

THE MESSAGE OF MINISTER MOHAGHER IQBAL

Minister of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education

Process Review Workshop on School-Based Feeding Programme (SBFP) for the BARMM

27 to 29 August 2019, Zamboanga City

Asalaamu alaikum warakmatulahi taala wa barakatuh!

The Messenger of Allāh said: There are two blessings which many people do not make the most of (and thus lose out): good health and free time (Sahīh al-Bukhārī No, 6412). After this week's activity, I hope we can contribute something on promoting good health.

On behalf of the Ministry for Basic, Higher and Technical Education, I want to welcome all of you to this important event with our partners from the World Food Programme (WFP). We continue to promote one of the Ministry's priority areas: a comprehensive and quality health and nutrition program and services for our pupils. Hence, the Education Ministry shall implement the School-Based Feeding Program for the benefit of our young learners and students.

The MBHTE's overarching goal is to improve the educational system in the Bangsamoro, both private and public academic education and technical training. While that could mean ensuring the quality of our teaching and learning infrastructures, I want to emphasize that parallel to every student's intellectual development is their physical and mental growth.

Indeed, it would be difficult for our students to take on curricular and extra-curricular activities if, for instance, they are not having meals with the proper nutritional value.

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As far as the Ministry is concerned, it is unacceptable for our students would miss school days, get behind in their lessons or drop-out due to malnourishment or hunger. If not dealt with immediately, this problem could have long-term impact on our children. Since our young people would be the vanguards of tomorrow, we need to guarantee that they are in good health to take on the challenges of leading the Bangsamoro nation in the future. A healthy body produces a healthy and sound mind, which is critical for leaders in their decision-making process and in nation building.

Malnutrition is a problem that can be remedied by a proper, effective, comprehensive health and feeding program in all learning institutions. And this is our workshop for this week is timely. Our primary objective is to understand the School-Based Feeding Program and find the appropriate means to strengthen its implementation so that we reach the desired objective.

It is imperative for the MBHTE to invest in a School-Based Feeding Program. But allow me to emphasize that in the BARMM, we are guided by the principle of Moral Governance. As government, we can always fund programs for the betterment of our people. But in reality, we have finite resources, so it is critical we fully understand the problem we intend to solve. Moreover, our interventions must be strategic, informed of the existing context on the ground, will have long-term benefits, and will yield the best results so we do not waste taxpayer's money. In the MBHTE, any practice that could trigger poor governance and corruption will not be tolerated.

As I have said earlier, this three-day workshop is well-timed, and I am confident that it will be a very productive one. I want to thank the WFP and the MBHTE Health and Nutrition Unit for organizing this workshop and sharing your expertise on the subject matter.

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Moreover, we appreciate the presence of all the participants from different school divisions in the island provinces who took time from their work to attend this workshop. We look forward to hearing your reflections and invaluable insights on how to improve the MBHTE's School-Based Feeding Program. With your support and cooperation, we will be adding another important milestone for the MBHTE and make a critical program work for the benefit of our communities especially our children.

Once we begin rolling-out the SBFP and other MBHTE programs, I intend to introduce modalities that will ensure its proper implementation. For instance, I want to inform everyone that very soon the Ministry will be deploying monitoring teams in the BARMM to the different divisions and districts. The monitoring teams will give us feedback on the status of programs and activities as well as how our resources are used. Hopefully it will have very soon.

Lastly, I want to underscore that change is coming in the Bangsamoro. It sounds like a cliché, but we are serious in delivering what we have promised before the passage of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, though steadily and reinforced by due diligence. And I hope all of you here will continue to support us in the new phase of our struggle for the people in the Bangsamoro. Thank you very much and I look forward to the outcome of this workshop.

Maraming Salamat po!



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