fervently to set the foundation that would expedite the creation of a "complete and integrated system of quality education" in the Bangsamoro. Furthermore, a Bangsamoro educational system should be

“relevant and responsive to the needs, ideals, and aspirations” of the people in this region and informed of its existing political, economic, and socio-cultural situation.

The Ministry envisions a Bangsamoro 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. Learning in the Bangsamoro shall be accessible to all students and anchored on shared values of discipline, integrity, diligence, and ingenuity. I want to restate that at the core of our efforts in the Education Ministry is ensuring that “no child is left behind” – all would be given the opportunity to proper education for their intellectual, physical, and moral development.

With an improved curriculum suited for employability, we aim to produce, at least, one professional in every family in the Bangsamoro. Which means, we hope that all of you present today would be able to graduate from the academic or technical institution of your choice and become responsible, productive and respectable professionals. Your advancement in your respective fields would greatly help the Bangsamoro. By equipping you with the best possible education as well as an enabling environment for learning, you will become an asset to your respective community and society in general. Essentially, you shall become agents of peace by contributing to our region’s sustainable socio-economic development and nation-building.

Indeed, education has been cited as an essential tool for peacebuilding and the eradication of poverty. Through proper and accessible training, future generations can acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and values that are integral for political, economic, social, and cultural development. An educated population, therefore, is critical for a country’s prosperity and a contributing factor to lasting peace, justice, and reconciliation.

Furthermore, it is generally acknowledged that educated people are less prone to commit violence in society. While there are some exceptions, it is therefore crucial that the educational program in the Bangsamoro is balanced and holistic, looking at the intellectual, physical, moral and even spiritual advancement of all the learners, especially our young people.

I commend the organizers for this event and to all the students who are participating. Students summits, or conferences, serve as an essential venue for student leaders and learners to network and exchange viewpoints with your peers and professors. I anticipate

that this summit will be productive for all attendees, wherein ideas have the potential to become full-blown strategies. I believe it is crucial that we provide our students with a safe space where good ideas are born, nurtured, and realized. With that in mind, I look forward to the results of this summit, and I hope that the attendees will not only learn something but also make new friends.

Thank you very much for listening, and I hope I was able to provide some input to today's event.

Good Afternoon and Wassalam!



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