

**SPEECH OF
HIS EXCELLENCY BENIGNO S. AQUINO III
PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES
2010 CEAP CONVENTION
WATERFRONT CEBU CITY HOTEL, CEBU CITY
SEPTEMBER 22, 2010**

Good Afternoon.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to be here on behalf of President Benigno S. Aquino III. He would have wanted to be here to address you personally, but as you know, he is currently on his trip to the UN. Please allow me to share with you his message.

Today's convention is an indication of your active participation in ensuring a better future for every Filipino child. Your thrust of promoting "the total development of the human person" through Catholic orientation is consistent with our administration's platform of empowering every Filipino with skills and knowledge to be the best that they can be: recognizing that education has an ethical dimension as well as the delivery of knowledge. As the voice of Catholic education of our country, CEAP has led its 1,286 member-schools in promoting character-formation and citizenship-building as the social and spiritual foundation of the nation.

As educators, you have been entrusted to help in forging the direction of our children. However, there are several roadblocks that prevent you from performing your job efficiently. The poor quality of educational materials continues to be a problem. There is also a big disparity in educational achievements across social groups, wherein students from poor families have higher dropout rates compared to students coming from relatively well-off families. These are challenges our administration has vowed to resolve. We will not let any of these issues worsen.

The Constitution mandates the allotment of the highest budget to education. But we must also spend with a purpose. Our commitment is to provide a better quality of learning for future generations. We will do this through our 10-point education agenda, which includes our aim to switch from a 10-year to a 12-year Basic Education Cycle, and to be fully-supportive of our private schools. We will also build a universal pre-school system, a science and math culture from Grade 1, and to make sure that every child is a reader by Grade 3. This agenda also envisions the return of technical-vocational education in High

School, better teacher education, hiring, and in-service training, and to have stronger, more committed local school boards where principals serve as empowered managers, and the establishment of Madaris Education for our Muslim brothers and sisters.

To give more educational opportunities for the underprivileged, we have Conditional Cash Transfer through the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. This aims to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty through investment in human capital such as education, health and nutrition. Education is about mentoring and partnership.

We envision a culture of excellence that promotes both.

All these are geared towards making education as the central strategy for investing in our people. This also signifies our focus on having an improved educational system as a centerpiece in our social contract with the Filipino people.

I am glad to be your comrade-in-arms in our fight to stop corruption and end poverty. For CEAP, and everyone who has expressed solidarity with our transformation agenda, may we continue our undying support to these efforts. We can do it: we must pray, but we must also act. Let us rebuild our faith in ourselves, to have a nation where teachers are, again, respected pillars of the community.

Thank you.